NEPAD: An Update on Progress and Challenges and United Nations relations with the African Union

Presentation
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1. **Introduction**

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Her Excellency Ambassador (Professor) Judith Mbula Bahemuka, the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, for inviting me to this important Retreat. My task today is, firstly, to brief you on “The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD): An update on Progress and Challenges” and secondly, on the broader United Nations relations with the African Union.

2. **New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD): An Update of Progress and Challenges**

Three and half years have elapsed since the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) was adopted by African leaders at their summit in Lusaka, Zambia in July 2001. This presentation is an update on the implementation of NEPAD, focusing on key developments during the past year. It also identifies some challenges and concludes by offering a few ideas on what the UN might do to further support the implementation of NEPAD.

a) **Update on Progress**

Much progress has been made on a range of policy issues and programmes. Eight are particularly noteworthy.

I. **Implementation of NEPAD Programmes:** The 2004-2007 Strategic plan for NEPAD has been articulated. It was considered at the 12th meeting of the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) held in Algiers on 23 November, 2004. The plan aims to develop sub-regional and regional programmes in the key sectoral priorities of NEPAD and, in doing so, builds on the progress in the implementation of programmes and projects in such sectors as infrastructure, agriculture and environment. An important aspect in the implementation of the sectoral programmes is the establishment of targets of expenditures on selected NEPAD priorities. African countries have agreed to devote 15% of their national budget to health; 10% to agriculture; 5% to water and sanitation; and 1% of their gross domestic product to science and technology. Although the trend of setting targets of expenditure for specific sectors pre-dated its adoption, NEPAD has, nonetheless, given a fresh impetus to that effort.

II. **African Peer Review Mechanism:** Considerable progress has been made in moving forward the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Twenty four countries have signed on to the APRM. Country support missions have been fielded to four countries (Ghana, Rwanda, Mauritius and Kenya). ECA, UNDP and ADB have participated in and provided technical support for these support missions. Support missions are planned for three countries (Mali, Uganda and Mozambique) in the first quarter of 2005. A Trust Fund for the APRM has been established with the support of UNDP to which it has made an initial contribution of $750,000.00 and pledged an additional sum of US$1.25million. UNDP has also
provided financial and technical support to participating countries. Meanwhile, at the Algiers meeting, four countries Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa pledged voluntary contribution of US$1 million each to the APRM Trust Fund. These pledges of voluntary contribution to the APRM taken together with the establishment of targets of expenditures on NEPAD priorities have given practical expression to the principle of ownership of NEPAD through adequate funding.

III. **Strengthening of the NEPAD Secretariat:** NEPAD is a programme of the African Union. But it is managed by a separate secretariat based in Midrand, near Johannesburg. Strengthening the managerial leadership and technical expertise of the secretariat is essential to the secretariat’s roles of facilitation and resource mobilization for the implementation of NEPAD programmes. Adequate funding holds the key to that effort and the secretariat’s goal of capacity building. The four year budget estimates for the secretariat were presented to the Algiers meeting. The following levels of expenditure are projected: 2004/5 – US$9.3 million; 2005/6 – US$13.6 million; 2006/7 – US$ 14.3 million; and 2007/8 – US$16 million.

IV. **Integrating NEPAD priorities into national development process:** The process of integrating NEPAD priorities into the national development frameworks of African countries is vitally important to the long term sustainability of NEPAD. During the past year, several countries launched NEPAD country chapters or focal points: Lesotho and Zambia launched theirs in August and September. A recent study undertaken by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa on the subject of integrating NEPAD priorities into national development process focusing on the experiences of Algeria, Nigeria and South Africa showed considerable diversity of institutional arrangements for integrating NEPAD into the development process but identified four critical factors in the process: (1) the establishment of a NEPAD focal point; (2) the establishment of an effective decision-making process for NEPAD; (3) providing financial and budgetary allocations to NEPAD priorities; and (4) devising a consultative process within government and with the private sector, civil societies and NGOs.

V. **The role of regional economic communities in implementing NEPAD:** The role of the regional economic communities (RECs) in the implementation of NEPAD is well recognized. For example, the RECs were requested to take the lead role in and have proposed projects for the short-term action plan (STAP) for infrastructure development of NEPAD. They would be actively involved in organizing the regional planning meetings for the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) scheduled for 2005 and they are to establish task teams to fast track the implementation of NEPAD projects.

VI. **Funding of infrastructure projects:** The African Development Bank and World Bank have provided financial support to STAP. From 2002-2004, ADB has financed 20 infrastructure projects to tune of US$520 million and mobilized about
US$1.6 billion in co-financing of those projects. ADB has also mobilized resources for the development of the Medium to Long term Strategic Framework for infrastructure development, which is expected to be competed by 2006. The World Bank has approved funding for at least half of the “Top 20” prioritized projects under the STAP and for CAADP multi-country agricultural productivity programme. Financial support for these projects is provided from its regional programme of US$200-300 million annually. As would be shown later, however, disbursing the approved resources has been rather slow.

VII. **UN system support for NEPAD:** The UN system’s support for NEPAD rests on four pillars: funding of NEPAD programmes, institutional support to the NEPAD Secretariat, collaboration among the agencies and advocacy. Besides the World Bank and the UNDP, a number of UN system’s entities, for example, FAO, UNEP, IFAD, UNESCO, ITU, and WFP have provided or mobilized resources for specific NEPAD programmes during the past year. A few have also offered technical assistance in developing projects or seconded staff to the NEPAD secretariat. The regional consultation mechanism of UN agencies working in Africa convened by ECA is the main anchor for coordinated support for NEPAD. At its 6th meeting held in Addis Ababa in July 2004, the agencies agreed to undertake joint programming on capacity building for the NEPAD Secretariat and to explore establishing stronger linkages among the work of the thematic clusters established by the regional consultation. The Secretary General has established an Advisory Panel of eminent personalities to advise him on measures to promote international support to NEPAD. The Panel met in September 2004 and will issue its report in April 2005.

VIII. **International initiatives in support of Africa’s development:** The past year witnessed a family of international efforts that will potentially benefit NEPAD. The UK established the Commission for Africa which has as one of its objectives support for NEPAD to achieve its goals. The US launched the Millennium Challenge Account for which eight African countries have been invited to submit proposals for financial support. The US has also expressed its intention to support the regional planning meetings for the implementation of CAADP. Canada has provided C$10 million and Denmark DKr 5 million for the NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility at the ADB. Canada has pledged a contribution of US$750,000 and France has indicated that it would contribute to the APRM Trust Fund. Japan convened an Asia-Africa International Trade Investment Conference in November to promote trade and investment opportunities between the two regions.

b) **Some Challenges**

Some the main challenges to the successful implementation of NEPAD include the lack of functional and institutional integration of the NEPAD Secretariat into the African Union; the continuing difficulties in developing sound technical and commercially viable projects in some sectors; lack of public awareness for NEPAD at the national level; the
difficulties in mobilizing resources from domestic and external sources; limited private sector participation in NEPAD projects; and the lack of coherence in international support for Africa; and the complex review and approval procedures by the multilateral financial institutions resulting in delays in the release of approved resources for projects. In response to the last problem, the President of Nigeria, who is also the Chairman of HSGIC, will convene, later this month (in January 2005), a meeting of relevant stakeholders in Abuja to explore ways to expedite the approval process.

To conclude, the UN system has shown much commitment to using the existing coordination mechanisms, especially the regional consultation mechanism as a forum for promoting dialogue and collaboration. Yet much remains to be done in undertaking joint programming, if not in implementing joint programmes, in support of NEPAD. At least in one area, namely, providing technical assistance to NEPAD Secretariat, there is more such scope for collaboration among the entities of the UN system. Even so, as NEPAD makes the transition from the phase of programmes and projects development to implementation, financial resource mobilization will emerge as the main preoccupation of African governments and the NEPAD Secretariat. The UN system should organize itself to support creatively that effort at the national and regional levels.

On its part, the African Union at its recently concluded Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, (January 31-February 1, 2005), heard a Report by the Chairman of the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee on NEPAD and decided as follows:

- **Takes note with appreciation** of the report presented by the Chairperson of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, H. E. Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;

- **Welcomes** the Africa Commission as an important step towards the mobilization of international assistance for the implementation of NEPAD and commends its efforts in this regard;

- **Calls upon** the international community to support NEPAD and in particular calls on the G-8 countries to:

  (a) cancel all debts of African countries and take practical steps to urgently implement such cancellation;

  (b) double development assistance to Africa and improve its quality *inter alia* by channeling such increase through multilateral development institutions and by augmenting the budgetary support component of it;

  (c) take the necessary steps to complete the Doha round of trade negotiations at the earliest possible time so as to provide free and
non-reciprocal access to their markets for African countries and eliminate export subsidies for agricultural products.

3. **The United Nations (UN) relations with the African Union (AU)**

In 1994, the Secretary-General began to convene high-level meetings with the heads of regional organizations including the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its successor, the African Union. The fifth such meeting was held on 29 and 30 July 2003, at United Nations Headquarters. The main theme discussed at the meeting was new challenges to international peace and security, including international terrorism. Following the meeting, the Secretary-General proposed that the sixth high-level meeting should be convened in mid-2005.

   **a. Cooperation between the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) and the African Union**

My office, representing the Secretary-General, participated in a series of meetings, organized by the Chairperson of AU that led to the formulation of the vision and strategic framework of the African Union (AU). Furthermore, my office has held discussions with AU on a project to monitor capacity-building efforts that will enable African countries to respond effectively to conflicts and on global advocacy for African issues and African development in general.

   **b. United Nations System-wide support to the African Union**

In the period under review, consultations have continued to be held on a regular basis and at all levels between officials of the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union. Moreover, several initiatives have been designed and implemented by the UN to help AU to develop its new institutions during its transition from the former Organization of African Unity.

I. United Nations experts helped to draft the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the rules of procedure for the Council which was formally launched on 25 May 2004, and assisted in the establishment of an African standby force and the Common African Defense and Security Policy which has been approved. AU is considering a United Nations proposal concerning the working methods of the Council and training of its staff. United Nations experts also helped to draft the policy framework for, and are assisting in the development of, the electoral assistance and conference management capabilities of AU.

II. Cooperation between the United Nations and AU was further strengthened through mutual support in the deployment of new and expansion of ongoing peacekeeping activities, both within the United Nations context and the regional framework:
(a) The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) worked alongside the AU-nominated mediator to the inter-Congolese dialogue to achieve an agreement on arrangements for transition, including power-sharing arrangements. The United Nations provided logistical support to the AU-led Joint Military Commission and later re-hatted AU observers into MONUC. AU is an active member of the International Committee in Support of Transition;

(b) The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) continues to coordinate with the AU liaison mission to the Military Coordination Commission;

(c) In Western Sahara, the observer delegation of AU to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) continued to extend its support to the Mission;

(d) In Burundi, the United Nations supported the implementation of the Arusha Agreement and subsequent ceasefire agreements and has been chairing the Implementation Monitoring Committee and the Joint Ceasefire Commission. Following the submission by the Secretary-General of a report to the Security Council recommending the establishment of a multidimensional United Nations operation in Burundi (S/2004/210), the United Nations and AU worked closely to ensure a smooth transition from an African peacekeeping mission in Burundi and United Nations Office in Burundi to the United Nations Operation in Burundi.

(e) In Sudan, the UN works closely with the African Union in assessing the latter to deploy observers to Western Darfur. The UN is also preparing to dispatch a full scale, multi-disciplinary Peace-keeping Operation to help implement the North-South peace Agreement. In both cases, SRSG Pronk is working with the AU Special Envoy Ambassador Kingibe.

III. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, supports the AU goal of promoting peace, security and sustainable development by coordinating international relief efforts in response to humanitarian emergencies in a number of countries of the region, including Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda. During the past year, representatives of the Office drew attention to humanitarian challenges and worked to establish stronger relations with AU in the area of humanitarian emergencies, including natural disasters. This relationship has been particularly effective in the Sudan, where AU has played a crucial role in the facilitation of talks between the parties signatory to the humanitarian ceasefire agreement for Darfur, which was signed in April 2004.

IV. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recently assisted AU in the establishment of its human rights documentation centre, funded a retreat of the organization on the future of the African Commission on Human
and Peoples’ Rights, and funded the travel of three members of the Commission to Geneva in May 2004. The High Commissioner participated in the third ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of AU, held in Addis Ababa in July 2004. In June and July 2004, the Office of the High Commissioner participated in several AU initiatives concerning Darfur.

V. In July 2002, the World Food Programme (WFP) established a Liaison Office to AU and, in July 2004, appointed a Representative to AU, based in Addis Ababa. Following are the key priorities for joint action, as part of bilateral meetings held in July 2004:

(a) facilitating access to the most vulnerable people during armed conflicts;
(b) protect women and children during conflict and provide security for aid workers;
(c) extending to AU the opportunity of using WFP logistical channels for war or natural disaster victims; and
(d) engaging in joint advocacy for low profile and forgotten crises, including post-conflict situations.

VI. The Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat has paid close attention to the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the African Union. The quarterly magazine, *Africa Renewal*, reported on the deliberations surrounding the transition and covered every major step in that process. The articles in the magazine covered AU efforts to build up its own peacekeeping and conflict resolution capacities and to promote regional economic integration. AU statements, declarations and speeches have been cited frequently in United Nations articles. United Nations Radio has also actively promoted the work of AU. In 2004, United Nations live radio launched a new, weekly feature programme, “UN and Africa”. The executive producer of the programme accompanied the Secretary-General to the recent AU summit meeting and reported extensively on its proceedings.

VII. The third phase of the support provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to the Peace and Security Agenda project is now operational, under a new $6.4 million budget. UNDP played a key role in the establishment of the AU Peace and Security Directorate and is funding eight key policy advisers to the Directorate. UNDP provided the funding for a consultative meeting, held in Cape Town, South Africa, in April 2004, which brought together all African ambassadors to the AU Commission to deliberate on how they could synergize efforts in ensuring that the Peace and Security Council functions most effectively.

VIII. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and AU have adopted a human rights approach to children’s issues. Activities include, especially in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the promotion of children’s agenda, the conduct of joint training to monitor commitments on children and other social issues, and the
promotion of the family theme in order to raise a number of critical societal and economic issues regarding the family, women and children in Africa today.

IX. Finally, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is providing ongoing support to AU on all issues relating to HIV/AIDS. In particular, UNAIDS is providing support for the drafting of the AU, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and UNAIDS strategy for monitoring the implementation of the Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, adopted by the Organization of African Unity in 2001, and the formulation by AU of the strategic direction that will guide its new actions. UNAIDS is also providing material and financial assistance for the secretariat of AIDS Watch Africa.

c. Challenges

There are two main challenges in UN-AU relations. First the issue of adequacy of resources for the former to support the latter’s priority programmes. Second the issue of coordination of United Nations activities in support of the African Union.

I would like to draw attention to paragraph 76 of the Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Recommendations contained in the Report of the Secretary-General on the Causes of Conflict and Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa (A/59/385), of 20 August 2004. The Report, inter alia, made the point that: "The nature, scope and orientation of the activities of the African Union are vastly different from those of its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity. In order to boost the efforts of the Union in undertaking peace operations, creative ideas, new forms of collaboration and enhanced coordination are required from the United Nations system". And, in Operative Paragraph 8 of Resolution A/59/L.50/Rev.1 of 21 December 2004 of the Secretary-General's Report, the General Assembly welcomes the decision of the Secretary-General to instruct relevant UN agencies and departments to look into new ways of collaborations with the African Union. The Task Force Meeting should reflect further on how best to assist the Secretary-General in this effort.

I thank you for your attention.