

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE FIRST NEPAD MULTI-STAKEHOLDER
DIALOGUE HELD IN SANDTON, SOUTH AFRICA ON 22-23 OCTOBER
2004**

Three years after the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) at the 37th and last Summit of the OAU in Lusaka, Zambia in July 2001, the first NEPAD Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue was held at the Sandton International Convention Centre in South Africa on 22-23 October 2004. The Dialogue was hosted by President T Mbeki of South Africa and was attended by President O Obasanjo of Nigeria (Chairperson of the African Union and the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee), President A Bouteflika of Algeria (Vice-Chair of the HSGIC) and President A Wade of Senegal (Vice Chair of the HSGIC).

Two hundred and fifty delegates attended the Dialogue, representing AU member states, African regional and sub-regional organisations, African stakeholder groups and international partners.

The Presidents interacted with the delegates both at the opening session on 22 October and during a Gala Dinner that same evening. In particular, the Presidents spoke about peace and security, human resource development, including health and education, the Digital Solidarity Fund and the APRM in the evening.

The purpose of the Dialogue was to provide a platform for an objective assessment of the progress achieved during the three years of NEPAD's existence, to examine the present challenges and to chart the way forward.

Various aspects of the NEPAD programme were discussed, including sessions on Peace and Security, Food Security and Agriculture, Infrastructure, Information and Communication Technology, Market Access and Intra-Africa Trade, Partnerships with International Organisations, Health and HIV and AIDS, Education and Science and Technology, the African Peer Review Mechanism, and the Private Sector (Mining, Manufacturing and Tourism).

The NEPAD stakeholders renewed their commitment to making NEPAD the tool for a fundamental economic and social transformation of the Continent aimed at ending the scourge of poverty and underdevelopment and strengthening the role of Africa in the global arena. They reiterated their endorsement of the comprehensive and integrated development approach underpinning NEPAD and reasserted the need for the creation of conducive conditions for development, increased investment in human development, agriculture and infrastructure, strengthening key economic sectors, mobilising resources and balancing relations with the industrialised world.

The nature of NEPAD and its added value as a catalysing, coordinating, mobilising, unblocking and energising agent were emphasised once again. It was reiterated that NEPAD is a vision for the continent, a framework and a programme within which others act, such as member states, the RECs, the continental institutions and regional partners.

The dialogue reflected on the breakthroughs and achievements of the last three years. In the spirit of a frank and open dialogue, it pointed to the areas where

implementation has been too slow and where there has been varied progress. Having reflected on where the process has come from, it examined what needs to be done as NEPAD moves forward. Persisting poverty, unemployment, low intra-African trade levels, the debt burden and low levels of ODA and FDI remain as challenges to be addressed. The dialogue concluded by stating that NEPAD cannot fail and that all stakeholders have no choice but to work together individually and collectively to make it succeed.

Clearly the foundations for the renewal of the Continent have been laid during the first three years and the time has come for accelerated concrete implementation of programmes, projects, strategies and policies by all stakeholders and implementing agencies. Overall the NEPAD process needs to change perceptions and ensure the efficient and effective management of available resources and capacity. The importance of institutional coordination at all levels and between all stakeholders emerged strongly, as did the need to prioritise properly.

The positive achievements in the development and implementation of NEPAD thus far, in the creation of conducive conditions for sustainable development and in carrying forward the agenda in priority sectors, were welcomed. These positive developments include the setting up of the implementation framework, including the AU organs, the NEPAD structures, and in the RECs, the operationalisation of the APRM, the resolution of various instances of conflict and instability in Africa, the development of key sectoral action plans and strategies, the identification of priority programmes and projects in various fields, the mobilisation of human, institutional and financial resources in support of implementation, and the mobilisation of the entire international community in support of the implementation of NEPAD.

However, it was acknowledged that the pace and scale of implementation is still not at the levels required, the progress is varied across the priority sectors, lack of human, institutional and financial capacity continues to impede implementation and levels of awareness, involvement and ownership across the full spectrum of African stakeholders still need to be increased, including women, the youth and the African diaspora.

While ODA levels have increased since 2000, consistent levels of positive economic growth are being recorded in the Continent, and NEPAD has succeeded in having agriculture and infrastructure prioritised again on the global and domestic agenda, resources for implementation still remain inadequate. There needs to be an increase in contributions to IDA14 and grant funding to fund regional integration projects. Coordination of support and policy coherence are important issues for the development partners to consider.

Looking ahead, the stakeholders appealed to the participating governments, the institutions charged with implementation and the development partners to stay the course and take all necessary actions to speed up implementation. In this regard, governments were urged to continue ensuring the creation of a sustainable conducive environment for development, poverty eradication, employment and growth, including in the areas of good governance, private sector development and the mobilisation of resources domestically and internationally. States have to take responsibility for implementing NEPAD objectives and priorities nationally.

At the regional level, the need to strengthen the implementation capacity of the RECs was stressed. RECs must be capacitated to assume the responsibility of the mandate to ensure delivery on NEPAD priorities and programmes. Stakeholders stressed the need to bolster the overall implementation capacity of NEPAD beyond the existing implementation units and monitoring schemes. It was stressed that all stakeholders had to take responsibility for implementation and to ensure that they made a concrete contribution to this end.

In support of implementation capacity, it was recommended that the NEPAD Secretariat set up an Implementation Support Group, the primary mission of which will be to assist the Secretariat and the Steering Committee to strengthen their oversight and monitoring of NEPAD and speed up its implementation. It was further recommended that the Support Group assist the Secretariat to draw up a precise, itemised road map, which will serve as a monitoring and evaluation tool for the HSGIC.

A call was made for the ADB as an African institution to refocus the work and operations of the entire organisation, as opposed to merely setting up a NEPAD unit, to support NEPAD implementation.

Furthermore, a call was made for the development finance institutions to create special mechanisms for funding regional integration projects, eg creating special envelopes for this in IDA and ADF.

It was noted that NEPAD had not given sufficient attention to the issues of women, the youth and the diaspora and that, therefore, the issues of these three constituencies needed to be prioritised in the way forward.

The stakeholders urged the development partners to continue their welcome support. It was pointed out, however, that this support needed to be dramatically scaled up and accelerated in line with existing commitments going back to the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey consensus, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the G8 Africa Action Plan. Issues of market access, increased ODA and FDI, and debt cancellation were emphasised. The need to materially and concretely realise political commitments in line with the NEPAD framework and priorities was emphasised. Support needs to be better coordinated and policy coherence ensured.

The NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee will hold its next meeting in Algiers, Algeria on 23 November 2004. The second meeting of the African Peer Review Mechanism Forum will be held back to back with the HSGIC meeting.