

**INTRODUCTION TO NEPAD: A New Vision and a New Challenge for Peace Building in Africa and the Role of State and Non-State Actors**  
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Africa faces grave challenges and the most urgent of these are the eradication of poverty and the fostering of socio-economic development, in particular through democracy and good governance. It is to the achievement of these twin objectives that the NePAD process is principally directed. Accordingly, we, participating heads of State and Government of the member states of the African Union have agreed to work together in policy and action in pursuit of the following objectives:

- Democracy and Good Political Governance
- Economic and Corporate Governance
- Socio-Economic Development
- African Peer Review Mechanism

*AFRICAN UNION Declaration on Democracy, Political Economic Corporate Governance, 8 July 2002*

NePAD is unique. It is an African initiative. It is designed by Africans, to be driven by Africans. It has developed as a result of a long history of plans and programs, such as the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980, the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and People's Rights of 1981 and the 1993 Cairo Declaration Establishing the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. NePAD incorporates a host of previous plans and programs with a specifically directed focus.

NePAD is spearheaded by a small group of African visionaries. These dedicated leaders are committed to free our continent from the malaise of underdevelopment, poverty and war. This commitment is founded on the realization that no single country in Africa can prosper while others are suffering and that the only viable way to achieve sustainable growth and development in any one country, is to engage Africa's common challenges as a collective. It is a commitment inspired by the fundamental philosophy of "*ubuntu-People are people because of other people*". War and instability, poverty and deprivation, pain and suffering, in any country in Africa, must affect us all as Africans. We Africans are now determined to take a common position in respect of peace and development on our continent.

In NePAD, for the very first time, we have a unified socio-economic development vision and policy framework. It is endorsed by all African leaders and has gained widespread support from global communities. This vision complements the political unity vision that has been successfully engendered on our Continent for many decades.

The African Union's Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance states specifically that:

*"Restoring stability, peace and security in the African continent ...are essential conditions for sustainable development, alongside democracy, good governance, human rights, social development, protection of the environment and sound economic management. Our efforts and initiatives will also be directed at seeking speedy peaceful resolutions to current conflicts and at building Africa's capacity to prevent, manage and resolve all conflicts on the continent"*

NePAD's first objective therefore, quite logically, is the attainment of peace, security and stability underpinned by the common cause that development is not possible without democracy, peace, respect for Human Rights and good governance.

NePAD's participating countries are committed:

- To meet basic standards of good governance and democratic behaviour to support each other;
- To recommend suitable tools how to assess that countries are meeting good governance standards;
- To identify weaknesses in structures and methods of correcting these;
- To support and build structures and efforts that protect the commitments to democracy, transparency, accountability, integrity, respect for human rights and the promotion of the rule of law.

The NePAD program has progressed through three different stages. The first stage was the development of a vision. This began in September 2000 with the appointment of a Steering Committee and the establishment of the NePAD Secretariat. This first stage ended with the approval of the *"Vision and Policy Framework Document"* by the OAU Summit in Lusaka, Zambia, in July 2001. NePAD thus became the official socio-economic development program of the OAU/African Union. It is important to note that NePAD is not an implementing agency. Implementation will be carried out by individual countries, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and continental institutions.

The Lusaka Summit established the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC), one of the key NePAD structures. At its first meeting this committee instructed the Secretariat to prepare a detailed implementation plan as phase 2. The implementation plan was completed in June 2002 and adopted by the African Union Summit in Durban in July 2002, under the title, *"NePAD Initial Action Plan"*, drawing to a close phase two.

It is very important to note that during this phase the process, as participative as possible, was followed. These included:

- Consulting leading African knowledge organizations such as the African Development Bank (ADB) and Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) as lead agencies;
- Organizing numerous workshops and conferences, both at regional and continental level, many involving civil society;
- Working closely with the REC's, especially in terms of identifying priority projects arising out of their regional indicative strategic development programs;
- Trapping expertise and information of the African Union and its structures;
- Using the expertise of identified African experts;
- Working with groups of African Ministries, in specialized areas;
- Involving representatives of all seventeen states on the Implementation Committee;
- Using the expertise and information of global knowledge institutions like the World Bank, IMF, UN Agencies, the EU Commission, etc.;
- Accessing and relying on reports and recommendations generated by a number of consultative processes, for example the 2000 Dakar Education Conference, the 2001 Abuja Health Conference, and the WHO report in Macro-Economics and Health; and
- Having full regard to the work already done, studies completed, and, projects and programs already on the table, developed by way of a process of consultation among stakeholders for fast track implementation by NePAD.

It is also important to note that the NePAD priorities and goals are consistent with the Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000.

NePAD is now in the third and final stage – that is, implementation. Since the adoption of the NePAD Initial Action Plan in 2002, among its primary focus is Peace and Security.

The NePAD Secretariat and the African Union Commission are working closely together on issues of peace and security. An African Union/NePAD Peace and Security Agenda outlining Peace and Security priorities to be pushed, has been drawn.

The aims include:

- A. Promotion of long-term conditions for development and security.
- B. Building the capacity of African bodies to pick up early signs of conflict, and to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and
- C. Adopting NePAD's core values in all structures through strong leadership.

A joint African Union/NePAD team, together with the G8 Countries and the United Nations, have developed a plan for strengthening the capacity for Africa to undertake peace support operations. At the Evian Summit, the G 8 endorsed its support for this plan.

The next stage will be to work on detailed action programs for joint implementation. NePAD's leaders are already exploring plans for strengthening of existing capacity in:

- Preventing, managing and resolving conflicts
- Making, keeping and enforcing peace
- Reconciling, rehabilitating and rebuilding after conflict and
- Stopping the illegal growth of small arms, light weapons and landmines.

The African Union and NePAD leaders have intensified efforts at resolving major conflicts protracted over many years in Africa. Substantial progress has been made in Burundi and the DRC while other conflicts are being resolved such as in Cote d'Ivoire. It is very important to note that NePAD is an African Union initiative and aims to make use of African Union structures. Because there has been some confusion in the past, I would like to again stress that NePAD is not an implementing agency.

In respect of achieving NePAD's goals of peace and security, the African Union structures, such as its Peace and Security Council, will have jurisdiction. One of the aims of this structure is to establish an African Standby Force, which would be crucial to all peace initiatives on the continent. It will be responsible to deploy peace support missions and for all interventions pursuant to provisions in the African Union Constitutive Act. Presently, individual countries are providing this function, such as Nigeria in Liberia. South Africa is also assisting in Liberia, although its capacity is already stretched to the limit in Central Africa. President Mbeki, as the previous Chairperson of the African Union had mediated in a number of crises, for example in Burundi and the DRC, and has achieved substantial progress. Efforts are also continuing in other conflict regions, such as the Cote d'Ivoire.

Allow me now to briefly discuss the African Peer Review Mechanism – APRM.

During the Durban Summit of the African Union, President Obasanjo of Nigeria, as Chairperson of the NePAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee, introduced the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) as:

*“..an instrument that will be voluntarily acceded to by member states of the African Union for the purpose of self-monitoring, and which aims to foster the adoption of*

*policies, standards and practices that will lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated regional integration in the continent.”*

The APRM has already been launched. The determination of criteria, standards and indicators has been completed and the modalities of operationalising the process have been finalized. The Head of States and Government Implementation Committee gave its final approval to the APRM documents on 9 March 2003. The aim of the APRM is to ensure that the policies and practices of participating states conform to the agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards, contained in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. The APRM is the mutually agreed instrument for self-monitoring by the participating member governments. Its primary purpose is to monitor and assess progress made by African countries to share experiences that can encourage good governances and democratic practices. This process is open to all member states of the African Union. Countries have to notify the Chairperson of the NePAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee. This entails the undertaking to submit periodic reviews, and to facilitate such reviews. The Chairperson of the Head of States and Government implementation Committee has written to all African union member states requesting them to join the APRM. The initial six persons to serve on the APRM Independent Panel of Eminent Persons, which will be responsible for quality assurance of the process, were announced on 28 May 2003. They are: Prof. Adebayo Adedeji of Nigeria, Prof. Kiplagat of Kenya, Dr. Graça Machel of Mozambique, Ms. Dorothy Nijeuma of Cameroon, Ms. Marie-Angelique Savant of Senegal and Dr. Christels of South Africa. Now the women in this audience will be happy to note the achievement of parity here because three out of the six persons are women. The following countries have already signed the MOU (Memorandum Of Understanding) on the APRM: Algeria, The Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda. The APRM review process is ready to begin within the next three months or so.

This conference is on peace-building in Africa, I have very briefly dealt with this aspect in respect to NePAD as I was mandated and I would now like to continue by asserting that NePAD is far beyond the drawing board phase. The wheels have begun to move and programs are already being implemented. As I caution again, it is important to take note that the implementation of programs of NePAD are not inflexible. Consultation with civil society through the outreach strategy is continuing. However, the vision of NePAD is irrevocable. We Africans are now determent that progress for Africa and African countries is on course. We are especially encouraged by the tremendous support that NePAD has received and is receiving from international communities including the Netherlands. And here I must stress that the Netherlands is wholeheartedly supporting the NePAD vision. We believe that working together in partnerships, the tide of Africa can surely turn towards betterment. This certainly is in the interest of all. Because peace and stability and prosperity in Africa must contribute towards global peace and security!