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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

Greetings to All,

Once more, I would like to thank you all for your unflinching dedication, commitment and support throughout the year 2002. The desire to deepen and spread democracy offers us at the NEPAD a unique advantage to respond positively and urgently to the African quest for a just order.

As we collectively charter the parameters for a secure and peaceful continent, we put ahead of our resolve and commitment our determination for a transformational agenda, but we would do so in well co-ordinated African perspectives. The year 2003 continues to contain a punishing schedule at the NEPAD Secretariat. Our collective achievements last year, has offered us the desired zest and enthusiasm to deliver on our imperatives.

The following is just a concise synopsis of our actions:-

January 2003:

The 13th meeting of the NEPAD's Extended Steering Committee was held in Yalonde, Cameroon from the 27-28 January. The host country put excellent facilities at the disposal of the members and the delegation which was led by Mr. J. Ndioro.

On the 2nd day the steering committee considered and gave directives on reports of the workshops and meetings held between November 2002 to date. These include the following workshops:

- NEPAD/SASAKANA workshop on agriculture
- NEPAD's expert's workshop on market access, Industrialisation, Intra-Africa Trade and Export, Diversification was held in Johannesburg, South Africa.
- Joint meeting of NEPAD, FAO and ADB on the role of REC's in the implementing food security programmes in the context of NEPAD, was held in Abuja, Nigeria.

The committee also reviewed the reports of NEPAD Secretariat's visit to some REC's and the recent Global Coalition for Africa Forum which was held in Accra, Ghana.

In considering the documents relating to the accession to the African Peer Review Mechanism the committee gave instructions for them to be finalised for the consideration of the Heads of States Implementation Committee.

The Chairman of the SC, Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu and Minister Ndioro along with some steering committee members addressed the Press both before and after the meeting.

February 2003:

Our Communications drive on the continent continues to see us attempting to set up communications links with countries on the continent. We have already established very good working links Ghana, Nigeria and Gabon. We continue with the drive this month, to Kenya, Mozambique, Egypt and Algeria. We have met with civil society leader, private sector, gender equality organisation, government representation and the regional economic communities in the countries we have visited.

We have agreed on a working relationship that will ensure direct communications between the countries and the NEPAD Secretariat. In this manner, we will be able to ensure that the various countries are updated on what the NEPAD secretariat is achieving and the NEPAD Secretariat in turn, will be able to learn on NEPAD activities being carried out in the various countries.

This year, we continue to seek to advance our gains in the process of inclusiveness and participatory democracy in the continent.

We seek to ensure that participation by civil society is properly communicated and forms part of good governance in the continent.

We will continue to address the challenges that face the NEPAD process, like for example, from the 1,600 languages spoken in Africa, how do we achieve convergence of opinion rather than wars. How do we close the digital divide?

As the NEPAD is a process of the African Union, the 2nd Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union is crucially important to the NEPAD process. This session, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, considered the amendments to the constitutive Act of the AU held in Tripoli in December 2002. It will further ensure the incorporation of the amendments to the constitutive act on which consensus was reached by the Executive council.

The distinctive feature was aimed at reinforcing and strengthening the AU and all its institutions. Central to the deliberations was how Africa should reverse the desperate state of affairs in which the poorest of the poor are finding themselves.

Through its deliberation from various actors in the sector, the science and technology workshop will seek to reach a consensus on the modalities of co-operation with the NEPAD and produce a framework of a network of the Science and Technology Centres of learning, develop an action plan for

science and technology and establish an inter-governmental science and technology co-ordinating committee.

March 2003

Ghana's NEPAD's office in association with the NEPAD Secretariat, will host the conference on the role of civil society within the NEPAD process. A well co-ordinated strategy on how the civil society should participate in the process will be discussed. The process and the instruments that will guide and produce a partnership between civil society and NEPAD will be agreed upon.

Nigeria will host the third meeting of the Heads of States in Abuja, Nigeria on the 8th March. This meeting will continue to discuss issues that are of critical importance to the effective implementation of the NEPAD process.

April 2003:

At the NEPAD Secretariat, our master narrative will be the role that women should play in reshaping the continent through the NEPAD process. Nowhere is the intensity of human deprivation so acutely felt than amongst African women, particularly in rural areas. Gabon will host the NEPAD Gender Forum, which will seek to look at the establishment of a strong partnership between the NEPAD process and women in the continent.

May 2003

The AU/OAU will be celebrating its 40 anniversary, to be hosted by South Africa as the current Chair of the Union.

This interim schedule for the year 2003, should indeed call for a major shift of policies and the redirection of resources, human and material. We must clearly demonstrate that we will indeed revive the previously marginalized creative thoughts of Africa.

Our continent relies on all of us to rededicate ourselves to ensuring peace, stability, economic growth, education and health for all citizens of Africa. Africa needs all of us...