

Future Africa



*Prospects for
Democracy and Development
under NEPAD*

Hesphina Rukato



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Dr Hesphina Rukato has been involved in African development issues since the early 1990s when she worked for the Zimbabwean Government in politics and external affairs. She also served in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

She left Zimbabwe in 1996 to join the Group for Environmental Monitoring (EMG) in South Africa as project manager for community-based waste management and environmental policy. In 1998 she joined the Minerals and Energy Policy Centre (MEPC) as programme manager: energy and development, moving on to the South African Government's Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism in 2001 as Director for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

At the end of WSSD in 2002 she joined the NEPAD Secretariat as Advisor: Environment and Tourism. She was promoted to Deputy Chief Executive Officer in 2005, responsible for human resources, finance and administration, and later also for programmes. She left the NEPAD Secretariat in 2009. She is now working as an independent consultant and as a senior researcher in the Centre for Human Rights in the Faculty of Law at the University of Pretoria.

Dr. Rukato, a Zimbabwean citizen who lives and works in South Africa, holds a first degree with honours in politics and administration and a Master's degree in environmental policy and planning from the University of Zimbabwe, with a PhD from the University of the Witwatersrand in environmental management standards. She has published widely in her fields of endeavour.

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For any errors and omissions, I accept responsibility and offer my apologies.

Foreword

I feel privileged to have been part of a ground-breaking initiative which led to the creation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It was also my privilege to have served as the Chairman of its Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) from 2001 to 2006. For these and other reasons I appreciate the opportunity to write a foreword for this book, which provides major insights into the NEPAD programme, focusing as it very well does on its genesis and early years; major accomplishments; challenges, and options for the future. The options presented in the last chapter of this book are not just for NEPAD as a programme of the African Union (AU), but also for the African continent as a whole.

At the turn of the 21st century Africa needed a new development paradigm to meet the challenges and tap the opportunities of contemporary globalisation in creatively proactive and imaginative ways. South Africa had been freed from apartheid, bringing to an end the political struggle for independence for the whole continent, and opening the way for accelerated economic and political development. The political independence of the continent had been one of the main pillars of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). It was also one area where the OAU could claim success. Having fulfilled the main objectives of the OAU, African leaders found themselves with the task of having to pause and reconfigure the route that Africa needed to take in order to extend the benefits of political independence in ways that would bring about the sustainable economic development of the African continent.

The termination of apartheid rule in South Africa made Africa to stand at the threshold of a new era, which required new strategic approaches for addressing the continent's historical underdevelopment and poverty. The advent of political independence also meant that African leaders as well as the global and African civil society, had to shift their attention from campaigning for political independence to

campaigning for and ensuring 'post independence' sustainable development, good governance and human rights on the continent. African leaders were aware of the fact that even though Africa is the richest continent on the globe in natural resources, its people are the poorest. It was in the context of the coming-to-an-end of apartheid that we initiated and actively participated in various projects to advance the African continent in new people-oriented and democratic directions, notably through the aegis and instrumentality of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA, 2000) and the Africa Leadership Forum (ALF)¹.

At the global level, the Cold War had come to an end with the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the transformation of the Soviet Union. Economically, globalisation was fast shrinking the world into one market economy, facilitated by the booming information and communication technologies (ICT).

This new global order presented an opportunity for the new leadership to put in place a comprehensive development strategy that would allow the continent to leverage its vast resources, to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment, as well as engage with the rest of the world particularly the most industrialised countries. There was a need to ensure that the engagement with the rest of the world is based on a new partnership, rather than the subservient relationship that had characterised the relations between African states and the world during the colonial and the immediate post-colonial era. It was this master-servant relationship that had, among other things, entrenched the underdevelopment of the African continent. Any new development paradigm had to be far-reaching and comprehensive enough to address all these challenges.

The struggle for independence for many of the African leaders had made them acutely aware of the need to take responsibility for the state of affairs of the continent. They realised earlier on that a continuous blame of colonialism for the underdevelopment of the continent, justifiable as it was, could no longer be an excuse for inaction. The determination to now forge ahead towards auto-centred development on the continent focused on Africa's ability to use its resourcefulness to chart a new path towards sustainable development. The African leadership acknowledged from the onset that this was going to be an arduous task, but one that was unavoidable. The critical success factor in this rethinking of a development strategy for Africa was the determination of a new crop of leaders who, in looking

1 The Africa Leadership Forum was founded in 1998 by then Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo. The primary focus of ALF is to help improve the current quality of leadership in Africa while at the same time helping to train the next generation of leaders for the continent. ALF provided the first forum where leaders could meet and exchange experiences with the view to improving their performance. ALF has spearheaded regional and continent-wide initiatives such as the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation (CSSDCA), now a standing conference of the African Union, and the Africa Women's Forum.

beyond their domestic frontiers, were now more than ready to collectively take the responsibility for the destiny of Africa and her people into their own hands.

This was the leitmotif or *raison d'être* for the emergence of NEPAD, with its foundations built and anchored on the principles of African ownership and leadership, self-reliance, partnership, good governance and people-centred development. It was this set of principles that shaped the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity into the African Union (AU) and the basis upon which the Constitutive Act of the African Union was founded. NEPAD was adopted as a politico-socio-economic programme of the African Union in 2001.

Having agreed on a broad framework for Africa's comprehensive development, it was important that the Heads of State and Government, who were to champion the implementation of the NEPAD programme, embarked on the onerous and arduous task of advocating for this programme among all major stakeholders in Africa and the international community, including the international and African civil society organisations, the international and African private sector organisations as well as within the United Nations system.

I am pleased and satisfied that within a few years of its adoption NEPAD became widely accepted as the politico-socio-economic programme of the African Union. The G8 countries positively responded by tabling the G8-Africa Action Plan in 2002. The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in 2002 in support of NEPAD as the framework for the UN's engagement with Africa on socio-economic development. The private sector in the Commonwealth, the USA, and in Africa have established formations to engage with NEPAD in a more organised and formal way. African and global civil society has supported NEPAD through actively participating in NEPAD implementation in various ways.

At the sectoral level, the NEPAD sectoral frameworks, which are clearly defined in the NEPAD framework document and which have been adopted by African ministers, have become the guiding frameworks for the implementation of NEPAD at country, regional, and continental levels. NEPAD has been fully integrated into AU structures and processes. In the first six years of its existence NEPAD made giant strides by focusing on infrastructure and regional projects on the basis of efforts of the Regional Economic Communities as well as giving birth to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

I hope that the new leadership of NEPAD will take the NEPAD process to a higher level of implementation, building on the foundation that has already been laid. I am convinced that NEPAD has laid a strong foundation for the sustainable development of the African continent. This foundation needs to be complemented by a fundamental reform of African public institutions and a change of mindset of Africans at all levels to find African-based solutions to

our collective problems. It is only when Africans take full responsibility for finding such solutions that Africa can start making progress. Such progress will be realised when we start seeing social change and more institutional integration, among many other things, of the curtailment of current untrammelled want, greed and colossal waste that characterise most of our public institutions today.

I am also convinced that we have chosen the right path for the future of Africa, even though much remains to be done. Many of the founding fathers of NEPAD have either left office or are about to come to the end of their presidential terms. I am confident, however, that with the new crop of leadership emerging on the continent, Africa is in good hands. This is because, through NEPAD, Africa has embarked on an irreversible Africa-centred path towards peace, security, democracy and sustainable economic development. There are also people-centred programmes and processes. With perseverance, determination and sacrifice on the part of Africa's leaders and its people, the ultimate goal of poverty eradication for the African continent is achievable.

However, there are hard choices to be made in the process. The last section of this book outlines the possible choices. My generation of leadership has laid a solid foundation for these choices. Whether or not these choices will be made remains in the hands of the future African leaders and its people. They must be the architects of Africa's future and be in the vanguard of their own development before they can justifiably seek a helping hand from their development partners.

It is for this reason that I congratulate the author of this book for taking the initiative. I also commend all those who have taken their time to contribute to this great project, because they have all in their own way put the NEPAD story in its deserved context and perspective.

This book will serve as a historical contribution to the development agenda of the African continent. It will also provide inspiration to future generations of Africans on Africa's long and at times tortuous and difficult journey to development. The scenarios and options presented in the last chapter of this book will offer the readers, particularly African readers, a challenge to take the right decisions and make the right choices on the development alternatives that exist, for uplifting the African continent and utilising its diversity as a resource, rather than a restraint or constraint.

We owe it to ourselves but, more importantly, we owe it to the future generations of Africans to make the right choices and necessary sacrifices. Yes, we have laid the foundation, but foundation without a superstructure does not complete the edifice.

President Olusegun Obasanjo

Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; Former Chairman, NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee

Introduction

The story of NEPAD is best explained by first understanding the social, political and economic conditions in Africa during the late 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. This introduction provides a synopsis of key developments that served as catalysts in the conceptualisation and timing of the NEPAD initiative.

The 1980s were possibly the most difficult years for African countries, both individually and collectively. The majority of countries experienced unprecedented economic stagnation and political turmoil. External terms of trade for key commodities declined by huge margins - coffee and cocoa were down by 40 percent on their levels in the 1950s, tea and cotton by more than 50 percent and copper and sugar by about one third. This happened at a time when the prices of manufactured goods produced by the highly industrialised countries were increasing.

On the political front, the decade was characterised by escalating armed conflicts and increasing military regimes and dictatorships. The conflicts were inspired by both internal and external causes. Internal causes included contestation over resources and deficient constitutional arrangements that did not adequately accommodate ethnic and religious diversity. Conflicts were also inspired and fuelled by external forces as in the case of Mozambique and Angola. The conflicts carried on for years because the belligerent parties were supported by the big powers. The combined effect of these economic and political forces was widespread economic weakening, evidenced by rampant corruption, ballooning fiscal and current account deficits, increasing indebtedness and declining investments.

By the end of the decade, the majority of African countries had lost sovereignty over their macro-economic policies and a number of them were on the brink of collapse. The multilateral development finance institutions and donor countries

which had become the major financiers of national budgets were now dictating policies and prescribing development priorities. A number of countries, including Ethiopia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire and Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), did collapse. There was therefore a general lack of confidence in the political leadership of the time in Africa.

By 1999 African leaders started working on a plan to transform the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into a vibrant institution that would accelerate political and economic integration in the 21st century. NEPAD is Africa's response to these very grave circumstances. The NEPAD architects realised that there was an urgent need for a strategy to reverse economic deterioration that had placed the whole continent on the verge of a meltdown.

From the beginning, NEPAD was conceived as an adjunct to the Constitutive Act of the African Union and not as a stand-alone initiative. NEPAD had to reclaim the right of the African people to determine their own development path, select their own priorities and sequence them in a manner that reflected their own assessment of threats and opportunities. This required the challenging of dominant attitudes and paradigms, primarily of African political leaders on the one hand and development partners on the other.

Through NEPAD, African leaders are challenged to acknowledge their own shortcomings and those of their predecessors in political governance and economic stewardship. Above all, they are challenged to make a new beginning. The development partners are called upon to respect the right of the African people to determine their own development path and priorities; above all, to support the implementation of NEPAD as the African-conceived development renewal programme.

The story that follows traces the evolution of the NEPAD initiative from the beginning, its achievements and shortcomings and the way ahead. I hope you will find the story fascinating and enlightening.

Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu

Former NEPAD Chief Executive Officer

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1

Background to NEPAD

The NEPAD chronicle has to be analysed within the context of Africa's history, particularly its colonial history, as well as global circumstances in which Africa found itself at the end of the colonial domination era, as well as when apartheid crumbled in South Africa in 1994. One of the most critical factors that shaped Africa's development trajectory is the underdevelopment of the continent because of colonialism. At the attainment of total political freedom in 1994 Africa was still a divided and diverse continent of 54 countries, whose borders had been determined by the Berlin Conference of 1884. This history also determined that Africa would be divided into five regions, all at different levels of development, different colonial backgrounds and masters, different languages, and different cultures and traditions.

It was therefore clear that any attempts at uniting the continent had to take into account this divided historical reality which had, by the stroke of a pen on a map in Berlin in 1884, divided the continent along borders that bore no resemblance to the cultures and traditions of the African people. These factors were to determine the manner in which Africa would respond to the end of colonialism on the continent, which was marked by the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994. The same factors would also fundamentally influence future challenges in integrating the continent.

Prior to the total political liberation of the African continent, several attempts had been made to develop the continent as part of the Pan-Africanism agenda¹ as well as under the aegis of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). These efforts

1 As a philosophy, Pan-Africanism represents the aggregation of the historical, cultural, spiritual, artistic, scientific and philosophical legacies of Africans from past times to the present. Pan-Africanism as an ethical system traces its origins from ancient times and promotes values that are the product of the African civilisation and the struggles against slavery, racism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.
(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pan-Africanism#Origins>)

include the adoption of the Monrovia Declaration in 1979, and the subsequent development and adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) of 1980, as well as the final Act of Lagos of 1981. These early efforts were triggered by the realisation by African leaders of the time of the need to restructure African economies, as well as the continent's mode of engagement with the rest of the world, particularly the developed countries.

Through the Lagos Plan of Action, which was the most comprehensive programme ever embarked upon by Africans at the time, African leaders committed themselves to adopting "*a far reaching regional approach based primarily on collective self-reliance*"². As early as 1980, African leaders were already well aware of the need to rely primarily on the collective efforts of Africans to address the underdevelopment of the continent. The continent's proven resilience during the colonial period provided Africans with a conviction that such resilience and experience would engender self-determination and sustainable economic development.

Although the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action was received with much excitement, its implementation proved to be a disappointment. The Lagos Plan of Action was never implemented, for the following reasons:

African leaders were still enmeshed with the prime focus of the OAU, which was to attain the total political liberation of the African continent³. Not much attention was given to issues of socio-economic development in spite of the early recognition of the need to tackle the underdevelopment of the continent. Firstly, much of the continent was still caught up in political instability and civil strife. For example Mozambique, Angola and Namibia were still fighting for independence, and so was South Africa. As such, there was a consensus that socio-economic progress would only be possible after the attainment of political independence. Ultimately, the insufficient political will and inadequate resources undermined the vision of self-reliance which was one of the cornerstones of the Lagos Plan of Action.

The lack of financial resources to effectively implement this Plan at the national level became a reality. This was especially so in the context of the financial might of the Breton Woods institutions and their externally driven socio-economic structural adjustment programmes that made the Lagos Plan of Action seem impracticable to many countries. Consequently, it was easier for countries to receive funds and advice from the World Bank than to focus on the development of domestic resource mobilisation strategies which would have

² *Lagos Plan of Action*, Pg 4.

³ *Interview with Prof. Adebayo Adedeji, 2008.*

ensured an incremental weaning from the conditional resources of the former colonial masters.

There was also little support from development partners. In addition to the decline in official development assistance (ODA), the partners came up with their own individual and competing initiatives, such as the World Bank's structural adjustment programmes, (SAPs) that were not fully funded but rather used as diversions from the African vision of self-determination. Further, the delivery mode of these initiatives was based on the "divide and rule" approach, which was a contradiction to the integration agenda being vigorously pursued by Africans at the time. In that regard:

"Although a majority of African governments were probably more sympathetic to the LPA's economic model of collective self-reliance than to SAPs, their financial circumstances in the 1980s made the immediate resources provided by the Breton Woods institutions more attractive than the long-term and uncertain benefits of the LPA" (Ikome, 2007, Pg 89).

Another domestic factor that militated against the success of the Lagos Plan of Action is that its architects were significantly influenced by the notion of "political voluntarism of states... (whereby) the implementation of the initiative (would) almost exclusively depend on incentives offered by expectations of potential economic benefit to African societies and people (Ikome (2007)⁴". It also later dawned on the architects of the Lagos Plan of Action that the main tenets of the Lagos Plan of Action did not offer them the political security they required to remain in power in perpetuity. Issues of good governance contradicted the dictatorial, corrupt and wastage tendencies of the time. As will be seen later in the book, these same factors ultimately undermined the principles of NEPAD, particularly around good political and economic governance, as well as the limitation of terms in political office.

Many of the African leaders at the time were part of the problem and not the solution to Africa's challenges. For example, Zaire's President Mobutu Seseseko and Nigeria's Sani Abacha are an example of corrupt African leaders who have made Africa the laughing stock of the world⁵. Funds that are targeted for the poor never reach them. Instead, according to Ribadu, (2009):

"On a regional dimension, it is estimated that some \$20 billion leaves Africa annually through the illicit export of money extorted from development loan

⁴ Lagos Plan of Action, Pg 18.

⁵ Interview with Prof. Nkuhlu, 2007.

contracts. This money is deposited in overseas banks by a network of politicians, civil servants and businessmen. This figure is now roughly equal to the entire amount of aid from the US to Sub-Saharan Africa every year. This outflow is not just abstract numbers: it translates to the concrete reality of kids who cannot be put in schools, who will never learn to read, because there are no classrooms; mothers who die in childbirth because the money for maternity care never made it to the hospitals; tens of thousands who die because there are no drugs or vaccines in hospitals; no roads to move produce from farms to markets or enable a thriving economy; no jobs for young school graduates or even ordinary workers; and no security for anyone because the money has been stolen and shipped out" (Pg 6).

At the global level, the release of the Berg Report in 1981 dealt a further blow to the Lagos Plan of Action⁶. The report provided a platform and justification for the Breton Woods institutions to build on the Berg Report agenda to provide strangling debt conditions to African countries that desperately needed credit to cushion them from the debt crises of the 1980s.

Parallel development programmes of the United Nations and its agencies, for example, suffered the same fate, mainly due to the fact that they were not fully owned and/or administered by Africans. Rather, they were implemented as "prescriptions" by the donor community, even though there was no consensus on the root causes of the endemic poverty and underdevelopment. Indeed some of these interventions further entrenched a culture of entitlement and dependency.

However, in spite of the lack of implementation of the Lagos Plan of Action, and a poor performance in Africa of the UN and the World Bank programmes, African leaders continued to pursue alternatives for addressing the continued impoverishment of the continent and the regional integration agenda. In 1991 the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC)⁷ was signed.

⁶ The World Bank published a report called "Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action. The report recommended adopting a more outward-oriented programme of raw materials exports, eliminating subsidies and controls, and letting market forces determine the prices for raw materials export (Sundaram J.K and Arnim R, 2008, Pg 2). The goals, objectives and characteristics of the strategy contained in the Berg Report are inconsistent with those of the LPA...the implication of the recommended approach is to make Africa more dependent on external markets for its agricultural and mineral products and for its essential factor inputs. This is contrary to the principles of self-reliant and self-sustaining development of the LPA (Ikome, 2007, Pg 88).

⁷ The African Economic Community (AEC) is an organisation of the Organisation of African Unity states establishing grounds for mutual economic development among the majority of African states. The stated goals of the organisation include the creation of free trade areas, customs unions, a single market, a central bank and a common currency, thus establishing an economic and monetary union.