

# **Meeting of NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians**

**Good Hope Chamber of the Parliament of South Africa  
Cape Town  
22 September 2004**

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The assembled Speakers and Members of Parliament from Burundi, EALA, ECOWAS, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda, concluded, after deliberations, that the Parliamentary contact group on NEPAD ought to continue to promote and implement the NEPAD process pending the development of full capacity of the Pan African Parliament to do so and resolved to follow a three year plan of support, oversight and promotion of NEPAD along the following lines:

- 1) Information dissemination about NEPAD in all African Parliaments;
- 2) Policy-responsibility and budget oversight for NEPAD to be introduced in African Parliamentarians;
- 3) Close cooperation and links between the NEPAD secretariat, NEPAD structures in AU states, and African Parliaments (national and regional);
- 4) Advocacy – There was an obligation on members of Parliament to go to the electorate in their respective regions, countries and constituencies in order to sensitise the electorate about what NEPAD is and to seek their involvement in the process;
- 5) Electronic dissemination of information ought to be increased by using the internet and websites to spread the message about NEPAD. This could include developing a portal on the NEPAD secretariat's website to include information for Parliamentarians and about the Parliamentary contact group;
- 6) NEPAD newsletter: delivery to Parliamentarians needs to be ensured;
- 7) Lobby in Europe for Northern support: the NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians (“Contact Group”) will link up with European Parliamentarians to lobby European Parliaments and decision makers on support for NEPAD initiatives;
- 8) Women's rights and empowerment need to be institutionalized in NEPAD;
- 9) National NEPAD day: One day a year ought to be designated as a national NEPAD day where the latest developments could be examined and successes celebrated.
- 10) Language – The information about NEPAD ought to be available initially at least in English, French, and Portuguese.

The members of the contact group further decided to form a steering Committee to guide the activities of the contact group. Prof. Turok, MP, South Africa was appointed as Convenor of the Contact Group and the new steering Committee will be composed of the delegates from:

Egypt

East Africa

Burundi

ECOWAS/Senegal

Mauritius

Kenya

Uganda

South Africa

Convenor

In order to support the actions of the Contact Group on NEPAD, German development Cooperation (“GTZ”) and European Parliamentarians for Africa (“AWEPA”) were asked to source funding and support for these initiatives. It was reported that the African Capacity Building Initiative (“ACBI”) has already committed some funding.

# Meeting of NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians

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22 September 2004

### Précis of Meeting

#### Abstract

The meeting arose out of a need to review the role of Parliamentarians across Africa with respect to the promotion and implementation of NEPAD. The meeting agreed that Parliaments should give much more attention to policy debates on the principles of NEPAD and to ensuring that national budgets reflect the philosophy and priorities of NEPAD. All Members in the meeting resolved to ensure adequate communication and promotion of NEPAD to the public and institutions of society generally.

#### Opening

The meeting was opened by Prof. Ben Turok, MP, South Africa and Par Granstedt, Vice-President of AWEPA. In attendance were the Speakers of the House of Federation of Ethiopia and the Parliament of Lesotho as well as Members and Senators from the National Assemblies and/or Senates (see annex 'A' for attendance list) of the following countries;

Burundi	Kenya	Senegal
EALA	Lesotho	South Africa
ECOWAS	Mauritius	Swaziland
Egypt	Mozambique	Tanzania
Ethiopia	Nigeria	Togo
Gabon	Republic of Congo	Uganda

The meeting was also addressed by Hon. Peter Schieder, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Several European MPs were present as well as various international agencies.

#### Background to seminar

The NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians was formed in Nairobi, Kenya in August 2003 as the result of a request by Prof. Nkuhlu, Head of the NEPAD Secretariat and is an initiative of concerned Parliamentarians who wanted to ensure that all parliaments in Africa are fully engaged in the NEPAD process. In order to further the process and to report back on developments in their respective national and regional fora, a conference was organized in Cape Town, in the Good Hope Chamber of the Parliament of South Africa to review Parliamentary actions on NEPAD undertaken to date and to chart a course for future actions to be taken.

The meeting (see annex 'B') was organised into **introductory**, **briefing** (both from the NEPAD Secretariat and experts), **report back** (from the delegates) sessions, which were

followed by **Regional group exercises**, and finally by a session which brought out the **conclusions** of the participating MPs/Senators and recommendations for the future. All Parliamentarians were provided with the latest NEPAD briefing documents.

### **Issues identified by Parliamentarians:**

- The relation of NEPAD to Civil Society and need to present it to civil society;
- What the role of Parliament could be in the NEPAD process;
- Conflicts, peace and security, and post conflict reconstruction;
- The relation between NEPAD and national budgets in respective Parliaments;
- The linkage between Parliaments and the Executive on NEPAD;
- Children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS – which must be dealt with adequately by NEPAD;
- APRM, and the effect of good governance on the NEPAD process;
- Industrialization and regional cooperation;
- Relations with the G8, the WTO and the IFIs on NEPAD;
- Debt reduction;
- Education and policy;
- The relation between NEPAD, the AU and Regional Economic Communities such as ECOWAS, EAC, and SADC;
- Harmonization of NEPAD with other existing policies and initiatives;
- Economic empowerment of Women; and
- Research and development.

### **Introduction**

Mr. Par Granstedt, Vice-President of AWEPA introduced the delegates to AWEPA's work with its African partners and to its work in the Parliaments of Europe, including the European Parliament. Prof. Ben Turok, MP South Africa and Convenor of the NEPAD Contact Group then introduced the background to the present meeting. He noted that the initial meeting in August 2003 in Nairobi where the contact group had been formed, had indicated very clearly a lack of information and understanding of NEPAD, not only on a Parliamentary level but also among African populations in general. In particular he noted that:

- Members of Parliament in general did not know enough about NEPAD. This was due in part to the initial top down nature of NEPAD which had hitherto been dominated by the executive branches of government;
- That in a similar vein, civil society also did not know enough about NEPAD for the same reasons but that now that there was a consensus on the document, the information should be disseminated to Civil society;
- There was a need to discuss the role of Parliament in the NEPAD process. The present briefing was not a meeting to take the place of the Pan-African Parliament and did not constitute a parallel process. Rather it was designed to complement the eventual taking up by the PAP, of the legislative and oversight role of Parliaments in the process.
- That national and sub-regional Parliaments needed to ensure that budgets passed reflected NEPAD's self-reliant development cornerstone philosophy.
- That Parliaments needed to take a broad view of the issues affecting NEPAD, not a technocratic view; the focus should be on principles and policies, not on details;

- That Children affected by HIV/AIDS and the pandemic in general ought to be taken on board more effectively in NEPAD.

## **Briefing**

Dr. Mohammed Jahed, Chief Economist, NEPAD Secretariat, gave the assembled delegates a progress report on the action plans for NEPAD. Although the entire briefing will not be reproduced here the main points touched on were:

- That NEPAD was the socio-economic programme of the African Union, not a separate agency;
- That addressing conflict on the African continent and peace and security and post-conflict reconstruction were important elements of NEPAD;
- That the primary objectives of NEPAD (see his paper) also involved good governance, human rights, and in this respect the APRM was an innovative concept which had been acceded to by some 23 countries so far. It was expected that between 30-35 countries will have acceded to the APRM by the end of 2004;
- That altering the relationship between developing countries and MFIs was also central to the process especially with respect to market access, Debt, ODA, and FDI (foreign direct investment);
- That the engagement of the Regional Economic Communities (“RECs”) such as ECOWAS, the EAC and SADC in the process was crucial and the regional continental development programme needed to be accelerated;
- That both civil society and the private sector needed to be mobilized in support of NEPAD.

## **Report back of Delegations**

### *Structural considerations*

The report back from country and regional delegations varied on what had been accomplished so far in terms of bringing NEPAD to Parliaments and to civil society. There was unanimity however on behalf of all delegations that much more needed to be done if both Parliaments and civil society were to play meaningful roles in the NEPAD process.

Most Parliaments had had initial sensitisation sessions or in some cases ‘NEPAD Days’ although there were some Parliaments, which had only attended conferences regarding NEPAD due to upcoming elections or for other domestic reasons. Of the states represented, it was acknowledged that most had developed a NEPAD structure in the Executive Branch although this was mirrored by Parliamentary Committees or fora in only a few Parliaments. In most cases it was acknowledged that communication on NEPAD between the executive structures and Parliamentary ones was lacking. In one case it was said that “*Partnership seems to mean anything but Parliaments*”. All delegations were of the opinion that NEPAD had not descended to the grass roots and that populations were, in general, badly informed about NEPAD.

## **What should be done ?**

The report back session generated not only recognition of the limited consciousness of NEPAD in Parliamentary and civil society spheres but also very specific ideas about what should be done to correct this and what issues should be prioritized.

Some examples were:

- Parliaments should hold public meetings with constituents on NEPAD to both inform and elicit feedback on the NEPAD process;
- Sub-regional and regional cooperation should be accelerated in order to make optimal use of synergies and strengths of respective countries. In this respect existing sub-regional structures such as ECOWAS, EAC and SADC should be capacitated;
- Links between NEPAD executive and Parliamentary structures need to be initiated in order that everyone has the most up to date information; and
- Links between the Parliamentary contact group and European Parliamentary structures need to be initiated in order to have a dialogue on support to NEPAD with northern colleagues.

It was acknowledged by the delegates that there were some pre-conditions for NEPAD to succeed and these included peace and security, post-conflict reconstruction and development, good governance, human rights as well as HIV/AIDS. In this regard it was noted that if HIV/AIDS remained unchecked, it had the potential to completely undermine any progress on NEPAD, which might conceivably result. It was noted that the issue of HIV/AIDS had been treated as a 'health' issue in the NEPAD documentation rather than as a developmental issue. In terms of issues, which needed to be prioritized, the assembled delegates emphasized the following;

- Education and capacity building: this was almost unanimously identified as critical to the development of capacity to deal with complex issues such as industrial development, agitating for the release of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, debt relief, and agricultural access to markets. In addition it was necessary to address the brain-drain phenomenon.
- It is essential that the empowerment of Women be accorded a high priority;
- The G8 process had not yet yielded much in terms of actual delivery and a new approach was perhaps called for;
- How to deal with WTO and MFIs in terms of negotiations and how to follow the process adequately;
- Harmonization of sub-regional initiatives within the context of NEPAD; an example was given of competing large energy infrastructural projects which might have better been combined.
- What was needed in terms of regulatory frameworks to encourage small and medium sized enterprises ?
- Access to affordable and relevant technology was needed to encourage development.
- Research and development needed to be accelerated in order to bring African solutions to African problems. Regional cooperation was key in this regard as no one country had the ability to really mount serious R & D programmes.

## **NEPAD CONTACT GROUP OF AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS**

### **PROPOSALS FOR ACTION AT MEETING IN CAPE TOWN**

**22 SEPTEMBER 2004**

#### **1. ACTION BY STEERING COMMITTEE**

Convenor to arrange next meeting  
Convenor to ensure translation of report in French and Portuguese  
Keep in touch with Nepad Secretariat  
Ensure that Contact Group maintains focus on economic issues

#### **2 ACTION BY CONTACT GROUP**

Encourage advocacy on Nepad  
Strengthen linkages with existing institutions  
Encourage empowerment of women in economy  
Can we change IMF and World Bank policies?  
Examine possibilities of funding for training across the continent

#### **3 ACTION BY AWEPA**

Greater information flow in Europe on Africa  
Raise funds for training and information flow in Africa  
Provide support for preparing project proposals  
Attempt to create better coherence within Europe on Africa

#### **4 ACTION BY NEPAD SECRETARIAT**

Facilitate intra-Africa trade  
Examine agro-industry cooperation in Regions  
Generate common position on foreign debt

#### **5. ACTION BY INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS**

Ensure Nepad issues are fully raised in national Parliaments and Committee system  
Carry Nepad to the public and political parties  
Ensure regional networking on Nepad  
Contact local offices of UN and other international organizations to seek help with information retrieval.

Ensure receipt of Nepad Newsletter

## 6. ACTION BY INDIVIDUAL PARLIAMENTS

Create Nepad Desks

Hold debates on Nepad

Hold public hearings on Nepad

Examine why productive capacity has declined since Independence

Examine how Nepad funds will be used constructively

Examine marshalling own financial resources across Africa

Regular assessment of empowerment of women in the economy

Is it possible to raise bonds from other African countries rather than the World Bank?

Examine non-tariff barriers in Region (including bribes)

Examine persisting colonial agreements

Are our Budgets excessively aid dependent?

Consider HIV/Aids as both health and development issue

Use local academics as advisors and resource persons

Review regulatory systems over economy

Examine project preparation capacity is ready and projects are implemented

Examine donor bureaucracy critically

Invite Nepad Secretariat to visit

Access Nepad Website

Lobby for resources from North

Prepare for WTO negotiations

Prof Ben Turok M P

Convenor