Assessment of the Gender Orientation of NEPAD

By

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A   *Executive Summary*

A1   Introduction

This paper looks at the *New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)* to assess its adequacy in recognizing and addressing gender issues.

Since NEPAD has a special interest in programmes to create better *conditions* for development, in terms of improved democratic process, good governance and human rights, the paper takes a special interest in whether gender issues are addressed within these *conditions* for development.

This entails a special interest in whether NEPAD proposes to end the various forms of structural gender discrimination, especially where these are established in law, traditional practice and governments' administrative practice. It also entails an interest in whether NEPAD proposes measures to enable women's increased empowerment, especially by better representation in decision making within parliaments, government and the corporate sector.

Further than that, there is an interest in whether the entire programme proposed by NEPAD sufficiently follows the policy principles of gender equality set out in the **UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**, and whether it proposes to address those gender issue which are intrinsic within its area of interest, using strategies outlined in the 1995 **African and Beijing Platforms of Action**.

A2   Method of Assessment

The method of analysis and assessment is to look at the coherence of the document in terms its treatment of gender issues, differentiating between:

➢   *Internal coherence,* in terms of whether there are logical connections between the mention of gender in different parts of the document, e.g. are there gender oriented goals which properly follow and pursue earlier policy statements concerning the need to address gender issues?

➢   *External coherence,* in terms of whether there are gender oriented goals and objectives which take account of the participating government's international commitments on women's rights, and on gender and development

Here gender issues are defined as pervasive gender gaps arising from widespread and institutionalized discriminatory practices. Women's empowerment is interpreted as the process of women's collective action to remove discriminatory practices, and to gain gender equality in the control over the allocation of resources, and access to opportunities.

A3   Main Findings

The assessment findings show that NEPAD is deeply and comprehensively gender blind, in both its internal and external coherence.

The description of the problem area to be tackled by NEPAD does not mention any gender issue. Despite this, the statement on the 'New Political Will' mentions a policy goal to *promote the role of women in social and economic development* and *assure women's participation in political and economic life* (para. 49). But this rather faint policy goal does not translate into any commensurate programme goals. Instead we find overall programme goals *to promote the role of women in all activities* and to *make progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment by eliminating gender discrimination in primary and secondary school enrolment'* (para.68)*.

There is no justification given for choosing increased schooling as the only means towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. This would seem to be a curiously indirect approach, given NEPAD's claimed interest in goals to improve democracy, governance and human rights. But the programme objectives and activities in these areas show **no interest whatsoever** in addressing gender issues.

Worse than that, the later description of the NEPAD programme entirely forgets the earlier goal to close gender gaps in schools. The programme description on Bridging the Education Gap (para. 120-123) makes **no mention** of any objective or action concerned with closing gender gaps in school enrolment.

Therefore, NEPAD's near complete lack of interest in gender is overlaid with lack of internal coherence, where principles do not follow through into goals, and goals do not follow through into objectives. The subject of gender, small to begin with, soon fades away entirely.

In its little mention of gender issues, the document does not acknowledge the prevalence, or even the existence, of the many serious issues of structural and institutionalized gender discrimination. The unsatisfactory attempt to formulate a gender goal in the area of 'gender equality and women's empowerment' merely reveals the authors' implicit belief that women's subordinate position is due to their own inadequacies. So they recommend more education!

Since the proposed programme interventions almost entirely overlook the obligations arising from the above mentioned international agreements and commitments, it is also almost entirely lacking in its external coherence.

A4 Recommendations for Improved Gender Orientation of NEPAD

NEPAD needs complete revision if it is to recognise and address the gender issues which are intrinsic within the all the problems which need to be addressed in African development. This revision should have the following charateristics:

i.   Introduction of proper planning logic in the treatment of gender issues, which should be properly followed and linked throughout the document, from their initial identification in the

situation analysis, through to problem identification, policy statement, programme goals, objectives and activities.

ii.   Within the programme on 'Conditions for Sustainable Development', incorporation of a primary focus on ending all forms of legalized gender discrimination.

iii.   Mainstreaming of gender issues within the sectoral priorities, to recognise and address all the important gender issues that are intrinsic within the areas of endeavour currently suggested.

iv.   Utilisation of the *Women's Convention* as a guideline on policy principles, and the *African and Beijing Platforms for Action* as a guideline on goals and strategies, to guide the gender orientation of NEPAD.

v.   Formation of an Advisory Committee to advise NEPAD on how to undertake gender oriented planning and implementation.

1   Introduction

This paper provides an assessment of the adequacy of the gender orientation of *The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).* This assessment will therefore look at whether NEPAD sufficiently recognises important gender issues, and whether it proposes adequate developmental interventions for addressing such issues.

In looking at this overall question, we can distinguish between two forms of assessment:

i   *Internal adequacy*, in terms of whether the proposed programme is internally consistent in its treatment of gender issues, i.e. whether there are proper and adequate logical connections in following a gender issue along the planning sequence from principles and goals through to implementation activities;

ii   *External adequacy*, in terms of whether there are gender issues which should have been recognised, but which have been overlooked, especially in terms of whether there is sufficient commitment to following up the principles and goals already agreed in international conventions and declarations.

It follows from these considerations that the assessment needs to proceed from a clear definition of what is meant by a *gender issue*, as well as what is meant by a *logical planning sequence* for the coherent treatment of gender issues. Whereas there may be general consensus on what constitutes a logical planning sequence, there is rather less general agreement on what constitutes a gender issue. The paper therefore begins with a section on *Theoretical Framework* to set out the essential vocabulary and categories that will be used in this assessment. This provides the basis for the *Method and Assessment Criteria.*

This theoretical framework and explanation of method is explained in some detail in the hope that it can be used, by other analysts and planners, for the further identification of gender issues which NEPAD has overlooked, and therefore for the gender orientation of NEPAD.

The **Findings** are presented as a table, which systematically looks at each section of NEPAD in terms of the implicit planning sequence, with each section of the table providing an assessment of the **Gender Component** within the section, and how this section has contributed to the **Internal and External Coherence** of the gender element within the plan. Because of the lengthy and comprehensive nature of these findings, they are followed by a shorter section giving **An Overview of the Findings**.

On the basis of these findings, the paper moves to **Recommendations for the Improved Gender Orientation of NEPAD**, and makes its final **Conclusion**.

2 Theoretical Framework for the Evaluation

2.1 The Need for a Focus in a Gender Assessment

Recent attempts to provide a gender assessment of NEPAD have been based on lack of explicit evaluation criteria [see recent reports from ALF and MATCH]. These criticisms have recognised that the document is largely gender blind, and make a range of different types of demand for the improved gender orientation of the document. In general terms, these different types of demand may be summarised as belonging to the broad categories identified below:

i.   Gender orientation of NEPAD involves consulting women's organizations and representatives, to identify and incorporate all women's current concerns presently overlooked by NEPAD;

ii.   The document should make clear gender differentiation of all the actors and beneficiaries mentioned in NEPAD;

iii. Women need to be identified as a vulnerable group, for special developmental focus;

iv.   There should be clear provision for women's involvement in all of NEPAD activities;

v.   Women and men should be equally the beneficiaries of NEPAD programmes;

vi.   NEPAD should recognise the gender characteristics of economic and social development;

vii. NEPAD should address issues of women's marginalisation in economic, social and political decision making;

viii. NEPAD should be concerned with implementing the commitments made in the *African (Dakar) and Beijing Platforms for Action* of 1995.

Worthy as these demands may seem on their face, the implications of some of above demands, for the revision of the document, would be enormous. One can easily imagine the document becoming ten times longer, and losing its focus on other issues. A major problem underlying the above list is that the demands for action are not based on any explicit definition or framework for the process of gender orientation.

There is also the danger that the document would be blown even further out of clear focus as the experts in all the other areas of concern (the environment, democracy, good governance, peace, HIV/AIDS, etc.) make their critical demands for improvement of the document. We must also remember that planning is properly about selection, and choosing priorities and clear focus. Is the document supposed to faithfully identify all the problems and issues in every area, and propose appropriate developmental interventions to tackle every problem, according to all the conventions and conference resolutions to which each government is party?

All this is not to say that NEPAD should not be better gender oriented. It is merely to recognise that we need to base our assessment and suggestions on:

i.   An understanding of the principles and limited purpose of NEPAD (even if these are not very explicit in the document itself!), so that our proposals for improved gender orientation are tailored to NEPAD purpose, and not to some wider or different purpose;

ii.   A clear definition of the gender issues, or the different categories of gender issue, which are of priority importance in the NEPAD context;

iii.   An understanding of NEPAD as a logical sequence, or at least as an inter-related sequence of parts, so that we can see how gender issues ought to fit into this sequence.

The remainder of this section on the Theoretical Framework unpacks each of the above three problem areas.

2.2 The Principles and Purpose of NEPAD

The main purposes of NEPAD divide into three broad categories:

i.   Firstly, to take African control over developmental priorities, rather than to be a mere recipient of Western funding for programmes determined by Western perceptions, judgements and priorities; therefore to work in equal partnership with Western governments, instead of under domination;

ii.   Secondly, to set out strategies for improved governance, democracy, accountability, and observance of human rights, (presumably partly as a means) to attract Western partnership and donor funding;

iii.   Thirdly, to set out the main sectoral priorities and strategies for economic development.

Thus, although the document constantly refers to itself as a *programme*, it is clear from the actual text that it would be better referred to as a *strategic plan*. It is high level, concerns the whole African continent, and is mainly concerned with setting out and justifying the overall principles, goals and strategies for future development partnership between African and Western governments.

Obviously this broad and high level scope does not lend itself to identifying every possible gender issue which ought to be addressed, and every gender oriented strategy for implementing

programmes and projects. However, neither is it true that NEPAD's high level of generality allows the document to always refer to 'people', when the 'people' are actually women and men in very different developmental situations. Taking the three categories of purpose listed above, which also include important principles, we can see that each of them brings with them an important but implicit gender dimension:

Broad NEPAD purpose	Implicit gender dimension
To take African control over developmental priorities, rather than to be a mere recipient of Western funding for programmes determined by Western perceptions, judgements and priorities; therefore to work in equal partnership with Western governments, instead of under domination;	Women need to participate equally in the identification of developmental priorities, especially to ensure that issues of gender discrimination and women's marginalisation are addressed in development programmes, and that African governments' international commitments on gender equality are included in developmental priorties;
To set out strategies for improved governance, democracy, accountability, and observance of human rights, (presumably partly as a means) to attract Western partnership and donor funding;	Women's severe under-representation and disempowerment at all levels of decision making, which is a severe subtraction from democracy, and limits women's means to change systems of institutionalised and legalised gender discrimination, which are an offence against their human rights;
To set out the main sectoral priorities and strategies for economic development.	Women want to see a focus on addressing issues of gender inequality within sectoral programmes, and the identification of purposeful and effective strategies to address these gender issues.

The above table gives us a framework for raising the appropriate key gender questions when reading NEPAD. However, in raising such questions we need to have a sharp eye in recognising gender issues, focusing on the major gender issues, and a good understanding of how gender issues need to be linked at every stage to the strategic planning process.

2.3 Recognising a Gender Issue

It is useful to identify a spectrum of definitions in order to categorize gender problems according to their level of severity. Here it is suggested that the following list is useful:

Levels of Severity of Gender Problems

➢ General Development Needs

➢ Women's Special Needs

➢ Gender Concerns

➢ Gender Inequality

➢ Gender Issues

General Development Needs are here defined as those needs which affect women and men equally, so there is no sex or gender difference. This is the zero level for seriousness of gender problems. It is often claimed that such matters as the need for roads, transport, or water are general development needs. But given the severe gender differention and division of social and economic roles in African societies, it is doubtful whether any needs, with the possible exception of the need for air, can properly be put in the category of a *general development need*. Nonetheless, it may be said that some needs are *more* general than others, where gender differentiation and discrimination are less severe. For example, perhaps roads are more of a general need, by comparison with land. Access to land is an area where women have a greater need, being the majority amongst farmers and food producers, but at the same time an area where they are severely discriminated against.

Women' Special Needs are here defined as those needs that arise from biological or sex differences. Of course these may be serious problems in the general sense, but they are not in themselves gender problems. Obvious examples are the need for maternity hospitals, ante-natal care facilities, and so on. But most childcare facilities are not in this category, because women's childcare responsibilities arise mostly from the gender division of labour rather than biologically given roles. (Of course gender problems may arise out of women's special needs, for instance where male control of government budget leads to lack of funding for maternity hospitals).

Gender Concerns are those needs which arise because of the gender division of labour. Therefore examples of women's gender concerns arise from their more domestic location and their concern with child care and food production and preparation. Typically, too, women are more dependent on the natural environment, and with gathering of food and medicines from natural vegetation or forests. For this reason, too, women and men have a very different *perspective* on development problems, as well as a different *identification* of problems that need to be addressed.

Gender Inequality is a more severe type of gender problem, because here the gender concern is *also* overlaid with gender inequality, typically because women have less access to facilities, opportunities and resources. Because of this inequality in present systems of allocation, women have a greater need. Gender equality is here defined as a gender concern which also brings with it inequality in allocations and opportunities.

A Gender Issue arises when people recognise that a particular instance of inequality is *wrong, unacceptable* and *unjust.* This realisation is more likely where the gender gap is large, and where women are aware of their democratic and human rights. (It needs hardly be said that in the very patriarchal states of Africa, most gender injustice is perpetrated against women, rather than the other way round.) Of course, from a purely moral standpoint, it might be said that gender inequality is always unjust, and therefore an issue. But at the same time, it is difficult in political practice to make an issue of gender inequality if there is not a wide perception that this inequality is unjust.

Here we may note that, since NEPAD is concerned with high level prioritization and strategic planning, our primary focus should be on those **critical** and **pervasive** gender issues which are

already well known on the African continent, and which are already a focus of attention for the women's movement. Furthermore, the need for action on such issues is already implicit in the various human rights conventions and other development agreements signed by the participating African governments which are also party to NEPAD.

Further than that, the NEPAD document's own priority goals in the areas of democracy, good governance and human rights should provide the basis for highlighting and prioritising the abuses against women's rights, which stands an obvious major obstacle to such goals.

2.4 Analysing a Gender Issue

If our priority interest is to look at NEPAD's recognition and intentions on priority gender issues (rather than all problems of gender concern and gender inequality), then it is useful to further unpack the concept of a gender issue. It is here suggested that we may unpack the concept of a gender issue as having five component levels, indicating the categories for an analysis of underlying causes:

Underlying Causes of a Gender Issue

➢ Gender Gap

➢ Gender Discrimination

➢ Patriarchal Control

➢ Patriarchal Belief

➢ Coercion

Gender Gap is the observable (and often measurable) gap between women and men on some important socio-economic indicator (e.g. ownership of property, access to land, enrolment at school), which is seen to be unjust, and therefore presents the clear empirical evidence of the existence of a gender issue.

Gender Discrimination is the different treatment which causes a gender gap. A gender gap is never accidental, but is caused by differential gender treatment. In a patriarchal society, this is almost always the different treatment given to girls and women that cuts them off from access to opportunities, facilities and resources. Such discriminatory treatment may be part of social custom, or may be entrenched in government administrative rules and regulations, and even in statutory law. Even when residing in religious practice or custom, these discriminatory practices may well have the status of law in many countries.

Patriarchal Control is the system of male monopoly or domination of decision making positions, at all levels of governance, which is used to maintain male dominance and gender discrimination (for the continued privilege of males).

Patriarchal Belief is the system of belief that serves to legitimise male domination and gender discrimination. Typically it relies on patriarchal interpretations of biblical/religous texts, beliefs in male biological superiority (sexism), entailing claims that the unequal gender division of rights and duties is either natural (biological), or God-given, or too difficult to change (claimed to be hopelessly and irretrievably embedded in culture!).

Coercion is the even more ugly side of male domination, relying on violence against women to keep them in their place. Such violence may be domestic, or institutionalised within schools, police, army, etc. Where women's acceptance of patriarchal belief begins to waver, physical and sexual violence is the fall-back method of control and subjugation.

Setting out the elements of a gender issue in this way, it becomes more apparent how the attention to gender issues ought to be a central concern of NEPAD, and not merely some after-the-event exercise in making the document more 'gender sensitive'. Men's domination of the state decision making process (and women's near absence from it) is a clear abrogation of the democratic process, where each interest group is supposed to be proportionately or adequately represented in decisions on the system of governance, legislation, and the allocation of resources. But if women are discriminated against even within government, there is little prospect of their acting to end discrimination in the wider society.

2.5 The Concept of Women's Empowerment

If NEDAD is to take an interest in women's participation in decision making within state governance, then clearly this involves women's increased empowerment, which may be defined in large part as women's increased control over public decision making. Such empowerment is women's route to changing the practices and laws that discriminate against them, and achieving an equitable gender division of labour and allocation of resources.

Furthermore, when faced with male domination of patriarchal government, which serves primarily male interests, and therefore has a vested interest in the continued subordination of women, it would clearly be folly for women to expect male leaders to suddenly 'realise' the value of gender equality, and to 'give' women an equal share of the cake. Past experience already provides plenty of evidence that men do not 'give' power to women, it has to be *taken*. This process of taking increased power is the process of empowerment [Longwe, 1991].

If NEPAD is interested in women's increased occupation of political positions (as is claimed at Para. 49), then it follows that NEPAD's strategies should be concerned with *strategies for women's empowerment*. Here we make use of Sara Longwe's *Women's Empowerment Framework*, which identifies and defines the following levels of empowerment:

Level of Women's Empowerment

Welfare

➢   Access

➢   Conscientisation

➢   Mobilisation

➢   Control

Welfare is here defined as the lowest level at which a development intervention may hope to close a gender gap. By welfare we here mean an improvement in socio-economic status, such as improved nutritional status, shelter, or income. But we are here talking about the sort of intervention where women are **given** these benefits, rather than producing or acquiring such benefits for themselves. This is therefore a **zero level** of empowerment, where women are the passive recipients of benefits which are 'given' from on high.

Access is defined as the first level of empowerment, since women improve their own status, relative to men, by their own work and organisation arising from increased **access** to resources. For example, women farmers may improve their production and general welfare by increased access to water, to land, to the market, and to skills training. But this 'access level' is defined as one where women are 'given' increased access (perhaps by some project intervention from on high, which is beyond their control), and not by their own action to demand and acquire increased access.

Conscientisation is defined as the process by which women realise that their lack of status and welfare, relative to men, is not due to their own lack of ability, organisation or effort. It involves the **realisation** that women's relative lack of access to resources actually arises from the discriminatory practices and rules which give priority access and control to men. Conscientisation is therefore concerned with a collective urge to action to remove one or more discriminatory practices that impede women's access to resources.

Mobilisation means women's collective action to analyse and identify the discriminatory practices that stand in their way, and collective and strategic action to remove these discriminatory practices.

Control is the level that is reached when women have taken action so that there is gender equality in decisions making over access to resources, so that women have achieve direct control over their access to resources, and are no longer 'given' resources merely at the discretion of men, or by the whim of patriarchal authority.

Therefore these five levels are not really a linear progression, as written above, but rather circular: the achievement of women's increased control, leads into better access to resources, and therefore improved socio-economic status.

This concept of the empowerment process ought to be central to NEPAD development strategy if it is really interested in the goal of *promoting the role of women in social and economic life by ... assuring their political participation in political and economic life'* (para. 49), and in *'promoting the role of women in all activities'* (one of NEPAD's two Long Term Objectives, para. 67). One of NEPAD's seven goals is concerned with making *'progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment'* (para. 68)

2.6 Framework for Analysing the Internal Coherence of the Planning Logic

Having earlier categorized NEPAD as being essentially a large scale regional development strategy, we here identify the essential elements of such a strategy. These elements can then be used to consider the internal coherence of the strategic plan in its treatment of the gender element or interest within the plan.

Of course it is often the case that development plans do not measure up very well to the sequence of planning logic which is suggested below. If so, this is because the planning was not adequate. Very often a government may pursue a particular development intervention because of political expediency, or for sectional rather than national interest, or simply because a donor agency has money available in a particular sector. In such cases the 'plan' is really an after-the-event attempt to rationalize a particular developmental intervention, and to justify it in terms of existing policies, known priority problems, established developmental goals, and so on. To the extent that the plan reveals internal contradictions or lack of logical connections, the justification for the development plan is suspect.

A strategic development plan should typically present itself as a rational argument, pursued by logical connections along the following sequence:

Elements of a Strategic Development Plan

Situation Analysis

Policy Imperatives

➢   Problem Identification

➢   Formulation of Goals

➢   Identification of Appropriate Intervention Strategies

➢   Implementation Strategies and Objectives

➢   Programme and Project Identification

➢   Programme Management

Situation Analysis refers to the initial review of the situation in the area that is of interest to the plan, particularly to mention the various problem situations which might need to be addressed by the plan. Here, with NEPAD, we find mention of quite different types of problems: firstly to do with

globalisation, and Africa's need to get a fair share of the benefits from the process; secondly partnership with the West, and the need to escape from the prevailing pattern of Western domination of a 'rider and horse' type of partnership; thirdly, the catalogue of developmental problems of African poverty and underdevelopment.

Policy Imperatives refer to those aspects of the policy environment which are relevant when deciding what to do about the given Situation. In terms of formal planning logic, no Situation can be said to present a Problem unless there are Policy Principles which dictate that aspects of the situation are unacceptable, and therefore present a Problem on which action must be taken to eliminate or alleviate the Problem. However, the relevant policy environment is commonly omitted from plans, presumably on the assumption that everybody knows what the policy principles are, or otherwise because some aspects or the situation are 'obviously' unacceptable, and are 'obviously' adopted as a problem.

Many African governments now have their own national gender policies which set out general principles, identify problems, and set out gender oriented goals. In addition to this, they are (mostly) the signatories to international conventions and agreements, notably the *UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (which sets out the principles for gender equality of access and opportunity in all areas of human endeavour). All have assented to the *1995 Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action* which may be summarised as setting out the very detailed and specific strategies to be used by governments and civil society in operationalising the principles of the *Convention*. Moreover, the international agreement on these strategies is older than 1995, since the 1995 **Platforms** are no more than a more detailed expression of the *1985 Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women* which were agreed at the Third World Conference for Women in Nairobi.

Problem Identification. As already mentioned, in planning logic a problem only formally comes to light when Policy Principles are set against the Situation Analysis. Despite this formal logic, many problems are identified as 'obvious', and may indeed be so. But the 'obvious' aspects of problem identification tend to be notably missing in the area of gender. Whereas many ordinary problems are 'obvious' without recourse to looking at the policy, gender issues tend to get overlooked, along with the gender policy itself. Gender issues may be overlooked as being 'political' in plans that take a technical or purely economic perspective. They may be overlooked where the vocabulary is gender neutral, in terms of 'people', 'farmers', 'target group', 'beneficiaries', and so on, which provide an easy formula for gender blind treatment of development issues. Most of all, gender issues are likely to be overlooked by male planners who are definitely not interested in recognizing or addressing issues of gender inequality. With gender issues, it may be necessary to wave the gender policy in planners' faces before the existence of gender issues can be admitted. Despite the common lack of identification of gender issues, it is usually very easy to give gender issues a specific and precise identification in terms of the size of gender gaps, and the existence of discriminatory practices.

Formulation of Goals should follow naturally from problem identification, where a goal may be summarized as an expressed intention to address a problem, perhaps with a statement of intended quantified outcomes, to be achieved in a specified time. However, it is not uncommon for the transition from Problem to Goal to show a complete disappearance of a gender issue. Or otherwise a problem originally identified in terms of women's lack of empowerment gives way to a goal which proposes intervention at the level of 'welfare' or 'access'.

Identification of Appropriate Intervention Strategies. The logic in moving from Goal to Intervention Strategy is that the chosen intervention, in order to be effective, must tackle one or more of the underlying causes of the given problem. But with poor planning, the intervention is merely considered to be a 'good thing to do', without any established causal connection with the original problem. Very often intervention strategies are not made clear or explicit within a strategic plan, but remain implicit within the statement of goals. Where a plan's gender orientation proceeds as far as gender oriented strategies, it is often found that there is no clear logical, experiential or empirical connection between the gender issues and the proposed intervention to address it. Very often the systemic or structural aspects of gender discrimination are forgotten, and interventions are aimed at increasing women's confidence, skills, literacy, and so on, i.e. limited to increasing women's access to resources.

Implementation Strategies are the methods that are chosen to actually implement the intervention strategy. They are therefore the lower level strategies. For example, the goal of increasing women's representation in parliament may be achieved by the broad intervention strategy of affirmative action. This may be achieved by various implementation strategies, such as reserved seats for women, or mandatory rules for political parties on proportion of females amongst candidates, or providing special material support for female candidates. A Strategic Plan should normally end, at least in its substantive content, at the level of Implementation Strategies. The remainder of planning, from Implementation Strategies onwards, is concerned with the lower levels of action planning, programme and project planning.

Objectives are the expression of the more specific and more detailed intention of implementation purpose, especially in terms of activities and intended outcomes. Very often an implementation strategy is not properly identified or even justified, but may be deduced by its being implicit within a list of objectives.

Project Identification (leading to Project Plans) entails the identification and planning of the specific programmes and projects which will be drawn up to pursue the broad goals and strategies formulated in the strategic plan. Here it may be noted that it is normally a complete waste of time to assess the appropriateness and adequacy of programmes and projects if these have been found to be pursuing goals and intervention strategies that are known to be inappropriate or inadequate. This point is of particular importance in the area of gender orientation, since it is unlikely that projects are to be found identifying and addressing gender issues, when such intention is not to be found in the strategic plan that guides the whole programme.

The Management System sets out the system of organization and management for implementation and supervision. From a gender perspective, particularly important here is a system for ensuring that gender oriented objectives are actually pursued, that there are methods for monitoring progress on gender objectives, that women are represented in management, and that women amongst the target group, beneficiaries and affected community are involved in the planning and management of implementation projects.

3   Method and Evaluation Criteria

The method of this assessment is to assess the coherence of NEPAD as a strategic plan, looking only at the coherence of its treatment of gender issues, and action to address these issues.

In looking at planning coherence, the assessment systematically makes use of the eight elements of a strategic plan presented at Section 2.6, above. These eight elements will form the basis of the main headings which will structure the assessment. The headings used in NEPAD will here be arranged under these eight logical planning headings, because the sequence of argument and use of planning terminology used in NEPAD do not always conform to good planning logic nor conventional terminology.

In looking at the coherence in the planning logic when treating gender issues, the assessment distinguishes between the internal and external coherence of the plan. Internal coherence is assessed in term of whether the NEPAD is properly connected, within itself, in its treatment of gender issues. External coherence is assessed in terms of whether NEPAD is properly connected with those goals and principles of gender equality to which the participating governments are committed in international agreements.

Given NEPAD's central focus on the 'Conditions for Sustainable Development' in terms of democracy, good governance and human rights, there is a special focus in this assessment on whether NEPAD sufficiently recognises the essential gender element within these 'Conditions'.

In terms of evaluation criteria, therefore, we may say that NEPAD's treatment of gender issues would be adequate if it:

i.   Incorporates within its principles and goals all the relevant commitments on gender equality to which the participating governments are already party.

ii.   Reveals adequate logical connections between the identification of gender oriented goals, and appropriate and effective interventions to address these goals.

Therefore, using the theoretical framework set out in Section 2, the above evaluation criteria are the basis of the assessment findings presented in the next section.

However, this assessment is not intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive. All that is intended here is to focus on the main gender issues that ought to be important to NEPAD, and to identify the main omissions in recognizing or not intending to address these issues.

This paper has explained the theoretical framework, method and criteria in some detail because there is also an interest in in enabling others to apply this method for themselves, and come to their own judgement and conclusions, in their own areas of developmental expertise. In this way we may move towards an integrated gender component within all assessments of NEPAD, rather than the separate gender assessment provided by this present paper.

4. Gender Assessment Findings

Element of plan	Gender content in NEPAD	Internal coherence	External coherence
Situational analysis	**I: Introduction** Here some brief socio-economic data on poverty and 'backwardness' makes no mention of any gender gaps or gender discrimination. **II: Africa in Today's World: Between Poverty and Prosperity:** No mention of any gender issue. **The historical improverishment of a continent;** No mention of any gender issue **Africa and the global revolution** No mention of any gender issue	In terms of the internal coherence of the document, how can NEPAD be proposing to address gender issues when none are mentioned in the Situational Analysis? But <u>despite</u> this omission, we later find the gender oriented goal of proposing to close gender gaps in school enrolments. If this is later proposed as a developmental intervention, what part of a problem situation is it addressing?	Need for mention of women's marginalisation, relative lack of access education, land, credit. (c.f. African Platform for Action, Section III) The mention of African culture as an important 'resource base' fails to acknowledge the negatives elements within culture which subordinate women, and legitimate their continued subordination. For women, custom and tradition is, in many ways, more of a <u>problem</u> than a <u>resource</u>.
Policy imperatives	**III: The New Political Will of African Leaders** Here there is a policy-level goal of '*promoting the role of women in social and economic development by reinforcing their capacity in the domains of education and training; by development of revenue generating activities through facilitating access to credit; and by assuring their participation in the political and economic life of African countries*'.	This gender-oriented policy statement is clearly directed at gender issues which were not mentioned in the earlier Situational Analysis. Therefore it is difficult to assess whether this policy statement is an adequate response to the problem situation. The reference to 'assuring women's participation in political life' is strangely disconnected from the earlier policy goal on 'promoting and protecting democracy'. Women's participation is not represented as essential to democracy,	There is a failure to properly locate women's participation as an intrinsic part of democratic process (see African Platform, para. 103). This serves to compartmentalize democratization goals, separate from gender oriented goals. There is no mention of unequal power relations or the discrimination women face in entering politics. Instead the NEPAD policy statement interprets the problems in terms of 'reinforcing women's capacity', as if their lack of capacity is the underlying problem.

Element of plan	Gender content in NEPAD	Internal coherence	External coherence
		but merely as one of the means towards 'promoting the role of women in social and economic development'.	
Problem identification	There is no proper identification of problems in NEPAD, either in the area of gender or in any other area. After setting out Situational Analysis and Policy, the document proceeds straight to Goals. Perhaps the preliminary sections are supposed to serve as both Situational Analysis and Problem Identification. If so, there is no clear identification of problems to be addressed by NEPAD, nor prioritization of these problems. Problems are identified only by implication, in the subsequent Goals.	Since there is no mention of gender issues in the Situation Analysis, there is no prospect of selecting and prioritizing those gender issues which should be addressed, given NEPAD's priority interests in the areas of peace, democracy, good governance and human rights. Without such prioritization of gender issues, there is no logical basis for the subsequent formulation of gender oriented Goals.	Part III of the African Platform for Action could have alerted the NEPAD authors to the established 'Critical Areas of Concern' for gender equality in Africa. NEPAD areas of interest are dealt with especially in the sections on Women's Involvement in the Peace Process, The Political Empowerment of Women, and Women's Legal and Human Rights. NEPAD priorities could have been selected from this ample and comprehensive 'shopping list' of critical gender issues.
Goals	**Sustainable Development in the 21st Century:** **Long-Term Objective** To promote the role of women in all activities	These goals are addressing problems which were not mentioned earlier. These two goals fall short of the earlier policy statement, itself inadequate, which mentioned 'facilitating women's access to credit' and 'assuring women's participation in political and economic life'.	Completely missing from the goals is any intention to increase women's representation in parliament, government and top decision making positions, despite clear commitments both in the African Platform (para. 105f) and the in the Beijing Platform (para.182) which endorses the UN Economic and Social Council guideline of 30% women in top decision making positions.

Element of plan	Gender content in NEPAD	Internal coherence	External coherence
	Goals To make progress towards gender equality and empowering women by eliminating gender disparities in the enrolment in primary and secondary education by 2005.	Now the goal of 'progress towards gender equality and empowerment' is limited by prescribing the intervention strategy of eliminating gender disparities in school enrolments. As is discussed below, this is a limited and possibly irrelevant intervention strategy The 'Expected Outcomes' make no mention of intended targets to be achieved on the goal of reducing gaps in school enrolment	
Intervention strategies: Conditions for sustainable development	**V.A Conditions for Sustainable Development:** **Peace and Security Initiative** No gender element in the proposed intervention strategies (para 72-75) **Democracy and Political Governance Initiative** No gender element in the proposed intervention strategies (para 80-84) **Economic and Corporate Governance Initiative** No gender element in the proposed intervention strategies (para 89-92)	No gender element in the strategy for improved Democracy and Political Governance, despite the earlier NEPAD policy goal of 'assuring women's participation in political and economic life'. There is a strategy (para 83) for 'promoting participatory decision making' which does not mention any concern with, or strategy for women's equal participation in decision making. Similarly no gender element in the Economic and Corporate Governance Initiative, despite the earlier NEPAD policy goal concerned with 'promoting the role of women in social and economic development'.	The Beijing Platform for Action, at para. 190 and 192, lists nineteen alternative strategies which can be used to increase the proportion of women in decision making positions in politics and economic governance. One of these suggested strategies asks governments to *'Take positive action to build a critical mass of women leaders, executives and managers in strategic decision making positions.'* Another strategy is concerned with *'Taking measures, including ... in electoral systems, that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same levels as men'*.

Element of plan	Gender content in NEPAD	Internal coherence	External coherence
Intervention strategies: sectoral priorities	In the **SECTORAL PRIORITY** areas of Infrastructure, Human Resource Development, Capital Flows and Mar-	The objective on 'special attention' to the reduction of poverty amongst women is not clearly a gender objective, since it falls sort of	The Beijing Platform for Action provides comprehensive advice on gender oriented strategies for all of NEPAD's areas of sectoral interest. Here

Element of plan	Gender content in NEPAD	Internal coherence	External coherence

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Implementation strategies: Mobilising resources	**Market Access Initiative (para 157)** Here there is an objective 'to improve the productivity of farmers, with particular attention to … women farmers'. (*Evaluator's Comment:* The tagging on of phrases of the type 'especially women' is an example of the lowest level of lip-service to gender policy, and represents the most minimal level of gender orientation.)	For overall coherence, an objective on improving the productivity of women farmers should have appeared in the Agriculture section, and under Intervention Strategies. This wrong placement may arise from a larger failure to properly distinguish between access to resources <u>for</u> NEPAD interventions, and the intended increased access to resources <u>arising from</u> NEPAD interventions.	There are some strategies here which are gender blind, even though they scream out for a gender component. For example, the strategy 'to increase the security of water supply for agriculture' (para 157) should have taken notice that women need the water most, as the main agricultural producers. Here it would have been useful to refer to the Beijing suggestions on the involvement of women in environmental decisions at all levels (Beijing Platform, para 253)
Implementation strategies: New global partnership	From this point on in NEPAD, the gender content completely disappears, notwithstanding the continuing implications of the fairly strong gender policy goal at Para. 49, and the gender issues which are implicit within all of the problems to be addressed.	The interest in gender has now disappeared, finally completing the pattern of 'fade away', until the interest in gender has reached a complete zero.	In this area of new global partnership, NEPAD is mostly concerned with establishing an equal partnership with the West, and African direction and control of development programmes. But this line of thinking has not extended into any adequate identification of the comparative advantages of each side, and how they can be strategically combined for well focused, effective and rapid developmental outcomes. (For instance on how the Western advantage in technology and the African advantage of natural resources can combine to produce African development, and not merely increased Western economic development.) Such considerations of comparative advantage may be particularly fruitful in the area of increasing gender equality and women's empowerment, where the women's movement in the West has experienced considerable success, for instance in

Element of plan	Gender content in NEPAD	Internal coherence	External coherence
			pushing governments in the direction of abolishing discriminatory legislation, and instead introducing equal opportunity legislation. However, the long list of roles for 'development countries and multilateral institutions' (para 188) is purely technical and economic, and is notably lacking in any Western role for assistance in the area of democratization, good governance, human rights and gender equality. If we compare Western countries with African in their interest and capacity in the area of gender and development, the pattern is that Western governments and international development agencies have been pushing for gender oriented development, whereas African governments – in the main – have been resisting. NEPAD's inadequate interest in gender issues may also be taken as symptomatic of African's governments' reluctance to take action on gender issues. If so, this could form a major aspect of *incoherence* in future global partnerships, being evidence of serious lack of political will in the area of democracy and good governance, and a therefore a serious obstacle to attracting Western funding.
Project identification	The assessment here is based on the brief summary and examples at para. 189-200 of NEPAD, and not on the	The programme areas listed for 'fast track' actually cast doubt on the meaning and validity of the little gender interest seen earlier in the	It is clear that NEPAD goes to some length to explain that African governments have the 'political will' to move towards more democratic and ac-

Element of plan	Gender content in NEPAD	Internal coherence	External coherence
	further detailed list of projects at www.mapstrategy.com. Here the summary of projects makes absolutely no mention of gender issues, or even women's issues, or even any differentiation between women and men. There is an identification of programmes to be 'fast-tracked' (para 190): Communicable Diseases (AIDS, Malaria, TB) Information and Communication Technology Debt Reduction Market Access Apart from the intention to improve access to credit by women farmers (para 158), there is nothing to indicate any intention to address gender issues in the above listed programme areas.	NEPAD document. The area of gender equality in schooling, a main NEPAD goal, is not included in the priority 'fast-track' area. None of the 'Conditions for Development' areas of improved democracy and good governance are included in the 'fast-track' areas. But it is particularly in these areas that women might hope for action on legalized and institutionalized forms of gender discrimination.	countable forms of government. It is this promise which forms the basis for NEPAD's claim for African planning and management of development programmes, and for Western governments to assist. This claim is generally undermined by the omission of any good governance programmes from the priority projects. It is particularly undermined by the virtual disappearance of any interest in gender equality and women's empowerment.

Element of plan	Gender content in NEPAD	Internal coherence	External coherence
Programme planning and management	It is clear from what is said under the NEPAD section on management (para 201-203), as well as from various other statements in the document, that NEPAD is to be both planned and managed by African heads of state. In other words, planning and management is in the hands of the heads of governments which are all very patriarchal, and where the heads of government are all male. The lack of gender content in NEPAD is itself clear testimony to their near complete ignorance of the importance of gender issues in development, and their international commitments in this regard.	It is not clear what basis there is for the claim that NEPAD is 'owned by the African peoples' (para 51). This claim is not consistent with the actual text. The voice of African women is certainly not reflected in NEPAD. African women's demand for action on gender issues, both structural and material, is well set out in the African and Beijing Platforms for Action, to which African governments have assented.	Perhaps the main overall purpose of NEPAD is to put African development planning into African hands. But if this puts development planning into the hands of a male monopoly of patriarchs who refuse to take action on gender issues, then African women might actually be better off with present Western control of African development. At least Western governments are known to have stronger policies and commitment on democracy and gender equality.

5 *An Overview of the Findings*

5.1 The Overall Pattern of the Findings

The above findings on the gender assessment are quite hard to come by, because they involve the rather difficult process of looking for what is not there. For despite the many critical and pervasive gender issues which haunt Africa, and the international commitments to address these issue, NEPAD is severely and almost completely gender blind. Whereas assessment of a development plan should more usually entail criticizing the inappropriateness or inadequacy or ineffectiveness of what is in the plan, in this case we are almost entirely looking for what is missing.

Overall, we can see that NEPAD is severely inadequate in both recognizing gender issues, and in expressing any intention to address gender issues or promote the process of women's empowerment. Despite a declared interest in a major policy goal of *'promoting and protecting democracy and human rights'* and in '*developing clear standards of ... participatory government'* (para 49), NEPAD has failed to properly recognise the imperatives for gender equality and empowerment that must intrinsically lie within this goal.

Instead the main policy goal of '*assuring [women's] participation in the political and economic life of African countries' (para 49)* is put separately from the policy goal on democracy and human rights, and is presented as a means towards *'promoting the role of women in social and economic development'.*

Thus goals of gender equality are kept separate from the area of democracy and governance, and instead located it in the area of social and economic development. It might be thought that this apparent separation at the policy level might be a mere conceptual lapse, or not intended, or that too much should not be being read into this separation. But the whole NEPAD document is faithful to this separation. The subsequent text reveals absolutely no gender component in the areas of **Democracy and Political Governance** or **Economic and Corporate Governance**. Despite the hopeful policy goal that mentions '*assuring [women's] participation in ... political and economic* life', there is no follow-through to the actual programme goals and activities by which such a policy goal might be achieved. On the contrary, the little attention given to gender oriented objectives is in the area of gender equality in access to schooling and access to credit. But it is precisely in the areas democracy, governance and human rights where action needs to be taken to end the legalized and bureaucratized system of structural gender equality, so that women may achieve equality of opportunity according the governments' commitments under the **UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women**.

Nonetheless, the rather weak and compartmentalized policy goal of *assuring women's participation in political and economic life* could have led into some meaningful gender orientation of the strategic plan. The failure to actually pursue this policy goal reveals another part of the overall pattern, already mentioned in Section 4 of this assessment, that NEPAD reveals a *fade-away* on gender issues. The original policy intention is watered down when its implications reach a

programme goal, and the intention has disappeared entirely by the time we reach project objectives. [A discussion of the pervasive tendency of gender policies to 'fade-away' may be found in Longwe, 1995]

Very often the authors of planning documents are sufficiently aware of gender vocabulary and concepts, and the need to impress the donors on gender orientation. Therefore they are able to employ elaborate lip-service to persuade gullible readers that they have intentions to address gender issues, and to hide their reluctance in this area. But this is not the case with NEPAD, whose authors would seem to be genuinely, deeply and comprehensively ignorant of all matters relating to gender and development.

5.2 An Interpretation of the Patriarchal Paradigm

Clearly the authors of NEPAD are severely gender blind. We may explain this blindness as being of a particular and well defined form, which we may term as paradigmic patriarchal blindness. It is evident that the authors do no see any form of gender discrimination. Their whole interpretation of gender issues, such as it is, seems to have no societal or structural dimension. They do not seem to live in the same world of legalized, traditional and institutionalised gender discrimination that is actually the world inhabited by women in Africa. In all of NEPAD's preliminary description of the problem situations to be addressed by NEPAD, there is no mention of any gender issue. Even where the document presents a weakly gender oriented goal, we find that this objective is directed at a problem which has not been previously mentioned.

It is this patriarchal paradigm which can nicely explain the absence of any mention of gender issues in the discussion of democracy and human rights. Of course it could be that the authors deliberately removed the connection between gender and democracy, or deliberately avoided it. But more likely they simply could not see the connection. The clue to this interpretation may be found in the same policy goal referred to above, which is concerned with '*promoting the role of women ...by reinforcing their capacity ...*' (emphasis added). Both of the underlined phrases are instructive of the mind set of the authors. 'Promoting the role of women' is a well worn phrase which insultingly suggests that women are not sufficiently 'playing their part' in the development process! Women need to be 'integrated in development'!

More revealing, however, is the phrase 'reinforcing their capacity'. Here is the main clue to the patriarchal paradigmic mind-set. Women's lesser role and subordinate position arise from their lesser capacity! Therefore they need more education and training! It is no accident that the only significant gender oriented objective in all of NEPAD is concerned with gender equality in access to schooling. Not a word about the unequal gender division of labour, or that women are already doing most of the developmental work, or that women come up against barriers of gender discrimination which give the lion's share of the rewards to men, and the lion's share of unpaid work to women! How is more schooling going to alter that? Where schools teach female

submission, it will make things worse! [A discussion of whether schools can contribute to the process of women's empowerment may be found in Longwe, 1997.]

NEPAD is a statement written by male heads of governments who are, in varying degrees, staunchly patriarchal. In their home countries these governments tend to represent male interests, and defend the patriarchal status quo. Should we then be surprised if NEPAD has little recognition of gender issues, and even smaller intention to address them? More important, what are the strategies – if indeed they can be found - by which these representatives of patriarchy may be persuaded to adopt feminist policies?

This present assessment serves to draw attention to the large gap between the situation of institutionalised gender injustice in Africa, and governments' intention to do anything much about it. This lack of intention stands in stark contradiction to their own declared interest in democracy and human rights.

6   Recommendations for the Overall Gender Orientation of NEPAD

It follows from the above analysis that NEPAD needs complete revision if it is to recognise and address the gender issues that are intrinsic within all African development problems.

This revision should have the following characteristics:

i   Introduction of proper planning logic in the treatment of gender issues, which are properly followed throughout the document from their initial identification in the situation analysis, through to policy statement, problem identification, programme goals, objectives and activities.

ii   Within the programme on 'Conditions for Sustainable Development', incorporation of a primary focus on ending all forms of legalized gender discrimination within statutory law, customary law and administrative practice, as an essential component in the programme for improved democracy, good governance and human rights.

iii   Mainstreaming of gender issues within the sectoral priorities, to recognise and address all the important gender issues which are intrinsic within the areas of endeavour currently suggested, in order to provide gender equality of opportunity in access to all resources and facilities.

Given the difficulty of a consultation process to establish a widespread African women's consensus on the priority gender issues to be addressed within NEPAD, it is suggested that the *1995 Dakar* and *Beijing Platforms for Action* should be used as the basis for identifying the gender issues which need to be addressed, and the appropriate strategies for doing so. These documents are fairly recent, the same gender issues are still with us, and the documents are themselves the result of a lengthy and comprehensive consultation process amongst African women from all walks of life. The Dakar document is the best source of information on African women's identification of the range of gender issues that they would like to see addressed, whereas the Beijing document provides the more comprehensive 'shopping list' of alternative strategies for addressing any particular gender issue.

It is further recommended that NEPAD should set up a small Advisory Committee of women experienced in both gender issues and development planning, to advise on the re-writing of NEPAD to achieve a gender orientation that is commensurate with the international commitments of the participating countries.

7   Conclusion

NEPAD is deeply and comprehensively gender blind. It fails almost completely to recognise or address the major issues of gender inequality and discrimination, and the oppression of women that lie hidden and unacknowledged within NEPAD goals and objectives, and which must be revealed and addressed if the participating governments are to meet their commitments under various international agreements and conventions.

There is also some internal inconstancy within NEPAD's treatment of gender issues, in that the limited intention to address particular gender issues at the policy level is not sufficiently followed through into programme goals and objectives, or into project activities. The little interest in gender gets lost between the statement of policy statement and the listing of intended actions.

Therefore it is recommended that a Gender Advisory Committee be formed to assist NEPAD planners in writing a gender oriented document. This should reflect intentions on gender equality and women's empowerment, with proper planning logic and coherence. Policy statements on gender should reflect international commitments. Gender issues recognised in the situation analysis should be the followed through into problem identification and prioritization, giving way to the identification of clear goals, objectives and project activities designed to appropriately and effectively address these issues.

Gender orientation is particularly important in the area of NEPAD interventions concerned with improved democracy, governance and human rights. Action in this area is desperately needed to address the many grave issues of structural gender discrimination that are serious and pervasive across Africa.

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