



## **BENDING THE ARC: THE BUSINESS OF ATTAINING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN AFRICA**

### **COMMUNIQUÉ**

*London, 4 July 2005*

#### **Africa on the Move**

Africa is a continent on the move. In 2004 eighteen African nations achieved growth rates of five per cent or more, while eight were listed amongst the top twenty fastest growing economies.

The African Union's flagship economic programme - The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) - has set the stage for action to revitalise the social and economic development of Africa by its leaders and peoples. There is already significant change underway. More African countries have democratically elected governments than at any time before, and there is a common determination among Africa's leadership to resolve long-standing conflicts and new emergencies. This determination is replicated at the grass roots, where an interest and appetite for more information and participation in NEPAD and the MDG programmes has been registered. There is an escalating demand from our people, which we must harness, take advantage of and respond to. In summary, a collective commitment to improve the status quo has emerged.

We welcome the efforts of the G8 and its focus on Africa and in particular look forward to progress on assessing delivery against the G8 Africa Action Plan agreed at Kananaskis in 2002, which will be reported in Gleneagles.

Africa's leaders are fully cognisant of the stark reality and immense challenges of poverty and underdevelopment. A third of the way to the target date of 2015, Africa is not on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals – the internationally agreed plan for combating poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against vulnerable and marginalised groups such as women, children, youth, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

Let us make 2005 the year in which, with the appropriate measures and requisite political will, the whole continent can be set on a course to sustainable development. For this to happen, equitable partnerships between like-minded nations of the North and South must be forged, as well as with important social partners and the business community, so that we harness all the appropriate human and material resources to make poverty history. Let us be in no doubt, without equitable and productive partnerships, the Goals will not be realised.

Our consultations focused on three broad themes for achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Business, Partnerships and Finance.

#### **Recalling**

The conference recalled the following contributors to this programme of work - The United Nations Millennium Project, the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, the Office of the Special Assistant for Africa, the United Nations Panel on International Support for NEPAD, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Global Compact, the Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank





### **All Hands to the Pump**

We assert the urgency of honouring the Millennium Declaration and lifting hundreds of millions of people out of extreme poverty.

We recognise that Africa will not achieve the Millennium Development Goals on current form. Civil society and all stakeholders must be engaged and enlisted in support of the Goals. We commit ourselves to stepping up our awareness raising activities and resources through partnerships with like-minded institutions, and engaging stakeholders to mobilise capacity and support for the attainment of the Goals and NEPAD, noting specifically:

### **Business**

- Report annually on contributions towards the Millennium Development Goals, through a framework to be established.
- Support the NEPAD MDGs awareness-raising campaign to mobilise civil society and governments.
- Implement health programmes including prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and its opportunistic infections for employees and their families.
- Institute good corporate governance and transparent accountability procedures, including efforts to combat corrupt practices in business and clear reporting.
- Commit to equal opportunity of employment, encouraging participation of women and under-represented ethnic groups.
- Develop and apply relevant expertise to build capacity amongst other partners (including government and civil society), and deliver services to achieve the MDGs, from technical skills (such as investment climate improvement, agriculture, ICT and information provision, clean/sustainable energy technology, education and healthcare) Learn from successful partnership such as the eradication of small pox, Roll Back Malaria, Africa Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Programme (ACHAP), vaccine initiatives including the International Aids Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), and GSB-sponsored collaboration initiatives, and proactively seek partnerships.
- Channel private sector support for NEPAD through the NEPAD Secretariat and the ABR / NEPAD Business Group.
- Pay taxes.
- Broadcast business success stories and promote investment to Africa.
- Collaborate with Regional Economic Communities on policies to increase competitiveness and market access.

### **Partnerships**

- Consult to develop and sustain equitable partnerships between government, civil society, international organisations and business for development.
- Extend and apply the African Peer Review Mechanism in support of good governance
- Support NEPAD as a key example of pan-African partnership, participating and accepting the recommendations of the African Peer Review Mechanism, supporting its Investment Climate Facility and engaging with business via the ABR-led NEPAD Business Group and its members.
- Support the principles of the UN Global Compact.
- Coordinate aid packages and priorities between donors (including coordination of the UN family of agencies) according to national development plans agreed by all stakeholders, so as to avoid 'fads' and conflicting donor programmes.
- Support the Regional Economic Communities for the provision of cross border infrastructure and to increase market size for goods and services.





In all these areas we recognise the importance of simultaneous innovation and investment in both physical and electronic infrastructure in Africa. Here, science, technology and innovation (STI), including information and communication technologies (ICT), will play a major role in scaling up the MDGs. We urge the G8 leaders not only to follow through on their plans of action for the Global Digital Divide (2000) and Science and Technology and Sustainable Development (2003) but to now fully integrate STI and ICT in all MDG based Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

### **Finance**

- Welcome the G8 Finance Ministers' recent decision to cancel the debt of fourteen African nations, and call for steps to be taken to wipe out the debts of all highly indebted African nations.
- Call on the G8 and the European Union to announce a timetable for abolishing all agricultural subsidies, so that African producers can gain fair access to world markets. Bold action is required before the World Trade Organisation talks in Hong Kong in December. Involve the private sector more fully in the development of the Africa position for the negotiations. Request more support for the African Union's security and peacekeeping operations.
- Endorse the proposal for the creation of a \$20billion fund to be located at the African Development Bank, to finance projects in the areas of infrastructure, health, education, water, sanitation and agriculture, within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). And call for support for the NEPAD Infrastructure Facilitation Group initiative as the catalyst to attract private investment into infrastructure projects.
- Assert the importance of establishing conducive investment climates to attract private capital flows, and promoting liquidity in African capital markets.
- Establish mechanisms to mobilise Diaspora investments as a means to build Africa's private equity industry and support Africans abroad to participate in the continent's development.

In all areas, the actions and support pledged here is designed to reinforce the actions that African leaders have initiated.

We welcome the international community's renewed focus on Africa and the MDG's and therefore ask for 2005 to be recognised as the launch year for an African decade.

We reaffirm our commitment to broker, support and implement equitable partnerships to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and call on the Commission of the African Union to continue to embrace this programme of consultations and sensitisation. We look forward to working with you on the consultations and formally reporting progress to you this time next year.

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