

**STATEMENT BY H.E. PRESIDENT O. OBASANJO, CHAIRMAN OF THE NEPAD
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**

G8 SUMMIT, EVIAN, FRANCE

1 JUNE 2003

On behalf of my African colleagues present here today, I would like to first thank President Chirac, host of the G8 Summit, for his leadership. I would also like to thank him, the Government and the people of France for the excellent arrangements and facilities that have been put at our disposal since arriving in France and Switzerland. The challenges facing Africa require of us not to lose the significance nor the momentum of the partnership between Africa and the G8.

The epoch and historic G8 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada last year laid a firm foundation through the G8 Africa Action Plan in response to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The challenges and problems that prompted us to develop NEPAD as the socio-economic development programme of the African Union aimed at regenerating and reviving the African continent, have not changed. It is therefore critical that we strengthen this partnership between Africa and the G8 and we remain committed to the objectives of eradicating poverty and improving the quality of life of the African people.

Mr President, as African leaders we have spent the last year since the Kananaskis Summit preparing detailed and costed projects and programmes for implementation and we have made progress in that regard:

- We have completed the necessary work to implement the African Peer Review Mechanism. APRM documents have been prepared, fifteen countries have acceded to the APRM and the initial Panel of Eminent Persons has been appointed. We will conduct the first reviews during the second half of this year;
- We continue with our efforts of addressing conflicts in the African continent and we have cooperated with the G8 to prepare a Joint Africa/G8 Plan to enhance Africa's Capability to undertake Peace Support Operations;
- Using as a basis the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) completed last year, we have prepared detailed and costed country and region specific projects for implementation. The projects and programmes address interventions to improve food security and the productivity of the agricultural sector in various regions in the continent;
- We produced the Infrastructure Short-Term Action Plan last year, which includes high priority projects in energy, transport, water and sanitation, and information and communication technology (ICT). The implementation of these projects is now being promoted by both national governments and regional economic communities; and
- We have also made progress in elaborating plans in areas such as health, education, science and technology, environment and tourism.

In addition to the above, we have increased our efforts of ensuring increased resource mobilisation from within the African continent through economic transformation, especially through the participation of the private sector and reprioritizing the budgets of our respective Governments to address these challenges.

Despite the above progress major challenges that require increased support by the G8 countries remain:

- We welcome progress to-date on the preparation of the Joint Africa/G8 Plan on Peace Support Operations and the commitment by the G8 to support its implementation. The challenge is now to prepare detailed and costed projects for implementation so that indeed Africa is capable of undertaking complex peace support operations by 2010. Another challenge is to prepare detailed and costed projects in other peace and security areas not covered by the peace support operations but that are part of the G8 Africa Action Plan and the AU-NEPAD Peace and Security Agenda.
- While the Joint Plan is a medium to long-term plan, we must recognise the need to address, with your support, the other immediate conflict challenges such as the ones in Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. In this regard, I would like to mention that the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government met recently and deliberated on the appropriate sub-regional approach for peace and

security. They produced a budget for the peace support process in Cote d'Ivoire which will be used as a basis for mobilising support from development partners.

- The challenges of Agriculture and Food Security still remain. We need to give high priority to agricultural development. The current food insecurity in Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa needs to be addressed. In addition, we need to lay a foundation for sustainable agriculture. As African governments we are taking steps to increase support to agriculture and we are calling on our development partners to support our efforts.
- We are certainly concerned with the deadlocked WTO negotiations in Geneva and we do not believe that the Cancun Ministerial later in September 2003 will produce any progress without intervention by G8 leaders. Of particular concern to us is the destabilising effect of agricultural subsidies and other support measures by the developed countries to food production in our countries. This Summit must find a solution to this matter and other unresolved matters, such as the impact of volatile prices of commodities that are of particular interest to developing countries, in particular coffee and cotton.
- Africa is unlikely to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 at this current level of progress or lack thereof. While reforms are undertaken by African countries to address the challenges of education, health, and HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, more investment is needed in these areas. Particular areas requiring increased investment include education, health, and water and sanitation.
- Increasing Africa's competitiveness and enabling her to provide access to affordable basic services for her peoples through investment in infrastructure and ICT remain a challenge. We count on your support in mobilizing additional resources through the influence you have on the multilateral institutions and your private sector. This is in addition to resources that will result from improving the quantum and delivery of official development assistance (ODA) and of debt relief.

We are confident that you will continue to mobilize additional resources for the African continent and help shape partnerships in favour of Africa. In this respect we would like to acknowledge with appreciation some of the announcements made by our partners. In particular,:

- Canada's announcement last year in Kanaskis on increased assistance to Africa and the recent release of the report entitled: Canada Implements the G8 Africa Action Plan: Delivering on Commitments, One Year Later.
- Britain's release of a report on progress of implementing the G8 Africa Action Plan and proposal on the International Finance Facility (IFF) aimed at ensuring that adequate resources are mobilised to enable Africa to meet the MDGs. We believe that this initiative merits serious consideration and we are very keen to participate in its further development.
- We are encouraged by France's proposals, which you articulated Mr President, in respect of export subsidies and other support measures that destabilize agriculture in African countries. The proposals provide a good basis for discussions. We are also encouraged and agree with your assertion, contained in the report entitled: France, a Partner of NEPAD: An Action Plan for Africa, that "this summit must be the summit for implementation" of NEPAD.
- United States of America's announcement of increased support to the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The challenge now is to ensure better coordination of implementation both at country and regional level.
- Japan's announcement on polio eradication, additional debt relief and that the TICAD 3 process will be used to support NEPAD.
- We appreciate Germany's institutional support to the NEPAD Secretariat and efforts made to reach out to her private sector, parliamentarians and civil society.
- We also appreciate Italy's support of the e-governance project in Africa and her efforts to reach out to her private sector, parliamentarians and civil society.

These examples indicate initial steps that are being taken to implement the G8 Africa Action Plan. We are encouraged by progress made.

However, as already indicated we would like to stress that there is an urgent need for increased support in the earlier-mentioned areas, namely, enhancing peace support operations, increased investment in agriculture and food security, removal of agricultural subsidies and other support measures that destabilize agriculture in Africa, addressing the deadlock at the WTO negotiations, mobilizing additional resources to meet the MDGs, and mobilizing additional investments in high priority

infrastructure projects. Now that the preparatory work has been done we need a rapid roll-out of implementation.

In conclusion, I would like to once again thank all the G8 leaders for supporting Africa's development and making this day possible. I would like once more to emphasize that conditions that necessitated the initiation of this dialogue have not changed and that a structured engagement between the G8 countries and Africa must continue and be strengthened. We hope that one of the outcomes of this Summit will be the announcement on the strengthening of the partnership and dialogue between Africa and the G8. I would like to thank you specially Mr President for ensuring that Africa remains on the agenda of the G8 and we hope this practice will continue into the next G8 Summit.

Finally, may I seize this opportunity to thank the entire international community for its support of the people of Algeria following the devastating earthquake there. We would also appeal for your continued support as we tackle the difficult task of rehabilitation and reconstruction in Algeria.