

**NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD) AND THE CHALLENGES
FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT
BY**

KAYODE-IYASERE, Efofa Akinjide
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,
FACULTY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO-EKITI, P.M.B.5363, ADO-
EKITI, NIGERIA
E-MAIL: efosakayodeiyasere2017@gmail.com

AND

JEGEDE, Amen Osamede
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT FACULTY OF THE SOCIAL
SCIENCES, EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO-EKITI, P.M.B.5363, ADO-EKITI, NIGERIA
E-MAIL: [jegedeamen@yahoo.com](mailto:jegadeamen@yahoo.com)

AND

OWOLABI, Jimoh Temitayo
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING SCIENCE,
FACULTY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO-EKITI, P.M.B.5363, ADO-
EKITI, NIGERIA
Email; jimoh.owolabi@eksu.edu.ng

AND

AWE, Foluso Charles
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND PLANNING SCIENCE,
FACULTY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO-EKITI, P.M.B.5363, ADO-
EKITI, NIGERIA
Email; foluawe@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The New Partnership For Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative is a declaration of African leaders' commitment to battle poverty and place the African continent on a pathway to a lasting development for the benefit of all. Data for this study were collected from the analysis of the views, comments, and opinions in books, articles, in journals, magazines and newspapers, as well as speeches and addresses in seminars, conferences, workshops and meetings. Quantitative method was employed in the analysis of the data collected. Results for this study shows that most of the challenges of African countries is that a significant amount of annual budgets are spent on debt servicing, poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS eradication, as well as, the provision of primary health care. This study therefore recommends that NEPAD should find a way of eliminating dual economy and social imbalance, particularly between and among its member countries. There is need for NEPAD to effectively regulate some of the sectors of the African economy, for her to attain the desired greatness.

Keywords: New Partnership, Africa, Challenges, and Development.

INTRODUCTION

The New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) initiative is a declaration of African leaders' commitment to battle poverty and place African continent on a pathway to a lasting development for the benefit of all. Studies have shown that the past efforts at resolving regional development problems failed because National leaders had not exercise that strong feeling of commitment to make regional co-operation a reality.

Dieye, (2004) observed that the New Partnership for Africa's Development objectives in Africa break from the past, in the sense that NEPAD wants that henceforth, Africa can be perceived as a single and unique operational economic field. According to Obasanjo in 2006, who provided answers and explanation to the new initiative (NEPAD) concerning the report of the world health organization, he opined that NEPAD is not an institution or an organization, "it is a programme" it is a programme of the African people of OAU and indeed of the African Union. So, it must not be seen as a thing that will have a life of her own. It is different from that of the African Union. It will make use of the existing institutions, such as the economic commission for Africa (ECA) or the African Development Bank (ADB), which we are using currently; and of course, if there is a need to strengthen those existing institutions or even establish new ones we will do so.

Aluko-Olokun, (2003) states that “the whole idea of NEPAD is not about bringing in money; it is about mobilizing local resources, about strengthening partnerships, and about attracting private sector investments”.

NEPAD is therefore a product of African leaders’ recognition of the fact that the poverty and backwardness of Africa is a contrast to the prosperity of the developed world and the continuous marginalization of Africa from globalizing process and social exclusion of the vast majority of its people constitute a serious threat to global stability. The initiative, which was crafted in Africa and centres around Africa ownership and management, identifies a long-term strategy aimed at helping the continent to emerge from poverty and conflict. It is however ironical that inspite of the noble promises of NEPAD coupled with the fact that African leaders have started selling the initiative to the industrialized world. NEPAD is not well known within the continent of Africa, not even among the Academia and the organized sectors (African institute of South-Africa,2002).

Integration is a way of doing things in a coordinated group effort. Integration emphasizes the mutuality of feelings and the willingness to share from the common good of its members. Thus, Hass (1958), sees integration as a process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities towards a new center, whose institution possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states”. Clearly obvious in Hass’ concept of coming together of previously independent states to form a larger union, leading to a situation where the classical notion of sovereignty of states with overlapping common interest to form a union in order to advance and secure these interests. Hass further asserted that the final direction of integration is the attainment of an ideal type, concerned as a political community which accordingly is a condition under which pluralist interest are realized as manifested in political groups and individuals increasingly show more loyalty to control institutions than any other political authority.

The New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) is a product of the merger of Omega Plan and the Millennium Partnership for Africa’s Recovery Programme (MAP). It was initially tagged the New Africa initiative, while the new name NEPAD was adopted at the inaugural meeting of Heads of State from Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal, South-Africa and headed by Nigeria’s former president Olusegun Obasanjo in Abuja on October 23rd, 2007. (Animashaun:2002).

Ghana’s first leader, Kwame Nkrumah while anticipating independence in the 1950s declared; “if we get self-government, we will transform the Gold Coast (Ghana) into paradise in ten years”. (Bukarambe, 2002:2). This statement captured the attention of all African leaders at independence. Regrettably however, Ghana and the rest of the African nation are still pursuing that dream of transforming Africa from the clutches of colonial hegemony to paradise, which is becoming a mirage. This reality is behind the launching of the new partnership for Africa’s Development in a coordinated and integrated effort by African leaders.

Africa countries are formerly colony nations. They lack homegrown ideology for solving socio-political and economic problem. These countries although politically independent, depend much on their former colonial masters for support. However, some of them have bitter stories to tell about their past experiences with their colonial masters.

African countries are mostly suppliers of primary products and few existing manufacturing companies in these countries operate below their full capacities. Infact, these countries are pawn in the hands of other major regions in the world system.

The challenge of Africa situation is that a significant amount of annual budgets of most of these countries are being spent on debt servicing, poverty reduction, and as well as the provision of health care services. Africa is also plagued with political instability, unemployment, corruption and low savings for investment purposes.

In-view of the above highlighted problems besieging Africa countries, the challenge is how NEPAD and its adopted strategies could surmount the uphill task of solving the problems of economic, social and political underdevelopment of the region.

It is against this background that this paper tries to examine the usefulness of NEPAD as a tool for the development of the African continent and to evaluate NEPAD’s challenges and prospects.

1.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY.

That Africa is blessed with plethora of precious resources is a platitude. According to Abique, cited in Ademola (1999), the African continent retains the following shares of the world resources; 19% of Diamond, 80% of chromite, 70% of cobalt, 50% of Bauxite,50% of Gold,50% of Tantalite,25% of copper,20% of manganese ore and 16% of Tin among other numerous resources. In-spite of all these, Africa is the least developed in the world. Taken the above facts into consideration, Africa’s overall development continues to elicit the attention and concern of scholars, students and well-meaning Africans. It has become a challenge or responsibility to researchers to find the most suitable path to the region’s development, especially now that there is a growing dissatisfaction and resentment against the present precarious situation.

On the scope of the study, this work analyses NEPAD as a programme and its possibility of becoming a panacea to effective development of Africa. It therefore covers the period after independence of African states and the period after the creation of NEPAD.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODS

This study is basically a qualitative research as the subject under review, is a contemporary issue, Descriptive – analytical approach method of data collection was adopted. Data and information for this work were obtained from analysis of the views, comments and opinions in books, articles in journals, magazines and newspaper, as well as speeches and addresses in seminars, conferences, internet materials, workshops and meetings. It is essentially a library research. Qualitative method is therefore employed in the analysis of the data collected.

1.4 .0 DISCUSSION

1.4.1 NEPAD AS A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES.

NEPAD seeks to harness and harmonize the fragmented economies, increase the volume of intra-continental trade and integrate the continent's market into a bigger block, in order to boost competitive capabilities in the global sphere. Integration into the global economy according to Malley (2003), through continental/regional integration and co-operation will be a powerful tool for African countries to promote economic growth, development and poverty reduction. It will also enhance benefits and economics of scale among other things, the pooling of resources and risks, harmonization of investment policies and practices and the realization of institutional framework for the provision of continental public good, such as the eradication of diseases.

Moreover, the international financial system and periodic disruption to economic activities development assistance continues to be crucial in supporting poverty reduction and economic development in poor countries, but the need to be more than the recent slight reversal of the trend of declining aid levels. Accelerated progress also requires more and better targeted financial support for poverty reduction, particularly in policy areas, important for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) education, health, clean water and sanitation, Malley, (2003).

1.4.2 THE CHALLENGES OF NEPAD

NEPAD has been criticized from different angle. Politically, it has been repeatedly argued that the project had sold-out African to neo-liberal market ideology. Others criticized NEPAD for its lack of a coherent strategy and central leadership. Some viewed NEPAD as a top-down process initiated by the head of state and government, without prior consultation of civil society. Keet (2003).

Consequently, NEPAD has received much bashing by this within the ambits of globalization. Therefore, concomitant with the notion of globalization is three-fold domination of the world by : (a)transnational capital (b)the hegemony of neo-liberalism and(c) the emergence of a global historic block, Haris and Robenson, (2000) According to their analysis, the last feature of our contemporary world as ruled by what may be termed an emergent transnational capitalist class.

Today, transnational class relations cannot be ignored just as capital, production; labour and culture have become globalized. Class too is increasingly becoming transnational. Embong (2000).in addition, several follow-up questions arises. How seriously a threat to global instability really is Africa's alleged marginalization? NEPAD dare not admit, but weak government has very few threats to make against the strong. Perhaps, the best example to date was the denial of consensus by the Organization of African Unity at the December, 1999.World Trade Organization (WTO) Summit in Seattle. In contrast, South-Africa's Trade Minister, Alec Erwin, obviously peeved at the failure of Seattle to establish a new WTO round only joined the OAU caucus statement at the last moment grudgingly and demanding edits. It is however imperative to state that despite the challenges and arguments against NEPAD, there are also some gloomy issues and prospects of the programme.

B THE PROSPECTS OF NEPAD

DEBT CANCELLATION AND THE REPATRIATION OF STOLEN MONEY

- (i) African leaders and the initiators of NEPAD such as former President Mbeki of South-Africa and President Obasanjo of Nigeria stressed on debt cancellation and the repatriation of Africans stolen money in their several meetings with the G8 and other International institutions. Debt cancellation and the return of money stolen by corrupt leaders would facilitate the achievement of poverty reduction or eradication, which is one of the objectives of NEPAD. Repatriation of stolen money could be pursued vigorously to a logical conclusion by NEPAD and the perpetrators of the act, even if they will not be punished, could be encouraged to

invest such money in Africa instead of helping the already developed countries to develop more by keeping the money in foreign banks in Europe and America.

(ii) **DIVERSIFICATION OF PRODUCTION**

Diversification of production as an objective is one area where NEPAD have made a head-way. African countries are producers of primary goods which command very low prices in the international market as determined by industrialized nations. Production of those goods that are more relevant to the needs of Africa and traded among African countries will increase the volume of trade in the Region, enlarge and integrate African market. Emphasis on agricultural and allied product is a lead-way in this direction. This is one area Africa will continue to have comparative advantages if properly harnessed. In the first meeting of the Implementation committee in Abuja on October, 2007, the steering committee was mandated to develop a strategic plan for marketing and communication at the national, sub-regional, continental and international levels. (www.online.nigeria.org)

1.5 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

NEPAD should not be a programme that involves only the initiators and African leaders alone, but also the involvement of the grass root leaders and the civil society by way of suggestion and recommendation.

NEPAD should find a way of eliminating Dual economy and social in-balances particularly between the urban formal and the rural informal sectors and generally among its member countries.

The creation of Human Capacity, through informal and formal employment and rapid advances in public services needs to be a key plank of Africa's development strategies.

There is need for NEPAD to effectively regulate some of the sectors of the African economy such as transportation, communication and finance.

There is need for the promulgation of policies that encourage new entrants, enterprise, innovation and the development of social capital in Africa.

1.6 **CONCLUSION**

"United effort through NEPAD can propel Africa to greatness" (Zuma, 2005). The organization was created to spear-head the process of eradicating poverty and its attendant misery in Africa through wealth creation and partnership with international community.

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