



## SUMMARY OF CAFOD'S E-CONSULTATION ON NEPAD

- NEPAD's process and prospects
- Civil Society and the African state
- Conditionality
- Overcoming corruption
- Accountability and governance
- Aid (selectivity; donor role)
- NEPAD economics and poverty reduction
- International security
- HIV/AIDS
- A last word

### **NEPAD's process and prospects**

All participants welcomed NEPAD as a "well intentioned" African initiative. But all saw it as having been weakened at the outset by African governments' exclusion of inputs from African civil society. Professor Akongo Oyudi referred to it as a "heads-of-state project".

Chanda Fikansa had little confidence that a fundamentally elitist policy design process would produce a durable and alternative African development path.

"I have mixed feelings about its future and contribution to real African development. The way things are now with NEPAD, it is purely a political forum where the African politician and politicians from the north (or west) will meet and decide what Africa needs in terms of aid. ... I doubt... our African political leaders are going to successfully represent the wishes of the African people in NEPAD."

However, most contributors were optimistic over the possibilities of an African centred vision of development. But it was an optimism tempered with concerns over the lack of civil society inputs in NEPAD. The South African ecumenical paper *Blurring the Vision* says, "NEPAD puts Africa's development firmly on the global agenda and generates a new confidence in Africa that corrects perceptions of Africa as a doomed continent." But it warns, "if NEPAD does not focus on Africa's people first, it can result in an increasingly divided Africa at the continental and national levels."

Most contributors saw some tension between opposing objectives at the heart of the NEPAD framework. On the one hand, NEPAD attempts to set out development priorities that are authentically African, but on the other, it is a document aimed at appealing to external audiences to increase inward financial flows for Africa's development. Most contributors felt NEPAD fails either to satisfy or reconcile these opposing objectives.

Amade Suca from UNAC in Mozambique suggests the difficulty arises when a pan-African vision of development is set against a series of separate regional or bilateral arrangements with different sets of donors. Getahun Tafesse from Ethiopia focused on this tension when he noted NEPAD's failure to reconcile its preferred policy choices with the specificities of countries' PRSPs.

Overall Tafesse sounded a note of optimism where NEPAD introduces a new development consensus based on the recognition of the importance of participation and ownership in

development planning. "One, in fact, could be tempted to call NEPAD an African regional PRSP". However, he pointed out that the document is mainly focused on economic growth objectives. "Although NEPAD comprises important poverty reduction objectives, it is not a particularly poverty reduction focused strategy. NEPAD does not and should not replace... other initiatives such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)."

Barbara Kalima of Afrodad in Zimbabwe thought particular emphasis should be given to NEPAD's call for partnership. She believes it's only within a framework of partnership that Africa can challenge "the power imbalances that are currently predominant in the global governance system."

While many expressed doubts, no contributor suggested boycotting engagement with NEPAD. Neville Gabriel from South Africa noted the lack of seriousness amongst "our African governments". He characterised NEPAD governments' current engagement with civil society as a marketing and communications driven strategy. Publicity and selling the NEPAD product come at the expense of a more meaningful participation and consultation. But Neville still sees NEPAD as an opportunity. "On the whole, I think we should be taking a nuanced approach to NEPAD that finds positive entry points for engagement with our own African governments and begins to widen the scope of debate... in key areas such as debt cancellation, privatisation, spending on social programmes aimed at poverty eradication etc".

Angela Orellana Schwalm also thinks NGOs need to be concerned with the marketing of NEPAD. But Angela suggests taking a closer look at some of the motives behind donor countries' engagement with the NEPAD project. "I suspect they want to assist with Africa's development with an eye to extracting more resources, by setting out conditions to aid, etc. while disguising it as caring and sharing. They need to be honest about the reasons for their participation."

Angela argued that national self-interest should not be the only reason for donor engagement. Other considerations include:

"Global security - instability due to marginalisation and the possibility of conflict, land pressures due to migration, etc.

- UN Development Goals to reduce poverty by half to which we have committed - humanitarian, help [for Africa] to build its own economy and pay less down the road in aid
- Exploitation and appropriation of resources by the developed world has contributed to a great degree of degradation in Africa; we have a moral obligation to help..."

Overall, most contributors were sceptical of the motivation behind the original conception of NEPAD.

"Whereas, the NEPAD exhorts Africans to be architects of their own sustained fulfilment, there is no acknowledgement of the many African led and owned initiatives... These are truly the building blocks for the regeneration of Africa by Africans. The NEPAD's appeal to external partners is louder than its exhortation to Africans. One is left wondering for whom really is this document? How really will it make a difference? It could begin by taking stock of what we have achieved on our own, what we have failed to do and take responsibility for this as leaders and as citizens." (Bertha Amisi - Nairobi Peace Initiative Africa)

### **Civil Society and the African state**

Opa: "We in CSOs see our role as being to strengthen the African state and not to weaken it." Most contributors called for more people-centred policies in NEPAD. Bernard Outah from the Undugu Society of Kenya wrote, "the whole idea of Nepad needs to be rooted in the people on the ground through a systematic debate among various stakeholders including civil society, leading to a national consensus on the issues at stake. It will then be easy to take NEPAD a step further to regional and sub-regional integration. There are lots of problems in Africa today, but the people in Africa themselves, must have confidence and invest locally."

Barbara Kalima from Afrodad in Zimbabwe cautions us on the prospects for NEPAD's

commitment to democracy and good governance when it has been devised without inputs from a broader group of stakeholders. As a result NEPAD "still remains an 'alien' document to many Africans." She notes, "from the outset NEPAD states that 'African leaders will be implementing NEPAD on behalf of the people and not with the people. This is a significant nuance that will be a deciding factor in terms of how Africans generally participate within the NEPAD."

### **Conditionality**

The conditions donors place on aid or debt relief has been the subject of vociferous NGO criticism. The consultation was an opportunity to canvass views on more desirable frameworks for donor aid or debt relief.

Most contributors to the e-consultation advocated a donor-recipient country relationship that was balanced on agreed process or enabling conditions that would have civil society setting the agenda, or, as one participant put it - setting "conditionality from below". These "process conditions" include transparency, participation of the poor in decision-making and accountable government.

For a genuinely people-centred NEPAD to come about, Samuel Zan from Ghana called for grassroots discussions and consultations. But for this to happen, there has to be an enabling environment in which fundamental political freedoms and human rights are respected. So, at the heart of any agenda for NEPAD and the defining condition for all donor and recipient country relations, must be human rights. "NEPAD should make Human Rights a constitutive part of Africa's development!"

"At the very best, African leaders have paid lip service to human rights. NEPAD should help change the perceptions of most Africa leaders that Human Rights only comes after 'development'. No wonder that some African leaders have often criticised human rights activists as espousing 'Western values'... Human rights deserve more prominence and visibility..."

Chanda Fikansa suggests that rather than detailed substantive policy conditionalities, donors should insist on process conditionalities, "I encourage conditions attached to aid from donors that will foster broad representation, transparency and accountability."

Sr Denise Lynch from Arusha in Tanzania agreed that when "money is given to a recipient country the donor has a role to see that it is used for the intended purpose. This in effect means that the donor country will seek transparency and accountability from the recipients and, at the same time, give support and encouragement to the developing countries to cultivate a culture of transparency and accountability, bearing in mind good governance and respect for human rights."

While this was a common thread amongst contributors, Opa Kapijimpanga from Afrodad based in Zimbabwe suggested the emphasis should move away from conditionalities on to a more equitable framework of partnerships. "NEPAD would like to see a change in the underlying principle of the relationship: to entrench the principle of mutual partnership which respects African processes."

The conditionality framework should be dispensed with in favour of a framework of reciprocal obligations. "Donors must stop dictating what they think African countries must do. Conditionalities must stop". Instead, donors should mobilise development assistance in support of "national priorities." And where "these national systems and processes are weak, their capacity must be enhanced and assistance channeled through national budgets." Ultimately, there is a responsibility on donors to live up to the rhetoric they have espoused for the last 20 years by "harmonising aid policies and practices to reduce the burden of aid management."

### **Overcoming Corruption**

A major preoccupation for most contributors was the issue of corruption. But many had in mind the corruption arising from donor policies and inherent in the overall donor-recipient

country relationship.

Fr Albert B Byaruchanga called for greater monitoring of donors (officials and NGOs) by grassroots institutions. Fr Albert suggested that donor - recipient country relations cultivated a new breed of "brief case donors" instead of those with a genuine grassroots orientation.

Chanda Fikansa says, "Corruption is another threat to African development. NEPAD needs to state explicitly its stance on corruption. I feel they need to adopt a zero tolerance on corruption and out line measure to ensure that corruption is stamped out."

For Opa, corruption is inherent in the donor - recipient status quo: "the current aid regime... fuels clientelism, patrimony does exist because it benefits the north and some Africans. This relationship will need to be changed on both sides to make development aid more developmental; it should have an impact on development. Everybody is aware of the present system of patronage and rent-seeking activities. This has to change both from the African side and the Northern side."

For Opa the possibility of change can only come about through real partnership - based on a mutuality of obligations. "NEPAD would like to see a change in the underlying principle of the relationship: to entrench the principle of mutual partnership which respects African processes."

Donors and African governments are missing the real challenge: "the current relationship contributes to underdevelopment and there are two choices: either to lessen dependency (as has been said all the time since the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) the Cairo Agenda (1995) and now in...NEPAD... NEPAD takes the route of transforming the relationship. The relationship needs to be transformed into one that does not contribute to African underdevelopment but enables Africa to become a respected partner."

### **Accountability and Governance**

Yao Graham from Ghana sent in the Declaration on Africa's Development Challenges. It notes Africa's "uneven progress of democratisation and in particular of the expansion of space for citizen expression and participation." It called for a reconstitution of the state along developmental lines, in particular states emphasising equity, inclusion, human rights and overseeing a more "balanced" allocation and distribution of resources. "A state that is democratic and which integrates people's control over decision making at all levels in the management, equitable use and distribution of social resources".

Amade Suca from UNAC in Mozambique took a different view. He questioned the emphasis on democracy (at least western democracy) as a precondition for development. "NEPAD only talks about democracy as one of the preconditions for African development. Were European countries democratic when they were developing?"

For Tee Ngugi from Namibia, the cornerstone for the renewal of accountability in African politics is not just about asserting human rights on paper, but crucially in popular action. "Calling for democracy in these documents and failing to support human rights organisations and democratic activists in the individual African countries is a prodigious contradiction. So, if these initiatives aspire to anything beyond good well-funded conferences, they should turn themselves into vehicles for mobilising the African people and the international community against continuation of despotism on the continent. But, of course, they won't."

One contributor, who wished to remain anonymous, thought the fundamental precondition of development lies in governance. She said, "governance is a crucial plank of NEPAD. I think the issue of government capacity (or lack of it) is of great importance in African countries, especially at the decentralised local level. This capacity needs to be enhanced to enable pro-poor programmes to be developed and delivered in democratic and accountable ways. Poverty is worst in Africa where states have failed altogether - Somalia, Congo Sierra Leone. I think good governance should start at the lowest possible level and build good practice from there. Civil Society organisations have an important role to play in this process of building accountable and functioning local government by demanding that resources and training are

available to build the capacity of these structures. Partnership (when appropriate) between local government and CSO could provide solutions to problems at a local level."

Perhaps hinting of difficulties to come over the development of NEPAD's standards of governance and peer review, the anonymous contributor hints, "The problem with the NEPAD paradigm is how to help rebuild these states in a way that is not simply an outside imposition." But "without a functioning state there can be little hope of redistribution of wealth and policies which bring about personal, communal or economic security."

For the Association for the Defence of the rights of Women and Children in Rwanda, the key focus for the international community should be:

"encouraging democratic, free and transparent elections in all countries;

- support for initiatives concerned with the defence of human rights;
- encouraging popular education on democracy and human rights in relation to the needs of the South;
- respect for, and promotion of, the fundamental principle of the indivisibility of the rights of the individual."

#### **Aid (Selectivity; donor role)**

Contributors' comments on donor selectivity (the re-allocation of existing aid resources among recipients) were all deeply unimpressed by donor approaches. Innocent Nkata from Zimbabwe suggested that "this selective approach, if it does indeed succeed, will achieve nothing more than creating pockets of wealth while the majority of Africa's people continue to languish in poverty."

Diakonia Council of Churches in South Africa called for some selectivity but based on transparent "solid criteria negotiated with local civil society".

#### **NEPAD Economics and Poverty Reduction**

Overall the e-consultation had fewer than expected contributions on economic policy. For most participants there was one clear message. NEPAD is underselling Africa.

Most believe that NEPAD's emphasis on an externally oriented economic growth model is misguided and ignores the potential benefits of domestic resource mobilisation and stemming capital flight. Devaluing the continent's assets critically weakens NEPAD's development strategy. From a starting point that diminishes Africa's domestic capabilities, contributors felt NEPAD inevitably pins Africa's development prospects on an externally driven strategy - inward investment and export driven growth.

Getahun Tafesse from Ethiopia argued that, this strategic positioning of Africa vis-à-vis the global economy creates a deep flaw in NEPAD. "Africa's resources should not be presented as bargaining chips. Nor should they be used to justify but rather to assert Africa's indispensable position in the world." He goes on to suggest that Africa should drop demands for compensation and instead "design mechanisms for charging the global community for the benefits that accrue to it from its assets."

Moreover, Tafesse goes on to doubt the fundamental assumptions behind the growth strategy. "NEPAD's emphasis seems to lie ... only on the rate of growth and its sustainability without due consideration about the pattern of this growth" - that is, an absence of a pro-poor focus. He believes that the paper contains little acknowledgement of some more recent thinking on the relationship between growth and poverty reduction. "The meaning of development, as it is now understood, transcends economic growth and means the development of people. Measures of development have similarly undergone changes from focusing on GDP growth and per capita income to indices such as human development index, poverty measures, democratisation and good governance indicators."

For Amade Suca from UNAC in Mozambique the emphasis should be less on economic reform programmes and more on identifying land as the focal point of development

strategies. He called for reforms whereby land is changed from being a "dormant asset exploited only by foreigners". But Amade raised the issue of where the necessary capital was going to come from for investment in Africa's productive potential. He concluded that a more activist and interventionist state is necessary.

In fact all participants in this section were clear that Africa faces a gaping deficit of investment in communications, agricultural, transport, health, education and marketing infrastructures. But rather than shape economic policies around attracting private sector capital, most contributors felt that NEPAD needed to say more on capturing Africa's domestic resources for investment. Two primary sources of asset leakage were identified - private sector profit and savings leaving Africa and the continuing drain of resources in the form of debt servicing outflows. Debt cancellation was agreed by all as the first step to reversing declining investment levels.

However, Barbara Kalima criticises NEPAD's short termist treatment of debt. "Because of the high degree unsustainability of the debt in the 44 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries, it is clear that [NEPAD's] proposal would not lead to any significant debt relief for these countries but mere postponement of the debt burden."

According to Angela Orellana Schwalm, "The current state of African economic and resource depletion is such that these development goals cannot be realized without a significant influx of aid, debt reduction and more favourable terms of trade. It calls upon "northern" nations to assist them on the basis of their commitment to Millennium Goals of reduced global poverty; and on the desire for more global security and stability"

Neville Gabriel reported on a Church based consultation held in February in South Africa. It noted that there were positive aspects of NEPAD pointing out that it contained a new approach to debt cancellation - either a reduction of debt-servicing to between 5-10% of government revenues or bridging financing gaps on costed poverty reduction programmes. "However, the consultation concluded that while NEPAD's analysis of the nature and causes of Africa's socio-economic and political development problems is accurate, the primarily economic solutions it proposes are unconvincing."

"NEPAD correctly states that current 'globalisation' policies fail to lift Africa out of socio-economic decline but then goes on to say that Africa therefore needs more of the same policies."

The South African ecumenical paper *Blurring the Vision* gave the e-consultation one of the few sets of economic policy prescriptions. "Meaningful debt cancellation for Africa must be prioritised as a pre-condition for Africa's sustainable development, so that budget support can be provided for public investment in social services such as health care and education and the provision of water and electricity. NEPAD must also propose decisive structural changes to the current international financial and trade systems, including proposals such as an international Currency Transaction Tax and special protection for vulnerable African industries."

However, the ecumenical paper was sceptical of the commitments of donors to NEPAD in general and especially when donors' are asked to come up with additional financial support. It suggested that donors are fundamentally interested in low-cost approaches. "A G7 over-emphasis on the "cost-free" elements of NEPAD such as peace-building and governance issues and on private sector development alone, without a corresponding commitment to support Africa's reconstruction and development in additional material budget-support terms, reinforces the distrust that makes many believe that African development based on the hope of a new partnership with rich countries is not viable."

### **International Security**

The sovereignty of the African state is not directly addressed in NEPAD. But one contributor felt that increasingly interdependent notions of security (including human, environmental and economic security) pointed to the need for greater international pooling of sovereignty. "Conflicts are anticipated to continue as the resources base is further depleted and

competition arises over scarce resources (especially land). Effects of global warming (especially around coastal regions and deltas) have already resulted in flooding. Droughts, and deforestation, already common, are expected to increase due to climatic change and will contribute the desertification. Lack of fuel, and shelter, will cause migration of people across borders, resulting in land pressures that can lead to conflict. "

The Association for the Defence of the rights of Women and Children in Rwanda took issue with CAFOD's assertion that some conflicts in Africa amounted to "semi-permanent wars". For ABSL these are long term conflicts but also, "political or economic conflicts of interest."

"We suggest that the community should give detailed consideration to the following proposals:

- the supply of arms should be controlled, if not indeed stopped. Most African countries have no arms factories: the prolongation of conflicts may be due to the profits to be made by arms suppliers;
- negotiations between adversaries should be encouraged and facilitated, from a position of impartiality, so that they can reach a compromise and/or a lasting solution;
- everything possible should be done to protect and aid (in water supply, shelter, food, health, children's education, etc) the innocent civil population; and if possible provide an interposing force between the adversaries;
- there should not be recourse to economic sanctions, which only worsen the situation of the innocent population; efforts should rather be made to block the assets diverted by the leaders of the warring parties and repatriate them for use in the public interest."

Bertha Amisi from the Nairobi Peace Initiative strongly objected to NEPAD's instrumentalist view of conflict prevention, where peace and security are desirable insofar as they serve economic purposes.

"Where there is peace and security, there are more opportunities for economic prosperity. Yes, the wars in the past two decades have exhausted and are exhausting much needed human and material resources that could be put to better use. However, are peace and security merely conditions that serve to fulfill an economic purpose?"

"This is a limited view. To what extent does it resonate with the popular will of Africans? For many in Africa, wars are a debilitating experience. They not only impoverish materially, but also socially, psychologically, at the individual and community level. Peace and Security are desired as spaces where the restoration and celebration of being human, freedom, empowerment, community, self-actualisation, life itself, is valued and protected. Could Africans not want peace and security for the well-being they bring to individuals and the community and for economic gain?"

#### **HIV/AIDS**

Perhaps the most memorable and arresting contribution to the e-consultation came from Bernard Outah from Kenya. He wrote: "In a recent participatory urban appraisal exercise in one of the slums in Nairobi, it came out clearly, that matters of the "pocket" and "stomach" are contributing significantly to the spread of the disease. A female resident in the area argued that whereas it might take up to 5 years to succumb to the disease, it can take a few months for a baby to die of starvation. So indulging in unprotected sex for money to buy food for the family would make more sense than to worry about infection by HIV/AIDS."

Some contributors felt that the lack of sufficient attention given in the NEPAD paper to HIV/AIDS mirrored a lack of health activism on the part of some African governments. The fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS needed to take place at every level and in every sphere. "African governments need to pay special attention to the well being of vulnerable people, the youth, women and children. They should put in place and enforce policies and laws to ensure security and the basic rights of these groups, to protect them from sexual abuses in schools, in towns and other societies." (Sr Rovina Turyazayo)

Most contributors referred to the interconnections between the spread of HIV/AIDS and

poverty. Diakonia Council of Churches also drew attention to the need for aid to focus on the provision of affordable health care infrastructures.

"One can not say, development first, HIV/AIDS second. These are twins who cannot be separated. They have to be addressed and treated with the same importance and urgency they deserve. For me, behind HIV/AIDS, I see economic development and behind economic development I see HIV/AIDS. A very detailed and deliberate policy has to be included in NEPAD to address the HIV/AIDS problem. Prevention, awareness campaigns, Care and support for PLWHA, treatment of opportunist infections and use of ARVs, counselling (VCT) and care for the orphans must be explored and implemented". Chanda Fikansa

#### **A Last Word**

Bertha finishes with some optimism on NEPAD, but suggests that the success will be determined if its principal target audience is not the donor community.

"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."

Thanks to all who emailed their views.

Edited by Henry Northover, CAFOD  
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