

# NEPAD AND PERSPECTIVES FOR A PEACEFUL FUTURE IN AFRICA:

## *A donor's view*

*Jan Ruysenaars*

*“Whatever its flaws, the NePAD is a long overdue collective re-commitment of African leaders to their responsibility of redressing Africa's problems. This is to be commended. It is about time African leaders gave serious thought to transforming the continent. But NePAD will make a difference when it is presented to Africans for debate and discussion”.*

**Bertha Amisi** Nairobi Peace Initiative Africa

*“There are a series of profoundly absurd and badly targeted approaches in NePAD. Here is an example: The so-called marginalization of Africa is one of the absurdities put forward by NePAD. The exact opposite is the case as can be seen by the position occupied by the continent in the international capitalist economy. NePAD accepts the views of those agents of globalization such as the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organization (WTO), who point to Africa's internal problems and inhospitable political trade flows. However, Africa's fundamental problem is not its exclusion but its longstanding inclusion, subordination and exploitation by a profoundly asymmetric international economy that has forcibly integrated it into the international trade and financial system”.*

**Viriato Tamele**, from Mozambique

In my view, the worst and most invalid way is to have a non-historic and isolated approach: one that takes “Africa”, one that takes “NePAD”, and there you just start talking about it. The Robert Kaplan approach is still worse: “Increasing anarchy in failed states” or the “Anarchistic Pandemonium”: as if external and historical factors did not exist. One thing becomes obvious in these debates: NePAD is easily drawn into politicized and ideological debate, based upon flawed selection and interpretation of facts and events in history. We will have to manage that properly today and tomorrow.

Is NEPAD an expression of a New African Renaissance with African Responsibility, African Ownership and African Unified Efforts to make things happen for the better? Is it another way of capitalistic exploitation and alienation of Africa's resources in a new phase of economic globalisation? Can it be both at the same time? What can donors (external forces) do to help Africans towards a peaceful and prosperous future? How can we manage together the road to your future, with full respect of African ownership and self reliance?

Thoughts which I will deal with:

- Africa in a globalising world: some main characteristics and events in the past 50 years.
- The nature of violence and instability in Africa
- Challenges for NEPAD, African development and donors
- Northern countries as donors of African development

## AN UNFAIR START FOR THE AFRICANS (A CLICHÉ)

Whether we like it or not, it must be reminded that African countries became independent burdened with what we may call a “**Colonial Heritage**”. To summarise shortly, this entails:

- Inadequate and scarce personnel to run the state and the society.
- Inadequate physical infrastructures exclusively made for exploitation, export and control.
- Inadequate national boundaries, cutting through land and territory previously shared by peoples and nations, and confining them inside the new country.
- Inadequate ideas and imposition of the “nation state” concept, and of the “democracy” concept.
- Continued links with and dependencies of the colonial masters: sometimes called neo-colonialism.
- Unsustainable development models.
- Unresolved issues around land and territory.

Together with this, one has to mention the raging **Cold War and its consequences for Africa**: Russia, Cuba, China and the USA, none of them ex-colonial powers, competing for geopolitical and economic influence in Africa, having their secret services poking in the continent, plotting their schemes. This was complicated by similar games of the French, the Belgians, the British, to mention just a few.

**National independencies** came in the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s (and for the African population in South Africa only in the 1990s). Some countries achieved independence by peaceful negotiation, others by wars of independence. Independence and the struggle for it created expectations and aspirations among the populations: “the future will be better for us than the past”. These promises were also increasingly made by Western consumer-directed advertisements in the media, and to say it honestly, by development organisations.

Normally such expectations can be fostered and maintained for 5 to 7 years. If they are not realised by then, disappointment and frustration enters into society and politics.

Looking at **Africa in the context of a globalising world since the 1950s**, I wish to refer to some old studies and reports. In the present era of privatisation, free market and liberalisation it is surely not politically correct to mention them, but I cannot deal with African development without the observations of these scholars.

1. **Pierre Jalee**: «Le Pillage du Tiers Monde», (Edition FM/Petite Collection Maspero, Librairie François Maspero, Paris, 1965). He showed convincingly from official statistics how net flows of production, money, value and services massively were drawn out of Africa (and other underdeveloped continents) enriching companies, banks, insurance companies and civilians in the Northern and Western wealthy countries. The rich countries need the so-called poor countries since they have the non-replaceable raw materials and oil the capitalistic system needs in order to grow and develop. To be able to continue to do so, - he elaborated -, international oligarchies will strengthen their grip:

- ✓ On southern governments and on international institutions;
- ✓ On the markets for money, goods and services;

- ✓ On resources of oil, extractives, tropical wood and other valuable raw materials.
  - ✓ On local elites
2. **Walter Rodney**: “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa” (1972) He applied the theories of Celso Furtado and Andre Gunther Frank on Africa: foreign investments in Africa have helped to undermine African economies. They have provided cheap raw materials, labour, slaves to contribute to extraction and export of enormous profits, and they will continue to do so. The periphery (Africa) feeds the centre (Europe).
  3. **Jean Ziegler** and his profound analysis of the situation in the African Great Lakes Region of the 1950s and 1960s: the impact of colonialism on ethnic tensions and conflicts and on unresolved or even acerbated land and border issues.
  4. **Barbara Kingsolver**, the Poisonwood Bible, a novel based on historical documentation. (Neto, Lumumba, mentioned and used the **Frank Church Report**: U.S. Congress, *Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities*, United States Senate, Congressional Record, 1976 and the **Weissman Report**: Weissman, Stephen R., “The CIA Covered Action in Zaire and Angola,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Summer 1979). She confirmed twenty years later with evidence the assumptions and suspicions of Ziegler.
  5. **Ruth First**: “The Barrel of the Gun” (1976), she described a more internal mechanism: the individual aspiration for power and social climbing. The scarcity of possibilities for ambitious people forces them into either the military or politics, and the combination of both is the best: by military means you grasp power. The neo-colonialist powers are good in exploiting the principle of ‘the winner takes it all’ by corrupting leadership, by training and arming the military, and by helping to prepare ground for overthrowing legitimate governments. The military-industrial complex sees promising markets in Africa and mixes in the game. (Like building missiles in Congo)

Throughout Africa leaders with personal integrity and dedication to justice and participative democracy for their populations have seen harsh times, and often were superseded by less respectable persons. These changes were manipulated and supported by the USA, the Russians, the Libyans, the Israeli, the Belgians, the French, the British, the international business corporations, and other external interest groups. (Nice quiz questions: Who made Mobutu? Who made Idi Amin? Who killed Patrick Lumumba? Where was J. Kiariuki’s dead body found and why did he die?) Local leaders as well developed a practice of disappearances and killing of assumed opponents.

## AFRICA IN OUR DAYS

In a very recent OED Evaluation Report of the World Bank we find the following quote: “*Investment in mine industry and exploitation of extractives in poor countries generally do not lead towards an increase of economic growth of these countries. More often there is decline of such growth, and in too many cases we saw destabilisation of society and even violent armed conflicts*”. The UN Experts Panel on the Pillage of Extractives in the Democratic Republic of the Congo concluded that there exist links between illicit and uncontrolled exploitation of extractives, the increase of availability of weapons in the region, and continued instability. Similar analyses can be made of Angola, (and of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Chad,

Central African Republic, and Sudan). There are more small weapons than ever in Africa (International Arms Report 2003, just from the press).

If we carefully analyse the financial and economic files of the magazine The Economist, we still see a continued net outflow of value and money from Africa, just like Jalée found 40 years ago and predicted for the future. Not much has changed in this respect, and that is worrying me. The Africans continue to work and suffer for us, the consumers and pensioners of the North.

If we read and study the Human Development Reports of the last decade, we find continuously African countries in the bottom part. The impoverishment of Africa in many respects is alarming. Despite the wealth of African culture, and of ways of relating in Africa, and even despite the massive mineral wealth, in general the situation for the common African has not significantly improved.

In terms of human rights and democracy reports of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch tell us a lot about irresponsibility and on respecting leadership in too many countries in Africa.

We have seen recently major droughts leading to hunger in Southern Africa and in the broader Horn of Africa.

We see the scourge of HIV/Aids, and how this impacts on society, on production, on gender relations and on future generations.

We see a tremendous brain drain from Africa, with doctors, engineers, teachers, and nurses working and living in Europe and Canada and the USA, to be replaced in Africa by often poorly trained and ill-adapted white volunteers and experts.

We see the decline in social services throughout Africa; health care, education, safe water supply, income, food security.

African debts are still paramount, and present IMF and World Bank conditions are not helpful enough in this respect. National income is disappearing in debt servicing.

African governments as well could do much better than spend 60% of the national budget for their armies, and less than 5 cents per peasant for agricultural development and soil conservation.

N.B. We cannot be blind for the fact that some African countries did well in many of these respects. Countries like Botswana and Mali may claim some moral leadership in this respect.

## **AN INTERMEZZO: WE ALL ARE LOCKED INTO THE SAME PUZZLE, AND WE HAVE THE DUTY TO SOLVE IT**

It has the following pieces, which are all well documented in UN papers and academic studies of quality:

1. There is a positive link between prosperity and peace (or lack of violence). The richer countries are, the less they suffer from domestic armed violence.
2. There is a positive link between prosperity and democracy. The richer countries are, the more conditions exist for establishing a democratic society.
3. There is a positive link between prosperity and good governance (parallel to 2.)

4. There are positive links between investment in extractives industries in poor countries, violence, violation of human rights, and bad governance.
5. There are positive links between poverty, extractives, and corruption.
6. There are positive links between extractives, environmental pollution, and poverty.

## **CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE OF AFRICA**

NePAD and donors should work together to meet at least the following twelve challenges:

1. Control on legal and illegal investments and exploitations of oil, diamonds, gold, timber, coltane, etceteras. Consequent implementation and monitoring of the Kimberley process, support to the Publish What You Pay campaign, develop “Enterprising for Peace” conditions, policies, regulations and instruments for corporate enterprise. Stop corruption; stop the leaking of massive wealth to banks in Switzerland or the Bahamas, and return stolen wealth to the legitimate governments of countries.
2. Strictly control the flows of weapons and ammunition, and work towards disarmament and destruction of arms (in line with the Mali example.) No export of weapons from donor countries to countries in conflict and to irresponsible governments. Peace, stability and security are the very first conditions for future development.
3. Stop the net outflow of value and money from Africa by paying a proper price for a proper product, by giving Africans ownership over African mineral and natural wealth, by promotion of pro poor investments, by stopping the subsidy on Northern products exported to Africa (or dumped there) and by stopping unfair subsidies to Northern farmers and giving free market access to African agricultural produce like cotton, sugar, coffee, cashew, fish, and other products. Stop emptying the African fishing grounds by Western industrial vessels without proper negotiations and compensation.
4. Be serious with bringing human rights offenders, humanitarian rights offenders and war criminals (including rapists) to justice. Stop impunity and amnesty at all levels. Prosecute and punish corrupted leaders. Promote respect for humanitarian values and human rights. Develop rights based national development models.
5. Develop models for responsible African leadership and participative African democracy. Work on a new African political culture. Guarantee freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of press. Respect gender equity, full participation of women, education for girls, and minority rights. Apply all of this to the further development of NePAD.
6. Droughts and crop failures are not caused by lack of water alone. Normally Africans could and can cope with that. But not if it comes together with abuse of power, violation of peoples’ rights, massive HIV/Aids and violent conflicts. Donors and Africans together should look into this entire complex if they want to prevent and solve food crises and promote food security.
7. Discuss and develop together what “Good Governance and Responsible Leadership” means in the African Context. Offer to help train civil servants, policy makers, bankers, army and police leaders, NGO leadership etceteras. This asks for a new kind of technical assistance.

8. Have an effective war against the further spread and death of HIV/AIDS. Work towards accessibility of effective and payable drugs. Work towards prevention in all possible ways.
9. Develop incentives for African academics and other trained staff to return to or to stay in the continent, by making working for them remunerable and attractive. Be more critical on using foreign experts or volunteers as a tool for development aid.
10. Once again work with pro-poor stimulating and distributive development models per country. Develop together proper PRSPs (Poverty reduction Strategy Plans) and use them fully. Develop regional markets.
11. Release of all international debts and work together on an overall Africa-oriented kind of Marshall Plan or Stability Fund for Africa. Stop paying debt servicing.
12. Review national budgets in terms of PRSP and pro-poor policies. Reduce significantly the spending on military and arms

Overall, these things cannot be done without the full participation and co-ownership of the African populations and their legitimate representatives in the NePAD developments. They cannot be done without a system of democratic checks and balances, and without a combined bottom-up and top-down flow of ideas, experiences, and expectations. “NePAD needs the masses and the media”. If NePAD really wishes to make a change and to break the trend and vicious circle it is in, then African Governments, African Civil Society, and Donors of African Development have tremendous responsibilities.

## **HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO SELF RELIANCE AND AFRICAN OWNERSHIP?**

For full self reliance and African ownership the best would be not to have any donor-receiver relationship at all, and not to have development aid and finance flows from the industrialised world to Africa, nor even investment money. People like Jash Tandon seem to advocate such an African financial autarky. My opinion is that such an approach would not work: since we are all bound to live in this complex of globalisation and being globalised, we have to resolve this together. This will always involve financial relationships.

The Dutch Government is developing a New Africa Policy in response to the historically grown situation of Africa, and in response to the emergence of NePAD as an African Phoenix. The Government is also trying to convince other donors, - both likeminded and non likeminded - , to move into the same directions. They do this in the EU, in the OECD and in other relevant circuits. Interestingly enough they consult the Dutch civil society and development oriented NGOs in this development process, and we are glad to see that they seriously listen to us on main points.

The Novib-Oxfam coalition and others are in a funding, campaigning and advocacy relationship with many hundreds of African NGOs. We are also very active with lobbying on their behalf on the Dutch Government, Dutch parliament, the EU, the IMF and World Bank, the WTO, the ILO and other institutions as well as on corporate business. As we campaign among the Dutch and international public (e.g. “Make Trade Fair”, towards a new EU agriculture policy, etc.) Why? To change their policy and focus it in the direction that I summarised under the twelve challenges or points of relevance I just presented, to force and help them with becoming more coherent and consistent in their policies.

NGOs like Oxfam can be more independent and more radical in their position. Governments have to fully respect national sovereignty, legitimacy of leadership, diplomatic ground rules, and that kind of things. Still they can be influenced and made allies in a joint strategy with the NGO community. At least the Dutch and Scandinavian and at times the British can. So they deserve a leading position in dealing with NEPAD and African development, and we will support them critically but constructively with that.

Both the Dutch Government and Novib-Oxfam are sincerely struggling with the nature and the contents of their partner relationships with Southern partners, and with the issue of conditionality. The Governments' partners are Southern Governments; ours are Southern NGOs, who often have a complex relationship with their governments. We are dealing with taxpayers' money and money given by voluntary contributors. That creates obligations. We must be accountable and transparent to our sponsors: show them that we are successful, and efficient, and reliable. We must make visible and acceptable what happens with their money entrusted to us. We must make it possible to believe for them that the money is used according to the initial intentions. If we look at our list of 12 priorities of improved policy under NePAD, and we consider the big responsibilities to indeed make a change together, then we must agree that a balance between full self-reliance and ownership on one side, and donor responsibility at the other side, cannot be handled naïvely. As long as the world is not yet ideal, we will need to have contractual relationships with conditions for performance, behaviour and outcomes, and to negotiate them as equal partners as far as such is possible. Then we can be friends, even very critical friends at times. For Governments it always will be wise to have some carrots and some sticks to help their contractual friends to behave according to agreement.