

The African Opinion Leader Survey on NEPAD and AU-2002

Preliminary Report

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Summary of key issues polled in the 2002 Africa Opinion Leader Survey

1). Background

The African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) are both relatively new names on the African political landscape. Borne out of a desire to revive a much-maligned continent, ravaged by exploitation, war, and hunger, these initiatives have formed part of a concerted drive by African leaders to put the continent on a track towards growth and development. This preliminary report provides a brief overview of elite perceptions surrounding certain issues pertaining to NEPAD and African Union. A more in-depth report elaborating on these and other issues will be available towards the middle of the year.

The 1990s were characterized by turbulent and crucial events in African history. The Sirte Declaration of 1999 anticipated the dissolution of the Organization of African Unity and in July 2001 the Constitutive Act of the African Union was ratified and implemented in Lusaka, Zambia. During the late 1990s South African President Thabo Mbeki embarked on an African Renaissance, and gained the support of two prominent African leaders, Abdelaziz Bouteflika (Algeria) and Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria) for the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan (MAP). On 3 July 2001 the New Africa Initiative (a merger between the MAP and the Omega Plan of President Wade of Senegal) was formed and approved by the OAU Summit Heads of State, the policy framework of which formed NEPAD. The NEPAD document was signed and finalized on 23rd October 2001. It was a unique plan in that it was conceived in Africa by Africans and boasted the support of 5 prominent leaders: Thabo Mbeki (South Africa), Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria), Abdelaziz Bouteflika (Algeria), Abdoulaye Wade (Senegal) and Hosni Mubarak (Egypt).

Whereas the AU concerns itself mainly with the creation of a political infrastructure that should promote greater continental coherency and unity, NEPAD contains the blueprint for Africa's socio-economic strategy towards sustainable growth. It is essentially a holistic integrated framework, developed and conceived by 5 prominent African Presidents (Thabo Mbeki from South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo from Nigeria, Adelaziz Bouteflika from Algeria, Abdoulaye Wade from Senegal, and Hosni Mubarak from Egypt) that aims towards the socio-economic upliftment of the African continent.

The actual NEPAD document provides a statement of the problems facing Africa and addresses key social, economic and political priorities that will put Africa on the path of sustainable growth. The goals of NEPAD, as stated in the official summarised version, are the "promotion of accelerated growth and sustainable development, the eradication of widespread and severe poverty and the halting of Africa's marginalisation in the globalisation process."

Both initiatives, but especially NEPAD, have come under intense scrutiny from African civil society, who has argued that it is an elitist design, conceptualized and based on the interests of privileged minorities on the continent. This view has been countered by its proponents who have contended that the values espoused in NEPAD are indeed representative and in line with international standards of good governance.

An attitude survey testing elite opinions of NEPAD, African Union and related aspects was conducted in 7 African countries between August and December 2002. The countries incorporated include South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal, Algeria, Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe. This document constitutes a preliminary report of some of the initial findings of the survey.

2) Elite surveys of the Center for International and Comparative Politics

Since 1990 the Center for International and Comparative Politics (CICP) has conducted an in-depth analysis of the social, political and economic transformation taking place in South Africa. Six opinion leader surveys (1990, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1998 and 2000) have formed one of the core elements in this project and have allowed the Center to build up an extensive database on South African elite perspectives. In 2002 a survey focusing on NEPAD and the African Union was conducted in seven African countries in order to obtain accurate data on what elite perspectives regarding NEPAD and the African Union really entail.

South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal and Algeria were included in the survey as countries whose presidents are the main drivers for NEPAD and which have had a fair amount of exposure to the plan thus far. In addition Kenya, Uganda and Zimbabwe were selected as “outside” countries to allow for more accurate and detailed comparisons.

The survey was conducted under the auspices of the Center for International and Comparative Politics (CICP) at the University of Stellenbosch in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). Carefully chosen survey institutions were contracted to carry out face-to-face interviews in each of the countries selected. In a number of countries - South Africa, Algeria, Nigeria and Kenya - these companies were affiliated to Gallup International.

This preliminary report provides new insight on elite perspectives with regard to the African Union and NEPAD. The forthcoming publication of the survey will provide a more in-depth interpretation of these and other issues, as well as comparisons between the various countries on key aspects of the study.

3) Composition of the opinion leader samples

We define the elite as comprising of “those persons who hold authoritative positions in powerful public and private organizations and influential movements and who are therefore able to affect strategic decisions regularly.”¹ It is through their public discourse that members of the elite shape the contours of public opinion and the dimensions of a country’s ideological spectrum. As decision-makers the elite directly influence policy outcomes and often serve as the primary feedback mechanism about the success or lack thereof of policy implementation.

A positional sample was employed to select respondents for the particular survey. Such a procedure implies that individuals holding the most authoritative positions in influential institutions are approached to participate as respondents in the survey. The sectors from which respondents were selected included the private sector; NGO, CBO, civic organizations; public sector; professional, academic or analyst; trade unions; politicians; the media and the church (**Table 1**).

¹ Higley, J *et al* (1976) **Elite Structure and Ideology**, New York: Columbia University Press.

Table 1: Composition of samples

Sector	South Africa		Nigeria		Senegal		Kenya		Algeria		Uganda		Zimbabwe	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Private Sector	91	16.1	11	8.5	33	24.3	18	15.0	17	14.3	5	5.2	32	22.9
NGO, CBO	84	14.8	4	3.1	22	16.2	22	18.3	9	7.6	10	10.3	17	12.1
Public Sector	98	17.3	34	26.2	22	16.2	15	12.5	39	32.8	18	18.6	16	11.4
Professional/analyst/ academic	77	13.6	10	7.7	21	15.4	22	18.3	19	16.0	29	29.9	31	22.1
Trade Union	50	8.8	5	3.8	1	0.7	5	4.2	2	1.7			10	7.1
Politician	64	11.3	42	32.3	12	8.8	10	8.3			22	22.7	12	8.6
Media	49	8.7	15	11.5	12	8.8	12	10.0	27	22.7	4	4.1	14	10.0
Church	42	7.4	8	6.2	1	0.7	10	8.3			2	2.1	4	2.9
Other	10	1.8	1	0.8	5	3.7	6	5.0	4	3.4	6	6.2	4	2.9
Not classified	1	0.2			7	5.1			2	1.7	1	1.0		
Total	566	100	130	100	136	100	120	100	120	100	97	100	140	100

It should be noted that, unlike public surveys, opinion leader surveys should not be used to draw conclusions about the attitudes of the whole population. Their value lies in their ability to discern particular trends amongst the most influential decision-makers in both the public and the private sphere.

The format for the remainder of this document will consist of a presentation of selected responses regarding NEPAD and the AU, derived from elite perceptions in the surveyed countries.

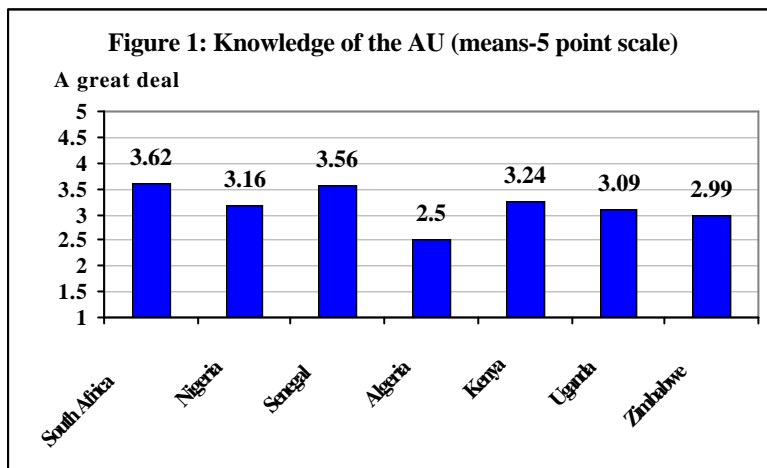
4) Knowledge of the African Union and NEPAD

At the outset of this study it was important to ascertain exactly how informed African elites were about the AU and NEPAD, in order to get an idea of the extent to which these concepts have become part of the continental political discourse.

4.1) The African Union

As mentioned in the opening paragraphs, the African Union was implemented in July 2001 through the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which would ultimately replace the OAU Charter of 1963. The Constitutive Act of the African Union lists 14 African objectives and includes a commitment to accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent and to support the promotion of peace, security and stability of the continent. The Act ultimately aims at the establishment of a common defense policy for Africa, and is based on the principles of respect for democratic values, human rights, the rule of law and good governance.

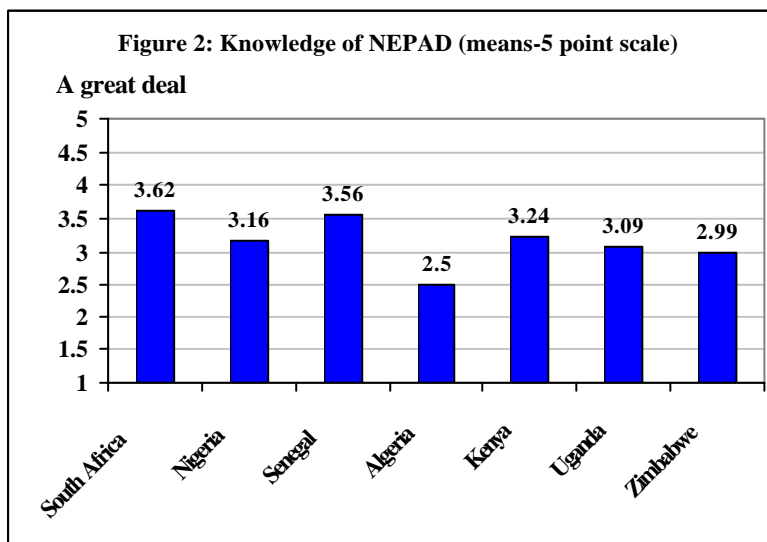
When asked to indicate their level of knowledge (**Figure 1**) regarding the African Union on a scale of 1 (nothing at all) to 5 (a great deal), only respondents from Zimbabwe and Algeria displayed a below average knowledge. Respondents from South Africa (3.62) and Senegal (3.56) expressed slightly higher mean values than that of the other countries, followed by Kenya (3.24), Nigeria (3.16), Uganda (3.09), Zimbabwe (2.99) and Algeria (2.50).



4.2) NEPAD

The results of a Markinor survey conducted in the months of April and May 2002, suggest that knowledge levels pertaining to NEPAD are extremely low amongst the general South African public. Significantly, only 14% of interviewees were aware of its existence, while 80% of respondents possessed no knowledge of NEPAD at all. This is a disturbingly low figure for a country where one of the principal architects of NEPAD, Thabo Mbeki, hails from.

In the light of this low awareness of NEPAD amongst the public, elite respondents were asked to rate their knowledge of NEPAD on a scale of 1 (know nothing at all) to 5 (know a great deal).



According to **Figure 2**, elite respondents in South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda indicated that they possess an above average knowledge of NEPAD. Elite respondents in Zimbabwe reflected an average level of knowledge surrounding NEPAD, while elites in Algeria reflected slightly below-average knowledge of the policy. As expected, elites in the initiating countries (South Africa, Nigeria and Senegal) displayed relatively higher levels of knowledge surrounding NEPAD, when compared with elite respondents in Uganda and

Zimbabwe (outside countries). Interestingly, Algeria- one of the key drivers of NEPAD - also reflects relatively low levels of knowledge regarding the policy.

5) NEPAD and the African context

The final NEPAD document that was tabled in 2002 to the G8 in Kananaskis, Canada, outlines the expected benefits of the incorporation of NEPAD within the economic agendas of the developed world. But what do these benefits mean to a vast continent with diverse needs and levels of development? An analysis of the perceived benefits of NEPAD could provide an indication of the most salient priorities of the policy as perceived by the African opinion leaders, and may assist the driving forces behind NEPAD in concentrating their energies on those values that are held most dearly in the respective countries.

Respondents were asked to identify from a list what they regarded as the 5 most desirable benefits of NEPAD and rank them in order of priority. Items that were incorporated in the list included: African unification; the eradication of poverty; stronger democratic governance; improved infrastructure; the restoration of African dignity; political stability; improved health care; increased foreign investment; improved social welfare; better education for all; jobs for all; food for all; and the reawakening of African cultural traditions.

Table 3 presents the 5 most desirable benefits of NEPAD as selected by the respondents in each country. The eradication of poverty, African unification and stronger democratic governance are by far the most salient issues, and appear within the top four priorities expressed within each country. The majority of elite respondents in Algeria (27,5%), Kenya (30%), Uganda (34%), South Africa (38,2%) and Nigeria (28,5%) regarded the eradication of poverty as the most desirable benefit of NEPAD.

Table 3: Perceived benefits of NEPAD

Rank	South Africa	Nigeria	Senegal	Algeria	Kenya	Uganda	Zimbabwe
1	Eradication of poverty (38.2%)	Eradication of poverty (25.5%)	African unification (26.3%)	Eradication of poverty (27.5%)	Eradication of poverty (30.0%)	Eradication of poverty (34%)	Stronger democratic governance (24.3%)
2	Stronger democratic governance (15.9%)	African unification (20.8%)	Improved infrastructure (19.4%)	Political stability (18.3%)	African unification (15.0%)	African unification (15.5%)	Eradication of poverty (22.1%)
3	African unification (10.8%)	Political stability (13.1%)	Eradication of poverty (14.2%)	Stronger democratic governance (12.7%)	Political stability (9.2%)	Stronger democratic governance (12.5%)	African unification (14.3%)
4	Increased FDI (6.4%)	Stronger democratic governance (10%)	Stronger democratic governance (12.7%)	African unification (10.0%)	Stronger democratic governance (8.3%)	Political stability (8.2%)	Increased FDI (11.4%)
5	Jobs for all (3.9%)	Restoration of African dignity (7.7%)	Increased FDI (7.5%)	Improved infrastructure (5.8%)	Improved infrastructure (5.8%)	Improved infrastructure (7.2%)	Political stability (10.0%)

Although concerns have been expressed that issues relating to security and conflict resolution may take precedence over concerns towards poverty eradication and social assistance, African elites seem all too aware of the myriad of social problems affecting the African continent, and

should therefore ensure that such issues are not relegated to the background within the NEPAD.

6) Democratising NEPAD

Over the past year, numerous criticisms have been leveled against NEPAD. Probably the most publicized criticism has been its perceived elitist character, which some argue, has overlooked the potential role that civil society can play in its implementation.

To test this assumption the survey required respondents to indicate on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) the extent to which they agreed with the statement that “only the ruling elite is actively engaged in promoting NEPAD.”

Table 4: It is only the ruling elite that is actively involved in promoting NEPAD

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
South Africa	59.4	14.1	26.5	2.57	1.08765
Nigeria	74.5	12.3	16.1	2.20	1.05947
Senegal	66.4	7.5	26.1	2.44	1.06560
Algeria	39.0	45.1	16.0	2.66	1.96001
Kenya	53.3	24.2	22.5	2.60	1.06432
Uganda	71.2	17.5	11.4	2.20	0.96436
Zimbabwe	34.3	16.1	49.6	3.25	1.26480

The majority of respondents in all countries except Zimbabwe agreed with the statement, thereby reflecting the opinion that NEPAD is largely an elite-driven process. Uganda (2.20) displayed the strongest level of agreement with the statement, followed by Nigeria (2.20), Senegal (2.44), South Africa (2.57), Kenya (2.60), Algeria (2.66) and Zimbabwe (3.25). Interestingly, in this instance, it is an “outsider” country, Zimbabwe, that displays the highest level of confidence in NEPAD’s inclusiveness.

This pattern may reflect the growing discontent within civil society towards the process through which the NEPAD policy has been drafted. A Continental Civil Society meeting on the AU and NEPAD was held in Durban (1-2 July 2002), where participants welcomed the increased engagement between the African Union and civil society bodies, but requested that the NEPAD Implementation Committee consult with civil society organizations on a similar basis. In the light of these criticisms architects of NEPAD in Nigeria, Senegal, Algeria and South Africa have launched a number of NEPAD outreach programs, but these have merely conveyed the general outlines of the plan and have not actively engaged civil society input.

When comparing the levels of agreement with the statement across the various societal sectors (Table 5), civil society elites in South Africa, Senegal and Kenya displayed stronger support for the statement than their politician and civil servant counterparts. In Nigeria, Algeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe, however, politicians expressed the strongest level of agreement with the statement.

Table 5: It is only the ruling elite involved in advocating NEPAD-Societal Sector

	<i>South Africa</i>	<i>Nigeria</i>	<i>Senegal</i>	<i>Algeria</i>	<i>Kenya</i>	<i>Uganda</i>	<i>Zimbabwe</i>
Civil Society	2.38	2.19	2.38	2.67	2.54	2.23	3.26
Politicians	3.03	2.12	2.83	2.54	2.70	1.91	3.25
Civil Servants	3.02	2.26	2.73		3.07	2.44	3.38
N	566	130	136	120	120		140

7) NEPAD: A Genuine African Program?

While its proponents have hailed NEPAD as an authentically African concept, its detractors have been quick to point out its seemingly obvious and overemphasized attempts to address conditionalities set by international donors. On the one hand, the architects of NEPAD pride themselves on the principles that NEPAD was designed by Africans for Africans. On the other hand, detractors of the policy argue that a set of conditionalities imposed by Western donors might thwart the principles associated with African ownership and control. Although President Mbeki and others assert that principles of good governance are implicit in Africa's development strategy and that such conditions are not externally imposed, the NEPAD strategy has been referred to as a "slick begging bowl", which could hamper the strategy's image. The question of ownership and control over the process has, therefore, been an issue that its architects have been at pains to clarify to those who regard it as a poorly masked response to a World Bank wish list.

To what extent do the African elite feel that the NEPAD initiative was designed by Africans for Africans, and do they believe that the commitment of the developed countries is crucial to the success of the NEPAD policy? In the current survey we asked our elite respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement that "NEPAD is not perceived as a genuine African program." The data displayed in **Table 6**, suggest that the majority of Zimbabwean and Ugandan elites are in agreement with this statement. This was not the case in South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal and Kenya, where the majority of respondents disagreed with the statement. In this instance Algerian elites displayed a largely neutral stance.

Table 6: NEPAD is not perceived as a genuine African program

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev
South Africa	23.7	20.4	55.9	3.38	1.01971
Nigeria	30.0	25.4	44.7	3.16	1.02529
Senegal	35.3	11.3	53.4	3.19	1.07415
Algeria	30.8	40.2	29.1	2.94	0.91247
Kenya	30.0	29.2	40.8	3.13	1.10715
Uganda	46.4	24.7	28.9	2.75	1.05110
Zimbabwe	58.3	16.5	25.2	2.57	1.10369

Another criticism pertaining to the representivity of NEPAD is based on the notion that its modus operandi is geared towards the aspirations of leaders in the founding countries (Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria). This, the holders of the view argue, effectively excludes the sentiments of countries that have not been involved in the drafting process and may in the longer term contribute to feelings of alienation towards the policy.

To test this suggestion, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statement that “NEPAD does not embody the economic aspirations of all Africans.” According to **Table 7**, the majority of respondents in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya disagreed with the statement, thereby reflecting a great deal of confidence in the capacity of the NEPAD policy to reflect the economic needs expressed by the majority of Africans. The majority of elites in Algeria, Senegal, Uganda and Zimbabwe, however, agreed with the statement, thereby expressing doubt in the capability of the NEPAD policy to address the economic needs of the African population. There are indeed significant and interesting differences in the response patterns between the different countries.

Table 7: NEPAD does not embody the economic aspirations of all Africans

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Mean	Std.Dev
South Africa	39.9	19.1	47.0	3.14	1.13864
Nigeria	26.2	24.6	49.2	3.24	1.04773
Senegal	44.8	12.7	42.5	2.92	1.13090
Algeria	49.5	35.0	15.2	2.50	1.01390
Kenya	29.2	35.8	35.0	3.00	1.10765
Uganda	40.2	20.6	39.2	2.96	1.09846
Zimbabwe	41.3	19.6	39.1	2.96	1.14541

8) Closing Remarks

Our objective with this document has been to present a number of selected preliminary findings from the Africa Opinion Leader Survey 2002. A more complete analysis of these and other issues will be provided in the forthcoming joint publication of KAS and CICP. Some of the topics that will be covered in this publication include:

- Elite perceptions regarding the challenges facing the African continent
- Elite confidence in the African Union and NEPAD
- Elite ownership of the NEPAD process and the nature of such ownership
- Elite perceptions of the goals and principles behind the African Union and NEPAD
- Elite perspectives on the implementation of NEPAD

These and other issues will be elaborated through the use of comparative analysis between the elites of the seven countries surveyed. The analysis will further be strengthened through the use of comparisons between the elites comprising the various societal sectors within the selected countries.