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#### **Africa's Development Renaissance: the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a Facilitator**

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(NEPAD) as a Facilitator**

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# **Africa's Development Renaissance: the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a Facilitator**

## **Abstract**

Issues pertaining to Africa's development renaissance have gained primacy in the past decade. Certainly, even before the close of the last century, there emerged determined efforts by African leaders to reverse the gloom and pessimism that had loomed large in its postcolonial history. The urgency for addressing the continent's development malaise was shown by the conclusion of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative, which was meant to set new ground rules for the enhancement of investments required for a take-off. While NEPAD is not the first pan-African effort to reengineer development process for the continent, there is a sense in which NEPAD is not like any other effort before it. NEPAD, as a post-Cold War product, is not encumbered by ideological contests and hence has been founded on objectives and principles that converge around (neo)liberal social, political and economic arrangement of society. The paper focalizes on Africa's development in a globalized world, in the past decade. It also examines whether the platform created by NEPAD is taken seriously by the member states for an enduring development renaissance on the continent. It is concluded that if NEPAD should be an effective facilitator in promoting Africa's claim of the millennium, then its complementarily with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) should be exploited maximally. Finally it is indicated that civil society participation in the development process as espoused in the Constitutive Act of the African Union would be critical for the realization of the development renaissance.

## **Introduction**

The seismic occurrences on the African landscape in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which tumbled the authoritarian governance systems and the apartheid regime of South Africa, brought some relief and optimism to the continent that had long been beleaguered by the plagues of bad governance, poverty, hunger and disease. As Africa's governance systems began to distance themselves from their prior autocratic predilections, to embrace competitive democratic systems and the rule of law, it became obvious that Africa was redefining itself in a more positive way (Joseph 1997). In the trail of these developments, hope began to emerge; and the thoughts that Africa was at last transcending its protracted apocalyptic existence, also began to flourish.

The collapse of the apartheid regime in South Africa; and the installation of a democratically elected majority government in 1994 were to carry to new heights the realization that indeed Africa was making a break with its melancholic past. As a consequence, the public discourse, in South Africa in particular, became infused with the concept 'African renaissance' as an expressing of rebranding the continent in a more positive way. However, its popularization virtually became the personal project of the former South African President Thabo Mbeki; which he carried through a number of public speeches delivered on the subject matter. This was to signal Africa's regeneration in such fields as governance, culture, science and technology. The Africa renaissance concept was adopted apace, across the continent; and applied to varied phenomena that were deemed to be of prime concern for Africa's revivalism and confidence building.

As issues pertaining to Africa's renaissance held grounds, it also became imperative to interrogate the performance of the existing pan-African bodies in the face of emerging globalization drives; and regional challenges. And as the existing institutions were found to be inadequate in meeting Africa's needs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, new pan-African projects such as the New Partnership for the Recovery of Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Union (AU) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) were established to propel the African claim of the 21st century, forward.

Since underdevelopment and poverty had been the main handicaps for the continent's visibility and contribution to the global community, Africa's development matters naturally took the center stage with the establishment of the NEPAD. In recognition of the post-Cold war global ideological convergence around neoliberalism, the context for the establishment and

operationalization of NEPAD had clearly been cut out. The general movement from authoritarianism to democracy on the continent provides a conducive regional environment for NEPAD in taking up the role of a facilitator for Africa's development renaissance. In line with this governance transformative process, NEPAD took a definite (neo)liberal ideological position in setting its principles, objectives and ground rules of engagement, which member countries are expected to abide with. The guiding principles of NEPAD, therefore, presumed that its members would accept the political and economic logics of neoliberalism that thrives on democracy, good political and corporate governance, sustainable environmental management and gender mainstreaming. Notwithstanding the specified ideological domain in which NEPAD is situated, the African renaissance has somehow been dented by the democratic relapse in such countries as the Ivory Coast, Mauritania, Guinea, and Madagascar. Also the persistence of conflict in the Darfur region of the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo has been a drawback on Africa's good governance image building drive.

In the face of the reincarnation of these troubling situations, the paper examines the role being played by NEPAD in keeping Africa's development renaissance dreams alive. And in doing so, attention is drawn to the complementary and reinforcing symbiosis that exists between the NEPAD, the APRM and the AU in addressing issues related to Africa's development renaissance. I have also discussed the emerging polemical issue as to whether the NEPAD, can be drawn into the skeptic notion of the 'old wine in a new wine-skin' metaphor (Mwangi 2008).

To address the issues, the rest of the paper is sectionalized around the following sub-themes: Roots of Africa's Underdevelopment; Pan-African Institutional Responses and Challenges; NEPAD Initiative as a 21<sup>st</sup> century Response, Challenges to Development Renaissance initiative and Conclusion.

### **Roots of Africa's Underdevelopment**

The low capacity of many African countries in lifting the lives of their populations out of poverty, disease, hunger and squalor had always been evident even before the attainment of independence (Nkrumah 2007). The anti-colonial struggle was, however, energized by the belief that independence was going to pave the way for positive transformations in the lives of the

African. In Ghana, the anti-colonial mobilization effort was pursued under the tantalizing banner of the Convention People's Party (CPP) that demanded its followers to 'seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things would be added unto you' (Rooney 1988) The expectation that the state would harness the collective energies of all to deliver on improving the quality of life was huge. Independence was indeed granted; but as it turned out to be, the euphoria was short-lived. Even before the expiry of the third decade, the peoples of Africa, with their scholars, were wondering aloud whether the years of independence were not actually lost years (Nyong'o 1992). The feeling of gloom and pessimism gained grounds as poverty, hunger, disease and autocratic rule, became pervasive on the continent. This began to evoke a rather ironic reminiscence for the colonial era that actually laid the grounds for the inherent underdevelopment and weakness of the state in Africa.

The underdeveloped nature of the African state and its 'swollen' character is a well documented matter that has become a growth industry (Diamond 1988). The etiological roots of Africa's underdevelopment are varied and have been accounted for as such in the literature. In accounting for this state of affairs on the African continent and elsewhere, the favorite starting point for neo-Marxists, is the European colonial activities in the areas in question (Leys 1975) . The indecent haste that characterized the scramble for territories on the continent by the European powers produced extreme balkanization of Africa into many unviable states (Ake 1981). Irrespective of the size of the colonial state the primary objective of the colonizing power was to appropriate the economic surplus that was generated by the colonized people by way of agricultural and/or extractive economic activities (Onimode 1988).

The pursuance of the economic objective logically led to the vertical integration of the African colonies into the global economic system (Frank 1966). As there was a general colonial disinterest in adding value to the products on the continent; and as a result the colonies assumed the role of upstream tributaries, serving the metropolitan colonial power with cheap raw materials. In this way, the colonies in Africa became the leading producers and exporters of such primary products as palm oil, rubber, cocoa, coffee, cotton, groundnuts, sisal, timber, gold, diamond, iron, manganese, among others; that served as inputs into the European industrialization program.

The colonial economic system that emerged in Africa, therefore, became internally disarticulated. This was due to the fact that the colonial economies as a productive entity were hardly characterized by any forward and backward linkages. The transport infrastructure was the most visible evidence of this disconnect between the export producing centers and the rest of the economy as the railways and the road infrastructure linked the producing areas directly to the harbors at the coast for export, with a minimal interest in the rest of the country. The disarticulation that happened between one colonial state and the other, even took exaggerated proportions as the colonies were largely disconnected from each other in terms of trade and communication infrastructure (Ake 1981; Onimode 1988).

Such legacies were to throw big challenges to the African nationalist leaders at independence. This was especially the case because the colonialists in their effort to park the indigenous people at the margins of their respective socioeconomic formations erected a plethora of impediments on their way. These impediments included minimal access to formal education, placement of bans on the indigenous people in engaging in some economic activities, discrimination against Africans in employment and the reservation of positions of profit and privilege to non-Africans. At independence, it was clear that the capacity of the new African state managers were low (Adu 2000). This was because many of them were academically inadequate and also lacked the requisite practical experiences that were necessary for embarking on policies that require strategic planning for lifting their countries out of the doldrums. The few that had the benefit of the required qualifications exploited it maximally as they became rent-seekers through the reinforcement of the culture of privilege. For these new African leaders the state provided the avenue for accumulating wealth without doing so capitalistically (Ake 2000; Bathily 2000). The colonial culture had been internalized, in all fields so much that the postcolonial state came to represent continuity, rather than the discontinuity, of the colonial economic arrangement. In consequence the exploitative metropole-periphery economic structure that Andre Gunder Frank (1967) identified with the colonial economic system did not diminish with the grant of political independence. The reality of the African situation was that given its definitive underdevelopment and weakness, its economic independence was not going to happen any time soon (Amin 1974).

While the neo-Marxist theorization have largely become the orthodoxy for explaining the underdevelopment and weakness of the African state, a counterargument that seeks to exonerate

colonialism by placing the blame on Africa's pre-colonial and postcolonial state formation processes have been made by Jeffrey Herbst (2000). His focus is mainly on the institutional weakness related to the legitimacy crisis that is associated with many African countries. The weakness of the African state he adduces emanate from the differentials that exist in the state formation processes between Africa and the rest of the world. His argument is that for geographical reasons state power consolidation in Sub-Saharan Africa was particularly costly; as Africa's population densities was low and barriers to long distance transport were numerous. The situation in Africa was contrasted with state formation process in other parts of the world particularly in Europe. He indicated that the consolidation of state authority in Europe was influenced by the shortage of land in the midst of excess labor, which created the incentive to exert effective control over land, even at the cost of wars. The nation-states that efficiently perform the key state functions in: mobilizing fiscal and human resources, organizing and financing an army, provision of public goods through effective administration were most likely to thrive as states. This was the case because such states were most likely to succeed in being granted legitimacy by its subjects.

On the other hand, those states in Europe that lacked the requisite atavistic and administrative capacities to exercise effective political control succumbed to the Darwinian survival logic and as such gave way to the more capable ones to flourish. In Herbst's account this Darwinian state selection and survival process did not happen in Africa because land was not scarce to trigger such struggles to control land and its occupants. The drawing of the colonial borders exacerbated the problems associated with the African state formation as the authority of the state managers was hardly coextensive to the territorial limits of the state. This created problems associated with institutional weakness of states as governments with doubtful legitimacy prevailed in Africa.

While the neo-Marxists and the Herbstian arguments may look as polar opposites the extant situation in Africa today points to the merger of the two positions in defining the African reality. African states emerge out of colonialism with both economic and institutional underdevelopment. The interplay of Africa's economic backwardness and institutional dysfunctionality mainly define the afflictions Africans have been going through since independence.

## **Pan-African Institutional Responses**

In dealing with the problems of underdevelopment, African leaders from the very onset realized the need to embark on pan-African unification projects so as to overcome the negative effects of small sizes of the individual countries (Armah 2004; Nkrumah 2007). The recognition of the expected benefits of a pan-African unification effort, however, did not translate into its immediate actualization. The lack of agreement on the mode of unification and the amount of power that could be divested to a central body led to ideological schism on the unification matter. It was not until 23 May 1963 that the emergent ideological blocks – the Monrovia and the Casablanca – buried their differences to establish the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa. As indicated, the main difference between the blocks was whether the pan-African body should be a loose inter-governmental body or a union under a supranational authority in which the inherited colonial borders would be erased for a federal structure.

The resolution of the differences between the two blocks was very much reflected in the objectives and the principles that were to guide the operation of the OAU. In fact the objectives captured the range of core challenges that faced the continent at the time. The objectives were captured in Article II of the Charter; which specifically stated the following:

- To promote the unity and solidarity of African states
- To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa
- To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence
- To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and
- To promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Clearly, the objectives were set to eradicate colonialism on the continent and to preserve its unity. The drawbacks of the underdevelopment of Africa were to be tackled through the intensification of ‘cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa.’ In achieving these member states pledged themselves to harmonize their policies in the following fields:

1. Political and diplomatic cooperation,
2. Economic cooperation including transport and communication,
3. Education and cultural cooperation,
4. Health, sanitation and nutritional cooperation,
5. Scientific and technical cooperation, and
6. Cooperation for defense and security.

The Article III of the Charter was quite elaborate in indicating the principles that would guide the relationship among the member states, upon which cooperation and cordiality among the states would be foisted. The principles in the Charter included the following:

- (a) The sovereign equality of all member States,
- (b) Non-interference in the internal affairs of States,
- (c) Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State and for its inalienable right to independent existence,
- (d) Peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, conciliation and arbitration
- (e) Unreserved condemnation in all forms of political assassination as well as of subversive activities on the part of neighboring States or any other States,
- (f) Absolute dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories that are still dependent,
- (g) Affirmation of a policy of non-alignment with regards to all blocs.

The principles clearly revealed the concerns as well as the psychology of new state leaders that wanted to preserve the integrity of the colonial inherited territories. And to nib in the bud potential tendencies toward hegemonic bully by the bigger African states over the smaller ones the principles were unequivocal in spelling out the element of sovereign equality of all, together with the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. Also of concern was the emphasis placed on the respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of member states.

One needs to understand the psychological dilemmatic situation of a nationalist leader who had gone through protracted struggles against a colonial power to secure independence and then being demanded to surrender the newly acquired sovereign power to a union that would either erase or undercut the essence of what had been fought for. The calls for higher goals in a pan-African project would naturally not occur, immediately, to many in such circumstances. It was mainly for this reason that the matter of degree for the surrender of national sovereignty for the unification effort became a tedious one.

In the global geopolitical context of the period it was difficult to envision a unification project on the continent with an overall binding value system on governance. Thus when the Charter made an obvious tangential reference to having '... due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' it turned out that there were no institutional frameworks of providing remedies to the people. It was the absence of a pervasive binding value system among the OAU member states that catalyzed the emergence and the entrenchment of authoritarian regimes prior to the touchdown of the global democratic third wave in Africa in the early 1990s.

Notwithstanding the non-prioritization of democratic principles on the continent that gave the impression that the OAU was a dictators' club, a strong commitment was shown in fighting colonialism and racial discrimination and oppression on the continent. The decolonization struggle took a privilege position on the agenda of the OAU. And was the Apartheid system, seen as being repugnant to the dignity of the non-white races that were discriminated against. The decolonization of the African continent and the dismantling of the apartheid regime in South Africa were possible through the unremitted commitment of the OAU that served as the common platform for the continental voice. As the primary objective of decolonization began to bear fruits, the focus of the Organization began to embrace the concerns of the continent's economic underdevelopment. These particular concerns were raised in the aftermath of the oil shocks that the oil exporting cartel – Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) – visited on the global economy in 1973 and 1979.

The effects of the steep rise of petroleum prices in 1973 and again at the end of the 1970s increased oil prices dramatically. Its effect on the continent was that while Africa in 1970 spent just one per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on oil imports the effect of the price

increase led to Africa's oil import bill to rise to six per cent of GDP a decade later. This led to the dwindling of foreign exchange in the oil importing countries in Africa. The benefit that accrued to the OPEC countries was lodged in Western banks as 'petrodollars' that was recycled to Africa as loans to the distressed countries. The implications of this on the indebtedness of African countries was huge, especially as the traditional export commodities of these countries fell.

The calamity of Africa in the 1970s was not limited to oil price hikes alone but there was a natural element in the catastrophe as well. The Sudano-Sahel hunger situation that was associated with the prolonged drought in the semi-arid regions of the Sahel and extended into the Sudano region raised the hellish conditions on the continent in the period to new levels. Africa looked on helplessly as though the continent was under a Malthusian spell. The interventions came from without and took various forms which included charity from international musicians.

In the light of the worsening living conditions African scholars were quick in taking refuge in the *dependencia* theoretical notions which originated from Latin America. The problems of underdevelopment had extraneous causal factors that sometimes act with their internal compradorial elements (Amin 1974; Leys 1975). The solution as suggested by the *dependencia* orthodoxy was to delink from the global economic and trading systems that were perceived as being irredeemably exploitative to the developing world. The development effort in Africa and the rest of the developing world was to be led by the state; and the state-centric projects were to be anchored on the principles of self-reliance. It was these theoretical underpinnings of the *dependencia* that girded the content of the alternative solutions that were sought for Africa's development challenges in the period prior to the establishment of NEPAD in 2001.

By the beginning of the 1970s Africa with the rest of the developing world began to call for the establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) that would be more beneficent to them. The developing world's demand for a NIEO was channeled through the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at its meeting held in Algiers in September 1973. The NAM's demand was carried further to a special Session of the UN General Assembly in April 1974 to address issues associated with international trade and raw materials. At this Session the Group of 77 (G77) emerged to secure the adoption of the Declaration and Program of Action for a New International Economic Order. The efforts toward NIEO generally lacked the support of the

United States and the industrialized countries. In all these demands for a NIEO that were pursued through the NAM and the UN General Assembly, African countries were active participants; as the demands for a new international deal was critical for the success for the predominantly raw material producers.

It is worth mentioning that African states acting through the platform provided by the OAU had also repeatedly focused on the malaise of underdevelopment that was so pervasive on the continent. This was especially the case in the period 1973–1991. With the economic dislocation that was associated with the oil price hikes in 1973/74 and 1979 Africa began to rethink its development approach for a more sustainable one. This was indicated in the Monrovia Declaration of July 1979, which became the bridgehead for later development programs as the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) of 1980 and the Final Act of Lagos of 1981. Also in the pack of the rethinking effort that was occurring in Africa was the Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Program for Social Economic Recovery; and the African Economic Community (AEC) of 1991 (Mwangi 2008).

As had been indicated the dominant theoretical framework in explaining the continent's economic difficulties were informed by the structuralist perspective that sees Africa's economic and trade relationship with the industrialized world as inherently exploitative to Africa's course. In this regard, the OAU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) alternative strategies were skeptical of Africa's deep involvement in the exploitative global system that had perpetuated their underdevelopment and dependency. The remedial measures therefore tended toward introversion that was to be achieved through regional and sub-regional integration that would promote collective self reliance. In nowhere is this self-reliant doctrine of Africa espoused more than the celebrated and yet an unimplemented alternative program of Lagos Plan of Action. Its popularity was mainly due the emphasis that had been placed on 'collective self reliance.' In fact in the section1 of the preamble to the LPA a lamentation of the Africa's situation was registered as follows:

The effect of unfulfilled promises of global development strategies has been more sharply felt in Africa than in the other continents of the world. Indeed rather than result in the improvement in the economic situation of the continent, successive strategies have made it stagnate and become more susceptible than other regions to the economic and social

crises suffered by the industrialized countries. Thus Africa is unable to point to any significant growth rate or satisfactory index of general well-being in the past 20 years (Organization of African Unity 1981: 1).

Having indicated the futility of the prior strategies in dealing with the African situation, the authors of the LPA were very clear in their minds that the solution laid in embarking on the path of self reliance. The distinctive mark of the LPA document was clearly its replete with the concept 'self-reliance.' While the document was profusely injected with the concept 'self-reliance' the need for foreign assistance to enable Africa to navigate through the rough waters of underdevelopment was recognized (Akokpari 2008).

But the LPA was actually to suffer a still-birth; as the forces of neoliberalism were to asphyxiate it. As trade liberalization to international trading and economic systems were projected through globalization philosophy, it became apparent that the introverted objectives of the LPA were instantaneously rendered anachronistic. The LPA therefore did not have significant appeal beyond academic cycles in Africa. The neoliberal project implemented in Africa through the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) were to significantly infuse a new economic development thinking through the neoclassical orientation that sought to redirect thought that would appreciate the virtues for participating in the globalized economy. Not even the efforts by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to establish what was labeled the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Program for Social Economic Recovery and Transformation (1989) could see the light of the day.

The Treaty for the establishment of the African Economic Community (AEC) was signed in Abuja in June 1991. The AEC has since May 1994 been in operation when the required number of instruments of ratification for its coming into force were deposited at the OAU. The integration approach of the AEC is a gradualist one that is meant to cover six stages to its final fruition in 2034. The AEC is to rely on the existing regional economic communities (RECs) to foster the larger pan-African economic integration effort.

The challenges and the transformations that occurred in Africa and the rest of the world in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century indicated that the marginalization of the continent was going to be

deepened if the pan-African institutions did not respond appropriately. This thinking coincided with the popularization of the African renaissance notion that called for the revitalizing the continent for it to take its rightful place in the global community. It is this thinking among a new brand of African leaders that led to the establishment of the New Partnership for Development of Africa (NEPAD) in 2001. The NEPAD was quickly followed by complementary institutions like the African Union (AU) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to provide a new direction for Africa's development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **NEPAD Initiative as a 21<sup>st</sup> century Response**

The futility of the plethoric strategies on the development status of Africa, led to the reappraisal of what had gone wrong so as to devise more viable and sustainable institutions. Again in line with the African renaissance idea, the former President Thabo Mbeki was the key figure in mobilizing the views of the former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and the Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika around the initiative for strategies for development revitalization which was labeled the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Program (MAP). The eagerness to deal with the malaise of Africa's underdevelopment was also reflected in the effort by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, who was simultaneously working on his OMEGA Plan for Africa that was also meant to reengineer development process on the continent (Ayee 2008).

In order not to create unnecessary parallel institutions for dealing with the development challenges that Africa faced the OAU demanded the mergence of the two initiatives. This was done and adopted under the name New African initiative (NAI) in Lusaka in 2001. Later the Heads of State and Government Implementing Committee (HSGIC) for the project finalized the policy framework and named it the NEPAD on 23 October 2001 in Abuja. The NEPAD had four objectives and these are: to eradicate poverty; promote sustainable growth and development; integrate Africa in the world economy; and to accelerate the empowerment of women. The objectives are clearly meant to address the issues of poverty through the promotion of accelerated growth and development. The objectives also recognized that the other half of the

population, namely women needed to be brought on board to facilitate the developmental process. The objective seeks to place Africa into the mainstream of the world economy..

The NEPAD's operation is to be guided by following principles:

- Good Governance as a basic requirement for peace and security, and sustainable political and socioeconomic development
- African ownership and leadership, as well as broad and deep participation by all sectors of society
- Anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and the resourcefulness of its people
- Partnership between and among African peoples
- Acceleration of regional and continental integration
- Building the competitiveness of African countries and the continent
- Forging a new international partnership that changes the unequal relationship between Africa and the developed world
- Ensuring that all partnerships with NEPAD are linked to the Millennium Development Goals and other agreed goals and targets.

The principles are hinged on the belief in good governance as it is seen as the basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socioeconomic development. It is noted also that all international partnerships with Africa should aim at changing the unequal *status quo* between Africa and the developed world (NEPAD 2001).

The July 2002 Durban Summit of the OAU/AU the NEPAD was supplemented with the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. According to the Declaration states participating in NEPAD believe in a just, honest, transparent, accountable and participatory and collective freedom. The Declaration also entailed the right to participate in free, credible and democratic political processes; and the adherence to the separation of powers including the independence of the judiciary and the effectiveness of parliaments. This Declaration on Democracy, Political and corporate Governance also committed the participating countries in NEPAD to establish an APRM to promote adherence to the objectives and principles of the NEPAD. The APRM was instituted in 2003 to complement the NEPAD. This is to ensure

a different governance milieu for the NEPAD to operate. The APRM has the primary goal of ensuring good governance among its members. This would be ensured by review processes that allow states that voluntarily opt for the process to be assessed in the areas of political, corporate and social and environmental governance.

The transformation of the OAU into the AU provides the third leg of the tripod that is geared towards the African renaissance. Unlike the OAU the AU is very much committed to the promotion of democratic governance and this has been captured clearly in its objectives and principles. The AU has the following objectives:

- Promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
- Promote and protect human peoples' rights in accordance with the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights* and other relevant human rights instruments;
- Establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
- Promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
- Promote cooperation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
- Coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- Advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology; and

The objectives and principles of the APRM and the AU tend to reinforce each other and thereby sending the message that Africa had moved away from its bad governance days and it is also a clear case that the continent is no longer interested in being at the periphery of global affairs.

With the new these developments in Africa the NEPAD has received support from the G8, the European Union (EU) and China. This has allowed it to begin putting in place measures for addressing challenges that the continent faces in many fields. The NEPAD, which is headquartered in Midrand in South Africa, is not directly responsible for the implementation of

development projects but it plays the role of coordination and resource mobilization. In this respect NEPAD has been credited for being involved in the following:

- The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), aimed at assisting the launching of a 'green revolution' in Africa, based on a belief in the key role of agriculture in development.
- The NEPAD Science and Technology program, including an emphasis on research in areas such as water science and energy.
- The "e-schools program adopted by the HSGIC in 2003 as an initiative to equip all 600,000 primary and secondary schools in Africa with Information Technology equipment and internet access within 10 years, in partnership with several large IT companies.
- The launch of a Pan African Infrastructure Development Fund (PAIDF) by the Public Investment Corporation of South Africa, to finance high priority cross-border infrastructure projects.
- Capacity building for continental institutions, working with the African Capacity Building Foundation, the Southern Africa Trust, UNECA, the African Development Bank, and other development partners. One of NEPAD's priorities has been to strengthen the capacity of and linkages among the Regional Economic Communities
- The construction of the Trans-Saharan highway and the installation of a gas pipeline in the Sahara region

### **Challenges to the Development Renaissance Initiative**

The fundamentals of the development renaissance issue, which hinges on good governance, democracy, peace and security, are still shaky in many parts of the continent. Democratic reversals have occurred in Madagascar, Ivory Coast, Mauritania and Guinea. The Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo are still being afflicted by conflict. The continent is still not out of the economic woes yet as poverty is pervasive and HIV/AIDS have assumed epidemic proportions in many parts of the continent. With the persistence of the familiar African story of

poverty, hunger and disease, the situation seems to play into the skeptics' notion that nothing has changed in Africa. In this case therefore NEPAD has been associated with that Africa is just recycling its unworkable strategies in another form.

The NEPAD has been most criticized by the way it was established. Just like the previous continental development initiatives, the NEPAD was top-down in its formation. The process for its formation excluded civil society and its associations. This non-consideration of this significant constituency obviously violates the very principles that the NEPAD and its complementary institutions seek to project. The exclusion was incur a backlash from civil society, when a number of such social movements, organization, youth and religious groups signed the African Civil society Declaration on NEPAD and rejected it in July 2002.

Due to its mode of construction NEPAD seems to be aloof of the ordinary citizenry and hence the notions about remains within the confines of a small constituency within individual domestic economies. The challenge that NEPAD must deal with if the African development renaissance element should appreciated and carried forward by all. Otherwise NEPAD would suffer disinterest as many other projects before it had experienced; and thus waning the drive for revitalization the African spirit for development.

The position of NEPAD in the institutional troika of the NEPAD, APRM and the AU is not often clear of obfuscation. This is because the NEPAD was formed outside the AU framework; and even though attentions have repeatedly been drawn to the need to incorporate the NEPAD into the AU fold, the matter is not fully settled yet.

A challenge already alluded to is about the relapse of democracy in some African countries and the infringement of peoples rights in such circumstances. This is the case notwithstanding the APRM process. And this brings to the fore the extent to which the neopatrimonial African politicians would voluntarily abide by good governance values if they are confronted with the risk of losing power.

## **Conclusion**

In institutional terms Africa's development renaissance has been realized through the formation of the NEPAD. The NEPAD has thus been pivotal in facilitating the processes for rebranding Africa for acceptability and recognition in the global economic system. NEPAD has rightly identified the important role good governance in ensuring that people would be committed to deliver on the development. This would enable Africa to realize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which would largely address the fundamental challenges of underdevelopment.

It is concluded that if NEPAD should be an effective facilitator in promoting Africa's claim of the millennium, then the complementary role of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) should be exploited maximally. The recognition given to civil society organization in ensuring good governance practices is laudable and if this addressed well then the initial reservations by the civil society organizations about the NEPAD would be overcome.

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