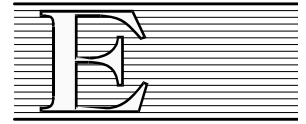




**UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**



Distr.: GENERAL

E/ECA/COE/26/9  
1 March 2007

Original: ENGLISH

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

Conference of African Ministers of Finance,  
Planning and Economic Development/Fortieth  
session of the Commission

*Twenty-sixth Meeting of the Committee of Experts*

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
29 March – 1 April 2007

**The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD):**  
*The way forward*

## A. Introduction

1. Following the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by African leaders in July 2001, the United Nations General Assembly adopted it as the framework within which the international community, including the United Nations (UN) system, would concentrate its efforts to support Africa's development agenda. In November 2002, the General Assembly gave guidance on what the international community and the UN system, in particular, should do in support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In December 2003, the General Assembly requested the UN system to intensify its efforts in developing and implementing joint programmes in support of NEPAD. The need for enhanced support to NEPAD was reiterated in a UN General Assembly resolution in November 2006 which called for the UN system to promote greater coherence in its work with African countries.<sup>1</sup>

2. The adoption of NEPAD as the development compact for African countries has therefore led to the establishment of a comprehensive structure at the global, regional and country levels to support the initiative and ensure maximum results. However, more than five years after its launch, NEPAD continues to face critical challenges making it difficult for African countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

3. Against this background, this brief report presents an update on the global and regional structure supporting the implementation of NEPAD. The note highlights some of the key challenges and makes a number of proposals to be considered and endorsed by Ministers for an effective implementation of NEPAD by African countries. In the spirit of the ongoing UN reforms aimed at more effective partnerships, coherence, harmonization and stronger coordination, the note proposes to strengthen the Economic Commission for Africa the role of ECA for regional coordination and establishment of a subregional consultation machinery to complement the UN Regional Consultation Mechanism (RCM).

## B. Global Support for NEPAD

4. International support for NEPAD has grown over the years as documented in the Fourth Report of the Secretary-General (2006)<sup>2</sup>. Several commitments have been made by Africa's development partners, including those of the G-8 Summits. These initiatives aim at directly or indirectly supporting the NEPAD agenda and include pledges made at various major international conferences and summits to respond to Africa's specific needs.

5. In response to these commitments, we have observed increases in official development assistance (ODA) and in foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as new initiatives regarding debt relief and South-South cooperation. As a result, countries and organizations have taken action to implement NEPAD projects in the areas of infrastructure, information and communication technology (ICT), health, education, environment, agriculture, science and technology (S&T), gender mainstreaming, civil society involvement and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution on "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support", 14 November 2006 (A/61/L.23).

<sup>2</sup> Report of the Secretary-General (2006) "The New Partnership for Africa's Development: fourth consolidated report on progress in implementation and international support", submitted to the Sixty-first Session of the United Nations General Assembly (A/61/2121).

6. Notwithstanding notable achievements in these areas, significant challenges remain. The slow progress in the Doha Development Round continues to be an issue and servicing bilateral or private debt, not envisaged in Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), poses severe problems for low-income African countries. As the 2006 UN Secretary-General Report on NEPAD to the General Assembly underscores, the momentum of international support for Africa is not yet strong enough to be irreversible, and there are a number of areas in which policy measures and practical actions must be taken to strengthen the impetus for the implementation of NEPAD.

7. In this context, there is an increased need for governments in the region and the international community to redouble efforts so as to increase the flow of new and additional resources to finance development from public and private domestic and foreign sources to support the implementation of NEPAD. Furthermore, it is imperative that development partners continue to align their financial and technical support to NEPAD's priorities and facilitate investment by their private sectors.

### **C. UN System-wide support**

8. Given the decision of the UN General Assembly to use NEPAD as the framework for Africa's development agenda, the UN system has developed global, regional and national mechanisms for channelling its efforts to support NEPAD. In that regard, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) is tasked with the roles of global advocacy for NEPAD and reporting to the intergovernmental bodies on UN system-wide support to NEPAD. The Department of Public Information (DPI) carries out public information and awareness activities. At the regional level, ECA is charged with coordinating the activities of UN agencies working in Africa through the RCM.

9. In Africa, the RCM has adopted the NEPAD priorities as the benchmarks around which the work done by UN agencies in the region should be organized. At the national level, the UN system supports implementation of NEPAD through the existing mechanisms such as the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs).

10. Since 2002, the RCM has established seven thematic clusters around the priority areas of NEPAD. In 2007, two additional clusters were added to ensure a full coverage of the work done by UN agencies in the region. The existing clusters are:

- Infrastructure Development, convened by ECA;
- Governance, convened by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);
- Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development, convened by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO);
- Environment, Population and Urbanization, convened by UN-Habitat (UNCHS);
- Human Resource Development, Employment and HIV/AIDS, convened by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF);

- Science and Technology, convened by United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
- Advocacy and Communications, convened by Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA);
- Peace and Security, convened by the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA); and
- Industry, Trade and Market Access, convened by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

11. Managers of these clusters have carried out numerous activities in support of NEPAD since its inception. Notwithstanding their achievements, the performance of the clusters, as well as that of the RCM as a whole, remains quite uneven. This has led to several reviews to assess the effectiveness of UN system support in advancing the objectives and priorities of NEPAD<sup>3</sup>. The reviews highlight four key areas of concern including the need to strengthen regional coordination and the cluster system, foster coordination and integration of UN activities at the subregional level, enhance UN partnerships with regional and subregional organizations, and monitor the effectiveness of UN interventions in coordinating support to NEPAD.

12. Given its mandate to facilitate and coordinate UN support to NEPAD, and in an attempt to address the above-stated challenges, ECA convened the Seventh RCM 14 and 15 November 2006 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting provided a basis for moving the agenda forward, for coordinating UN support to NEPAD from debate, assessments and recommendations to tangible actions. It also provided a platform for improved cooperation and coordination between UN agencies and African continental organizations such as the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the regional economic communities (RECs). The Seventh RCM adopted a set of recommendations and implementation modalities organized around five key themes<sup>4</sup>:

- Strengthening coordination and revitalizing the cluster system;
- Fostering subregional coordination;
- Improving coordination between the UN and African regional organizations;
- Monitoring and evaluation of actions and outcomes; and
- Mobilizing resources and enhancing capacity.

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<sup>3</sup> These reviews include the Second Report of the Secretary-General's Advisory Panel on International Support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (2006); The report of the Joint Inspection Unit "Further Measures to Strengthen United Nations System Support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development" (2005); and ECA's report "Assessment of UN System Support to NEPAD: Rethinking the Collective Approach" (2004).

<sup>4</sup> The report of the Seventh RCM includes a comprehensive review of the recommendations made during the meeting.

**1. *Strengthening coordination and revitalizing the cluster system***

13. The Seventh RCM recommended that ECA should move from being a convener of the RCM to a strategic coordinator of UN support to the AU and NEPAD Secretariats. In this regard, it is proposed that ECA provide secretariat functions to coordinate the activities of the nine clusters. The meeting also recommended that the RCM should be held at least once a year and each cluster should meet at least twice a year with AUC participation at both cluster and RCM levels. In addition, the role of AUC should not be limited to presenting opening statements, but should also include substantive participation at the technical level.

**2. *Fostering subregional coordination and integration***

14. The RCM recognized the critical challenge posed by the multiplicity of subregional organizations and the non-existence of a coordinating mechanism akin to the RCM. The meeting agreed that ECA's subregional offices (SROs) should play a role in bringing other UN agencies together at the subregional level to effectively support the implementation of NEPAD. It also recommended that UN activities at the subregional level be mainly targeted at such capacity-building as the human resource development, organizational development and institutional and legal framework development of the RECs and Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) in order to enhance their ability to own and manage the implementation of NEPAD priorities.

15. Furthermore, an appropriate mechanism for subregional coordination of UN support to NEPAD should be formulated and ECA, in consultation with other UN agencies, AU and NEPAD Secretariat, should coordinate discussions on the needs of RECs, to facilitate a better alignment and targeting of UN support to NEPAD at the subregional level. It also decided that the RECs should be invited to participate in the regional consultation meetings.

**3. *Improving cooperation and coordination between UN, AU, NEPAD, AfDB and RECs***

16. The Seventh RCM called for improving cooperation and coordination between the UN, AU, NEPAD Secretariat, AfDB and the RECs. In this regard, the meeting was of the view that support to NEPAD would yield the desired results only with effective implementation of NEPAD programmes, strong regional consensus for such programme and a clear definition of responsibility between the AU and NEPAD Secretariats in the formulation and implementation of programmes.

17. It was recommended that the UN system should maintain regular consultations with AU through the UN Secretary-General or the ECA Executive Secretary. This should be done in consultation with UN agencies and organizations with a view to deepening coordination and collaboration between the United Nations system and AU. It was also agreed that as a key player in Africa's development landscape, AfDB should be more involved in the RCM.

**4. *Monitoring and evaluation of actions and outcomes***

18. On monitoring and evaluation, the meeting recommended that ECA, through its NEPAD Support Unit, should monitor processes, outputs and resources. This Unit is expected to establish a database for both quantitative and qualitative information on processes and activities, outputs and resources relating to the UN agencies support to the NEPAD priorities and the AU vision and strategic framework. Each cluster is expected to develop a

monitoring framework based on their work programme for a specific period and the priorities and linkages to the NEPAD objectives and to the AU vision and strategic framework.

19. As reporting is an important indicator for monitoring the effectiveness of cluster system and the regional consultation mechanism, the meeting decided that, at the cluster level, reports on activities should be shared as much as possible with other agencies and with the NEPAD Secretariat and AUC. Reporting should also be managed and shared at the Heads of State level. In this regard, reports on the UN support for NEPAD priorities and the AU vision and mission be delivered by the ECA Executive Secretary to the Heads of State and Government at their annual summits, as well as shared with relevant meetings at the ministerial level.

#### **5. *Mobilizing resources and enhancing capacity***

20. The meeting recommended that the issue of mobilizing resources be dealt with at three levels, namely, central coordination or the RCM, cluster and sub-cluster. On capacity development, each agency and organization is requested to develop a minimum level of institutional capacity at all levels, from the RCM to clusters. It also recommended that at least one dedicated staff member be assigned for this purpose. The meeting also requested AU, ECA and AfDB to assist in programme alignment, coordination, advocacy and outreach, within the context of the Joint Secretariat. In this respect, AU should set the Africa vision, policies, priorities and programmes; ECA should convene the UN system around technical and advisory support to AU/NEPAD; and AfDB should anchor resource mobilization.

#### **D. *ECA's Support to NEPAD***

21. Since 2002, ECA's mandate as the coordinator of UN agencies and organizations working in support of NEPAD in Africa has been reaffirmed by various documents and resolutions<sup>5</sup>. Accordingly, ECA has gone beyond its prominent role in the conceptualization of NEPAD; the promotion of intra-UN cooperation in support of NEPAD; and the cooperation between the UN and African continental organizations. The Commission has moved to providing strong and tangible support to the implementation of NEPAD. ECA has also supported NEPAD implementing organs at the subregional and national levels, the NEPAD Secretariat and the RECs. Furthermore, ECA has provided technical support in specific areas of NEPAD, conducted studies and organized meetings and seminars that support its implementation, in addition to promoting and advocating for NEPAD at the regional and subregional levels.

22. To strengthen its coordination and operationalization of support to NEPAD, ECA created the NEPAD Support Unit in the NEPAD and Regional Integration Division. The Unit has commissioned a review of the Cluster system in order to improve its effectiveness and impact in supporting AU and NEPAD. ECA has also collaborated with the NEPAD Secretariat to organize two capacity-building workshops for the development of a capacity-building strategy for the implementation of NEPAD priorities.

23. In addition to organizing the RCMs, ECA has given strong support to the implementation of NEPAD programmes, notably in the areas of the Infrastructure Short-term

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, the Second Report of the Secretary-General's Advisory Panel on "*International Support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development*" (2006) and the report of the Joint Inspection Unit; ECA's "*Assessment of UN System Support to NEPAD: Rethinking the Collective Approach*" (2004).

Action Plan (STAP), ICT policies, water, trade negotiations, the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Plan (CAADP) and gender. ECA has provided significant support to APRM through technical support to the APRM Secretariat, country support, review missions and finalization of reports. ECA has also provided tangible support to the NEPAD Secretariat on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the two organizations. The collaborative effort in operationalizing the Mutual Review of Development Effectiveness is another area where ECA has made significant contribution in support of NEPAD.

## **E. Way Forward**

24. This note presents some of the key challenges facing the UN system-wide interventions to support the implementation of NEPAD as well as some proposals and initiatives to better address them. Given the new strategic directions resulting from the repositioning exercise undertaken in 2006, ECA is determined to provide tangible and effective support to African countries for the implementation of NEPAD.

### **Issues for consideration:**

- Support the expansion of the regional consultation mechanism to include AU and RECs and establish a subregional mechanism for coordinating the UN system-wide support to NEPAD on the continent. The subregional mechanism should be anchored on ECA's subregional offices and focus on the needs of the RECs;
- Support for the outcome of the Seventh RCM, especially the role of ECA as a strategic coordinator of UN support to AU and to NEPAD; and
- The priorities of NEPAD have been integrated at various degrees into national development plans. African countries need to put more emphasis on these priorities in their new or updated development plans and strategies.