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NEPAD CONTACT GROUP OF AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS

REPORT OF DELEGATION VISIT TO DENMARK, NORWAY, SWEDEN AND GERMANY
17 - 21 OCTOBER 2004

Delegation: Professor Ben Turok MP (South Africa), (Leader), Ms Catherine Namugala MP (Zambia), Mr Shadrack Niyonkuru, MP (Burundi)

The delegation are members of the Contact Group. The tour was arranged by Awepa with logistic support by the UNDP. We are highly appreciative of the huge effort that was needed to arrange the tour.

1. MISSION

The purpose of the mission was twofold;

- (a) to enhance the understanding of NEPAD in the countries visited, and
- (b) to persuade our hosts of the importance of the role of Parliaments in the implementation of NEPAD and enhancing development cooperation between Europe and Africa.

2. ACTIVITIES

1. Denmark: Meetings were held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNDP, and the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament
2. Norway; Meetings were held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament.
3. Sweden; Meetings were held with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the Foreign Affairs Committee of Parliament.
4. Germany; the delegation attended a Conference in the German Parliament and Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, on Good Governance in Africa, a Parliamentarians Forum on Real Policies in North and South, hosted by Inwent, an agency of the German government. Delegates were also invited to a discussion with the Deputy Chancellor of Germany, Mr Joschka Fischer.
5. The delegation had a discussion with Mrs Mongella, President of the PAP, about the work of the Nepad Contact Group and received her full support for our work.

3. DISCUSSIONS

The delegation argued that NEPAD is the hope of the continent and requires full understanding in Africa but also in Europe.

The current review of development cooperation and partnerships across Europe should not omit reference to Africa's Parliaments since good governance cannot be encouraged without parliamentary oversight. Parliamentarians are representatives of the people without whose support and participation NEPAD will be unrealised.

It was also pointed out that we should have not have an idealised notion about partnership. Partnerships may be unequal but they imply some benefit for each party. Indeed, experience

shows that generally development assistance from Europe to Africa invariably brings some benefits to Europe in enhancing the experience of professionals, in trading advantages, and cultural experiences among many other benefits.

It was stated that Africa is being encouraged to integrate more into the global economy, yet NEPAD has as its main objective "self-reliant development".

During the discussions it was agreed that we need more dialogue at the personal level. It was agreed that an approach must be found which reflects the North's concerns about security and Africa's concerns about poverty. Clearly the world cannot avert instability if the South remains steeped in underdevelopment and poverty.

The head of UNDP in Scandinavia agreed to contact their offices in Africa to provide internet and other assistance to M P's.

At the German conference, German MP's stated that the establishment of parliamentary democracy in Europe had been a tortuous and painful process. They understood that Africa would experience similar problems. Furthermore, political parties and parliaments had a vital role in establishing a democratic order.

Mrs Mongella, President of the PAP, stated that African Unity was not a new idea. But the continental vision became subordinated to national interests. NEPAD is basically an economic agenda. The APRM is an assessment by a national team with the aid of questionnaires from the Peer Review Panel. Good governance criteria should be applied to all institutions in Africa and not just to government.

A German official said that incomes in Europe are a hundred times greater than in Africa and profit rates are the highest in the world. Hence German aid is now focused on the development institutions in Africa not on individual projects. The scatter approach had not worked. There was a dissonance between the articulated policies and what was implemented and that had to change.

Deputy Minister for Development Aid stated that Germany wanted to support African development in the interests of world peace and stability. Paternalism is over and we need two-way accountability and transparency. There had to be a joint focus on priorities.

Summing up, the convenor of the Berlin meeting said that strong governance is at the centre of the development agenda and was required of all institutions and includes attention to ethics, laws, processes and values. Development must be driven by Africans themselves and parliaments must be involved and the necessary resources supplied. The private sector also has major role.

4. FINDINGS

1. There is a lack of resources for promoting a better understanding of NEPAD among African and European parliamentarians.
2. It seems that there is a need for much greater clarity and rigour in the development assistance policies in Europe.
3. We also need a clearer formulation of North-South relations generally.
4. We also need an overview of existing contacts and dialogue, especially on the role of Parliaments in Europe and Africa.
5. Government and Parliaments in Europe could do more to overcome negative images of Africa among the public.

6. Questions were asked why European agencies give more attention to NGO,s than parliament and more funding to NGO,s than to governments.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Since the issue of development cooperation is high on the agenda in Europe, the Contact Group is correct in placing economic development issues as a priority.

2. Gender issues need to be dealt with directly.

3. There is a strong case for pressing for more personal contacts between African and European parliamentarians relating to development cooperation. These should not be single events but a continuing process.

4. The Contact Group will circulate a list of UN and other agency offices in Africa which will provide internet and other support to African parliamentarians

5. The next meeting of the Steering Committee of the Nepad Contact Group will be held early in 2005 in Dar Es Salaam with Mrs Mongella in attendance.

Prof Ben Turok M P (South Africa)

Convenor,

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