

AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION ON NEPAD

"WE DO NOT ACCEPT NEPAD !! AFRICA IS NOT FOR SALE !! "

We members of social movements, trade unions, youth and women's organisations, faith-based organisations, academics, NGOs and other popular civil society organisations from the whole of Africa, meeting in Port Shepstone, South Africa, 48 July 2002 on the threshold of the launch of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development in Durban, critically examined NEPAD in the context of the struggles for Africa's development and emancipation.

While conscious of the importance of joint endeavours for the development of Africa, this 'new international partnership' initiative ignores and sidelines past and existing programmes and efforts by Africans themselves to resolve Africa's crises and move forward from programmes such as the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) and the Abuja Treaty (1991), the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF-SAAP, 1989), the African Charter for Popular Participation and Development (Arusha Charter, 1990) and the Cairo Agenda (1994).

In contrast to such programmes, NEPAD is mainly concerned with raising external financial resources, appealing to and relying on external governments and institutions. In addition, it is a top-down programme driven by African elites and drawn up with the corporate forces and institutional instruments of globalisation, rather than being based on African peoples experiences, knowledge and demands. A legitimate African programme has to start from the people and be owned by the people.

We take as our point of departure, and build upon, the many fundamental critiques of NEPAD from all over the continent, such as the statements of the African Social Forum (Bamako, Mali, January 2002) and of CODESRIA (Council for Development and Social Science Research in Africa) with the Third World Network-Africa (Accra, April 2002) and others.

During our deliberations and wide-ranging discussions on NEPAD we focused on the following key aspects and reached the following conclusions.

I. NEPAD, DEMOCRACY AND 'GOOD GOVERNANCE'

We discussed the nature and role of the post-colonial state in Africa, and the role of the developmental state in the earlier economic, social and human development achievements following independence. We noted that NEPAD

- * ignores the way the state has, itself, been undermined as a social provider and vehicle for development, particularly under the World Bank's tutelage;
- * ignores the way that the 'structurally adjusted' state has, in turn, been undermining institutions and processes of democracy in Africa;
- * does not reflect the historic struggles in Africa for participatory forms of democracy and decentralisation of power;

- * promises of democracy and 'good governance' are largely intended to satisfy foreign donors and to give guarantees to foreign investment.

We conclude that

1. While we are committed to good government in Africa, we do not accept the interpretation and content that this is given in NEPAD, including questionable economic policies that we do not accept embedded within 'good governance'.
2. We call on African people to mobilise for a developmental participatory state responsive to their needs and aspirations, and to build popular and democratic movements that can hold our states to their responsibilities.

II NEPAD, PEACE AND 'STABILITY'

We discussed how the conflicts on the continent have their sources in the legacy of colonialism, economic exclusion, political intolerance, social polarisation, artificial borders and unequal access to resources.

We noted that NEPAD

- * ignores all these factors and approaches these problems mainly as technical peace-keeping operations;
- * does not point to the structural adjustment policies of the IMF and World Bank in exacerbating conflicts leading to further wars;
- * does not point to the interests of corporations, war profiteers and war-lords, in their determination to control and exploit our resources, such as oil, diamonds, and other precious resources, as a major source of war and conflict in Africa

We conclude that

1. Peace based on and guaranteeing human security requires an environment that fulfils people's needs, and livelihood needs free from all forms of discrimination
2. Peace demands a Pan-African response to the divisions and tensions created by the legacy of arbitrary colonial borders and divisive social relations.
3. The Kampala Declaration establishing the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation (CSSDCA) can be an important instrument for peace building.

III NEPAD AND HUMAN RIGHTS

We discussed with great concern the longstanding denial and abuse of human rights in most of the countries of Africa and the devastating effects of the HIV-AIDS pandemic on our people.

We noted that NEPAD

- * makes very few references to human rights and these are largely rhetorical;

- * deals only superficially with the impact of HIV-AIDS upon peoples lives;
- * does not guarantee self-determination for the people and contains policies that contradict or are incompatible with democracy and human rights;
- * promotes regional economic integration but is totally silent on the rights of people to freely move and seek employment across borders in Africa.

We noted, further, that since the recent G8 meeting in Kananaskis, NEPAD is now being linked to the US agenda on 'terrorism' that could be used as a lever for the introduction of legislation violating basic civil and political rights.

We commit ourselves to continue our struggle for human rights in the fullest meaning, including political, civil, economic, social, women's, cultural and environmental rights.

IV NEPAD AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMMES

We analysed the policies and effects, and our direct experiences of World Bank SAPs over recent decades in our countries. We noted that, despite the negative economic, social, political, and environmental effects of SAPs, NEPAD

- * accepts the fundamentals of the neo-liberal and gender-blind SAPs paradigm which has been largely responsible for the deepening of the African crises, including the feminisation of poverty;
- * uncritically endorses the latest version of SAPs, the so-called Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (PRSPs) which have been discredited by popular movements;
- * throws a lifeline to the IMF and WB at precisely the time that they are in ideological and institutional crises as a result of unremitting criticism and struggles worldwide against their policies.

We commit ourselves

- * To continue to expose to greater public knowledge, and reinforce our resistance to all policies of the IMF and the World Bank now incorporated into NEPAD.

V NEPAD AND RESOURCE MOBILISATION

We examined the challenges and problems of resource mobilisation for development, and noted that NEPAD

- * ignores the question of people's ownership and control of African resources, and disregards the people as the most vital resource and purpose of development;
- * will not mobilise Africa's rich natural resources for African development but for further foreign exploitation and plunder;
- * has nothing to say about the mobilisation, redistribution and utilisation of African land for development, particularly for women;

- * focuses heavily on external financial resources without concern for the costs, and the negative economic, social, and environmental effects of foreign investment and liberalised capital flows

We conclude that:

1. The unrealistic hopes for external financial resources will, as always, not be forthcoming, as already evident in the recent G8 response to NEPAD.
2. The 'donors' or aid givers have shown that they will decide separately which countries they will/will not support and on their own policy terms and self-interests.
3. The 'debt relief' offers by the G8 will, similarly, be very limited and only offered to those governments which dutifully follow neo-liberal and gender blind precepts.
4. Such limited debt 'relief' will, nonetheless, not go even to such countries but to bail out the creditors.
5. The whole NEPAD 'fundraising' project is a non-starter, and we will focus our efforts on appropriate resource mobilisation, including African financial resources now legally and illegally outside of Africa; and relate all such resources to alternative development strategies based on collective self-reliance.

VI NEPAD AND DEBT

We examined the nature, sources and causes of Africa's 'debt', which is a fundamental cause of underdevelopment, poverty and inequality; is owed to the same forces that benefited from slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism; has served to build the wealth and power of the elites in Africa; and is not only a financial, but a political instrument of domination and control of the North over Africa.

We note, however, that NEPAD

- * accepts the obligation for Africa to repay this illegitimate debt to the further prejudice of fundamentally important social services and development needs;
- * ignores the demands for total debt cancellation produced by campaigns in Africa, in South-South campaigns and worldwide.

On this basis we

1. We demand total and unconditional debt cancellation.
2. We reaffirm the demand for reparations for the social, economic and ecological damage done to Africa and its people through slavery and colonialism.
3. We call for the return of Africa's wealth corruptly transferred by African elites and held in the North.
4. We undertake to intensify popular mobilisation to pressurise African Governments to repudiate the debt.

VII NEPAD, TRADE AND GLOBALISATION

We fully discussed the role of trade in Africa and the current global system, and noted that indiscriminate trade liberalisation has led to de-industrialisation ,

increased unemployment and growing poverty, and has reinforced Africa's role in the global economy as suppliers of cheap raw materials and labour.

We noted that NEPAD

- * ignores experience and the huge body of evidence and analyses discrediting the theories that trade leads to growth which leads to development;
- * accepts export-led growth and the expansion of Africa's traditional exports which has already aggravated the deteriorating terms of trade for Africa;
- * reinforces Africa's focus on 'market access' into the richest countries through unilateral but false offers such as the EU's Everything But Arms (EBA);
- * endorses the aims of reciprocal free trade and other policy conditionalities demanded by the EU and the US, such as privatisation, labour deregulation, and investment liberalisation in the Cotonou Agreement and the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA), respectively;
- * accepts the erroneous depiction of the 'marginalisation' of Africa, whereas Africa has long been deeply and disadvantageously integrated into the global economy;
- * promotes the deeper integration of Africa into the current globalisation process which fundamentally serves the interests of the rich;
- * misunderstands the imbalanced nature of WTO trade agreements and trade-related agreements, particularly the General Agreement on Trade in Services which will extend global appropriation of African services and resources.

We conclude that

1. We need to continue our efforts to create different types of local, regional and inter-regional trade, and a different role for trade in our economies.
2. We will continue to campaign for our governments to resist unilateral, bilateral and multilateral trade agreements which do not address the inequities of the international economic system.
3. We will continue to campaign and mobilise the African peoples to pressurise their governments to resist an expansion of the scope and powers of the WTO through the introduction of ever more new issues, and to resist a new WTO round being pushed since the Doha Ministerial Conference.
4. We will continue to build the popular movement at national, continental and international levels against neo-liberal economic globalisation, and against the World Trade Organisation as the main institutional force driving globalisation.

On the basis of the above, we do not accept the NEPAD plan, as a process and in its content. We are to committed to joint efforts for Africa's development and emancipation, and we call upon all African peoples' organisations and movements to continue their longstanding efforts to produce sustainable, just and viable alternatives that will benefit all the people of Africa.

ANOTHER AFRICA IS POSSIBLE !

ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE !!

Third World Network Africa
Economic Justice Network
Jubilee South Africa
Environment Monitoring Group
Environmental Monitoring Group
ROPPA
Department of Economics (University of Swaziland)
ENDA TM
Africa Youth Forum
NAFAU
Social Development Network
Department of Sociology
Women for Change
AIDC
Gender and Trade Network in Africa
Inter-Africa Group
Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt & Development
Gender & Forum National De Lutte Centre LA
AFRODAD
BOCONGO
TSOET / TCDD
Ecumenical Support Services
ESSET
EJC
Human Rights Committee of Youth Africa
Women in Business
Kenya Debt Relief Network
FEMNET
Development Network
Tanzania Social and Economic Trust
Zambia Congress of Trade Unions
Namibia Food and Allied Workers Union
LALIT
South African Council of Churches
Wits University
Centre for Civil Society
Malawi Council of Churches
CECIDE
Friends of the Earth
Association of Farmers Education & Traders
Espace Associatif