

**Report on the Panel Discussion on Multi-Stakeholders' Perspectives on the
Implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD):
*Four Years After***

I Introduction

A panel discussion on “Multi-Stakeholders’ Perspectives on the Implementation of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD): *Four Years After*” was held on 13 October 2005 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The panel discussion was organized by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) to coincide with the joint debate of the General Assembly on African issues. The discussion was moderated by Mr. Ejeviome Eloho Otobo, the Acting Director of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

The panellists at the meeting included: His Excellency Mr. Antonio Fernando, Honourable Minister of Trade and Industry, Republic of Mozambique; Ms. Dianna Games, Director of Africa@Work, Johannesburg, South Africa; Mr. Abderrahmane Merouane, Adviser to the Minister in charge of Maghreb and African Affairs, Algeria; Professor Firmino G. Mucavele, Chief Executive Officer, NEPAD Secretariat; Ms. Angela Mwaniki, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; Dr. Dorothy L. Njeuma, Rector, University of Yaounde I, Cameroon, and Member of African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Panel; Dr. Joseph O. Okpaku, Sr., President and Chief Executive Officer, Telecom Africa Corporation, New Rochelle, New York.

The main objective of the panel discussion was to allow participants of diverse professional background, expertise and policy experience to share their perspectives on the challenges and actions needed to advance the implementation of NEPAD, with a view to deepen the process of involvement and commitment by all stakeholders.

The convening of this panel discussion reflected the recognition of the importance of multi-stakeholder participation in the implementation of NEPAD. NEPAD is based on the principle of partnership between the government, the private sector and the civil society, as well as between Africa and the international community. African governments have taken the lead in articulating the initiative, drawing up the relevant programmes and plans, as well as mobilizing the resources for NEPAD’s implementation. The private sector has created a number of forums to advance its involvement. Meanwhile, the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that were initially sceptical of NEPAD have gradually come to the recognition that they can also make an important contribution to its implementation.

The success of NEPAD will critically depend on how much the private sector, civil society and the members of the broader African society take active ownership of and are mobilized to implement NEPAD. It is, therefore, important to seek the perspectives of these multi-stakeholders on the implementation of NEPAD.

II Highlights of the presentations by the panellists

Mr. Otobo welcomed the participants and introduced the panellists. He observed that the third report of the Secretary-General on the progress in the implementation of and international support for NEPAD (A/60/178) has detailed the progress made so far in the implementation of NEPAD. While the report has detailed the actions of African Governments and responses of the international community, the panel discussion offered a unique opportunity for various stakeholders to provide their perspectives of the nature and impact of NEPAD. Mr. Otobo then invited the panellists to make their presentations.

Mr. Fernando's presentation focused on the national experience of Mozambique in implementing NEPAD, in particular the key factors which had contributed to development in Mozambique.

With regard to peace, security and governance, the Minister noted that Mozambique has enjoyed durable peace since 1992 which has allowed the country to concentrate its efforts on rebuilding the economy. Furthermore, Mozambique is participating in the first round of the African Peer Review Mechanism, thus demonstrating its willingness to open its government to peer scrutiny. The second factor highlighted by Mr. Fernando was promotion of good business environment. In order to expedite the establishment of businesses, the government of Mozambique has opened "one-stop shops" where all the concerned departments are gathered in one building, to process the incorporation of private sector firms. Thirdly, Mozambique is encouraging the production and promotion of local products to foreign markets. The fourth point highlighted by Mr. Fernando was promotion of regional integration. Efforts are aimed at enhancing regional trade as well as liberalisation of visa procedures. Mr. Fernando ended his presentation by elaborating on Mozambique's participation in NEPAD projects. He highlighted the Rovuma Unity Bridge linking Mozambique to Tanzania.

In his presentation, Dr. Okpaku elaborated on the African perspective on strategies for building and modernizing the African economy. He began by stating that it is not possible to create development without defining what is meant by development. Therefore, Africans should define the African future that they aim to arrive at, as well as the resources needed to get there. Dr. Okpaku urged that targets should be set sufficiently high to challenge the creativity and commitment of African leaders and elites, remarking that the MDGs are only minimalist.

Dr. Okpaku further warned about the danger of recreating on economic and social front the kind of dependence that Africa had on political front. He emphasized that Africans need to assume the full responsibility for Africa's condition, as well as the responsibility to rebuild the continent. He continued by saying that innovation and creativity reside in problem solving, thus by stealing somebody's problem you also deprive them of their creativity. He further argued that if a problem is poorly identified, the solution will also be flawed. For example, the assumptions that Africa lacks human resource expertise and that it lacks capital have never been proven.

As far as development assistance is concerned, according to Dr. Okpaku it can become a development handicap if left for perpetuity. He emphasized that Africa needs to transform from an assistance-seeking society to a global power.

Dr. Njeuma focused her presentation on the APRM as a key instrument for achieving the objectives of NEPAD. She highlighted the APRM as an African-owned, voluntary process designed to periodically examine the four pillars of good governance in Africa: political, economic, corporate governance; and socio-economic development. Dr. Njeuma, then, elaborated on the process of the peer review, which includes a self-evaluation prepared by the country on the four key areas, including a plan of action on how to rectify any deficiencies observed. The process also involves a series of workshops to sensitize a cross-section of the population.

Dr. Njeuma further explained that the review team consisting of a member of the peer review panel, representatives of strategic partners and independent consultants prepares a report which is first presented to the country for comments, and subsequently for discussion at the APR Forum, consisting of Heads of State of the countries who have acceded to APRM. She emphasized the fact that the country itself comes up with a plan of action that would improve the lives of its citizens, thus making APRM a strong instrument contributing to the implementation of NEPAD's objectives.

Ms. Games offered the media perspective on the implementation of NEPAD. She started by highlighting that many ordinary people have not heard of NEPAD or do not understand it. Furthermore, it is not quite clear to the media how NEPAD works. According to Ms. Games, this can be attributed to the fact that media has not been considered to be a stakeholder nor harnessed in support of NEPAD.

Furthermore, Ms. Games remarked that media is still treated by many governments with suspicion. The fact that NEPAD is a high-level political initiative has created the image that it is a government-owned initiative. Being in its formative stages, NEPAD has many process-driven activities, which do not lend themselves to media reporting, which is another factor contributing to low coverage. Ms. Games noted that most of the debate on NEPAD is in the foreign media, as many African media houses are poorly resourced, journalists are not adequately trained or lack independence.

Ms. Games underlined that APRM was a good opportunity to get NEPAD back on the media radar, since it produces measurable results, even as she expressed disappointment that APRM appeared not to have indicators on press freedom. In conclusion, Ms. Games emphasized the importance of actively engaging the media as a partner and stakeholder.

Mr. Merouane focused his presentation on the experience of Algeria in implementing NEPAD. He noted that NEPAD priorities are embedded in the national plans and policies. He highlighted that the recent adoption of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation in Algeria paves the way to an increase in investments in the sectors corresponding to NEPAD priorities. Furthermore, the National Economic Recovery Plan

implemented in Algeria from 2000-2004 is followed by a complementary plan to boost economic growth, with an investment portfolio to the tune of US\$ 55 billion mainly in infrastructure, agriculture, rural development and social sectors.

In the second part of his presentation, Mr. Merouane observed that Algeria is involved in some selected NEPAD programmes and projects and is promoting their implementation at the national level, with the E-Schools project mentioned as an example. According to Mr. Merouane, Algeria has also integrated the initiative in its foreign policy and development cooperation framework. Furthermore, Algeria is in the process of preparing its national self-assessment in the context of APRM. Mr. Merouane described this as a golden opportunity to sensitize Algerian stakeholders on the goals and objectives of NEPAD.

Ms. Mwaniki spoke on the theme of achieving food security in Africa, a major priority of NEPAD. She started by defining food security as a situation in which all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Ms. Mwaniki observed that Africa is lagging behind the rest of the world in achieving food security.

Ms. Mwaniki explained that food security is affected by a complexity of factors, but the root cause of food insecurity in Africa is the inability of people to gain access to food due to poverty. She highlighted that the majority of food insecurity is found in rural areas. According to Ms. Mwaniki, the solution lies in increasing the agricultural profitability of small-hold farmers and creating rural off-farm employment opportunities.

As a conclusion, Ms. Mwaniki proposed seven strategies which hold good prospects for sustainable alleviation of food insecurity in Africa, as follows: nutritional intervention, or more specifically, dietary diversification; facilitating market access both outside and within Africa; rural opportunities, such as cottage industries to process food crops; education, research and development on issues relating to food security; gender sensitive development; learning from and building on existing coping strategies; as well as good governance for all the previous to work.

Mr. Mucavele started his presentation by defining NEPAD. He pointed out that NEPAD is a programme of the African Union. According to Mr. Mucavele, NEPAD is philosophically a framework that includes certain principles, norms and practices which countries should follow. The primary objective of NEPAD is to create conditions for higher economic growth and sustainable development throughout the continent. Mr. Mucavele reminded the participants that NEPAD calls for African ownership and responsibility. Secondly, protection and promotion of democracy and human rights means full participation of all stakeholders, a partnership with the stakeholders in each country, and with other African countries and international community. Furthermore, NEPAD is for self-reliance and reduced dependency on aid, through the strengthening of the private sector.

Mr. Mucavele noted that the AU/NEPAD African Action Plan presented to the African Partnership Forum is a product of wide consultations involving Ministers of Finance and the Regional Economic Communities. The plan details what NEPAD seeks to do in the areas of infrastructure, agriculture, food security, technology, research, health, trade, environment, peace and security, and governance. The estimated annual financial outlay is \$110 billion, out of which NEPAD is asking the development partners to contribute \$43 billion.

III Main issues in the discussion

During the discussion, the participants raised a number of points and engaged in a lively discussion with the panellists.

Concerns about the “elitist” nature of NEPAD in general and the APRM in particular were expressed by some participants. In response, Mr. Mucavele emphasized that villagers and governments have certain practices which meet the NEPAD objectives, thus NEPAD is being “retailed”. According to Mr. Mucavele, NEPAD calls for total participation of people in their own development and is far from being an intellectual exercise for only a limited circle of people. Regarding the APRM, Dr. Njeuma clarified that the national peer review commissions include representatives of a wide cross-section of the society, including the parliamentarians. Answering a concern earlier raised by another panellist, Dr. Njeuma further emphasized that the questionnaire given to countries does include indicators on freedom of the press and freedom of expression.

Another topic raised was the existence of various regional groupings, which can lead to complexities in policy implementation. In this connection, Mr. Mucavele highlighted the good cooperation between the regional economic communities and NEPAD, and noted that the Executive Secretaries of Regional Economic Communities are members of the NEPAD Steering Committee. Dialogue between the RECs and NEPAD Secretariat helps to bridge gaps and reduce duplication. He further explained that within the context of the “spatial development approach” the long-term development of Africa as a whole will be considered. Main centres of production and consumption will be identified with a view to determining where comparative advantages are located, where to build markets and ports, as well as deciding what kind of infrastructure is needed.

The role of the youth in shaping the future of Africa was raised, in particular the need to build “informed Africaness”. In this connection, Mr. Mucavele highlighted the experience of youth exchange in the framework of the e-school project, through which youth from five different sub-regions are communicating and sharing experiences. Student exchange is planned as the next phase of the initiative. Ms. Games further suggested that it is important for Africans to learn about each other to avoid isolation of communities.

Several participants emphasized the importance of harnessing the resources found within Africa or belonging to Africans for the benefit of the continent. In this context, it was

agreed that lesser dependence on donors would give Africans more say in shaping their future. According to Dr. Okpaku, once Africans find the courage to take their future into their own hands, they will find the necessary resources. In particular, he stressed the need for developing a high-level medical industry within Africa. To give an example, developing vaccines for diseases such as HIV and the avian flu would enable Africa to earn millions which could be used for development, instead of spending millions on buying the vaccines.

Mr. Mucavele further remarked that Africa has abundant natural resources but lacks the know-how to use them. He also observed that there is a significant amount of money held by Africans outside Africa and posed the question why this money is not used in Africa.

The moderator concluded the discussion by reiterating that NEPAD is about harnessing Africa's resources and creativity to improve its current economic, social and political conditions and at the same time laying the foundation for a bright future for the people of the region.

Note: The papers presented by some of the Panellists are attached herewith. The views expressed therein are those of the authors in their individual capacity.