

Statement by  
His Excellency President Olusegun Obasanjo  
On The Occasion of TICAD-III  
September 26, 2003

### Protocol

I am pleased to address this distinguished Conference, and to speak on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), with reference to its latest developments.

As you may know, NEPAD is now in its third year and has entered an implementation and consolidation phase coupled with a process of strengthening and expanding partnerships.

I recently had the honour of presenting to the African Union Summit in Maputo, a progress report on the implementation of the NEPAD Initiative, and I will like to highlight some features of the relationship between the NEPAD and the African Union. In this regard, let me reaffirm that as a programme of the African Union, NEPAD is meant to be in support of all African countries in their resolve to promote durable peace and sustainable development, as well as integration.

One of the major outcomes of the Maputo Summit has been

the decision to integrate NEPAD into the structures and processes of the African Union within a three year period. This process has recently been set in motion, mainly through a consultative mechanism between the NEPAD Secretariat and the Africa Union Commission. It is expected that the process will gain focus and substance with the entry into function, of the new team that will be driving the Commission under the leadership of our brother Alpha Oumar Konare.

The relationships with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have also been at the center of NEPAD's attention. For the great African Union project and for NEPAD's implementation, the RECs are recognized as major actors working with the individual member States. NEPAD is strongly committed to assisting the RECs in improving their capacity to perform the role expected of them when it comes to coordination and implementation. It is refreshing to note that the hallmark of collaboration with the RECs has been constant dialogue with particular emphasis on their effective involvement in fostering and implementing NEPAD. In this regard, NEPAD will be convening, by the end of next month,

in Abuja, Nigeria, a high level seminar to discuss with the Executive Secretaries and the Africa Union Commission, ways and means of strengthening coordination and cooperation with the RECs.

### **Peace and Security**

Peace and security are pre-conditions for development. That is why the NEPAD leadership has been paying priority attention to the issue of conflicts across the continent. Indeed, a great deal of effort has been put in conflict prevention and resolution, as can be seen in cases of Liberia, Guinea Bissau, DRC, etc, where Africans have managed to ensure the prevalence of a peace agenda.

At an operational level, the NEPAD Secretariat and the AU Commission worked closely on issues of peace and security and made good progress in their interaction with the G8, the European Union, and the United Nations, in developing a plan for strengthening the capacity of peace support operations in Africa.

### **Governance/APRM**

Another issue of critical importance for NEPAD has been the promotion of the Governance Agenda in pursuance of the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance, adopted in June 2002, and submitted to the AU Inaugural Summit in South Africa, in July 2002. To this end, the NEPAD leadership and Secretariat launched the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and in March 2003, appointed an independent Panel of Eminent Persons.

The APRM Panel held its inaugural meeting in July, and is now in the process of preparing for the first reviews to be initiated hopefully within the next three months. It should be noted that sixteen African countries have already voluntarily acceded to the APRM and efforts are underway to seek and encourage more accessions. Let me quickly add that the APRM is a unique development in African politics and represents a renewed commitment to good governance, transparency, accountability, and an opportunity to share experiences.

## **Infrastructure**

Realizing the crucial importance of infrastructure and its potential positive impact on the development and integration processes in Africa, NEPAD embarked on a joint collaborative effort with the African Development Bank, to develop an Action Plan. In this connection, a Short Term Action Plan for infrastructure was produced in July 2002. The Plan, which has enjoyed the full involvement of the RECs, focuses on some critical areas such as energy, transport, water and ICT's. It is being presented and submitted to the business community as well as to development partners for a possible engagement. At the same time, a joint effort is underway for the elaboration of the Medium and Long-term NEPAD Plan of Action in the field of infrastructure.

## **Agriculture, Trade and Industry**

NEPAD has put great emphasis in the agricultural and rural development of the continent. It has contributed greatly in giving agriculture more visibility and more priority attention on the global agenda. As you may be aware, the NEPAD

Secretariat has worked closely with FAO in coming up with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The focus now is on the implementation with an emphasis on promoting food security and addressing extreme poverty. To this end, the Secretariat has facilitated the elaboration of a Plan of Action to implement CAADP and has identified, with the full involvement of the RECs, a number of flagship projects tailored to the needs and specific situation of the different sub-regions. These projects will be submitted for potential funding sources.

Regarding trade, and besides a contribution to a concerted African position in the framework of international trade negotiations, the NEPAD Secretariat is endeavoring to promote a greater intra-African trade. It is also important to note that the NEPAD Leadership is cognizant of the importance of increasing Africa-Asia trade, as it holds great potential for the development of Africa.

Another area in which we intend to focus our efforts is strengthening the supply side capacities of African

economies and redressing the constraints that hinder their ability in reaping the benefits and opportunities offered by the international trading system. In this regard, the NEPAD Secretariat has embarked on a collaborative effort with UNIDO, in a process that would provide a comprehensive vision in building Africa's productive capacity. This process will focus on industries in which Africa enjoys a clear competitive advantage such as agro-processing and the textile industries. It is also noteworthy to mention that the NEPAD Secretariat is developing a Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs) Strategy for African firms as part of a strategy that would make SME development and promotion an integral component in all of our programs.

### **Environment and Tourism:**

Besides some bold projects initiated at its own level, and covering mainly the areas of capacity building, natural disaster mitigation, stockpiles and environmental impact assessment, the NEPAD Secretariat has been working very closely with the Africa Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to develop a comprehensive

Programme of Action for the environmental component of NEPAD.

The Programme of Action which has been adopted by the African Environment Ministers and submitted to the Maputo Summit of the African Union is now at the implementation phase. In this regard, an important Donor's Conference is due to be held by December, in Algiers, in order to mobilize funding for the Programme. The Japanese Government as well as some other partners represented at this Conference are strongly urged to consider participating in the Algiers meeting.

### **Human Development**

The development of African human resources has been considered by NEPAD as high priority. Two areas in particular, have been identified for urgent action, namely health and education. On health, a strategy has been prepared in close collaboration with the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa. A comprehensive Plan of Action on African Education is being prepared in collaboration with UNESCO.

## **Civil society and the private sector**

The NEPAD leadership has continued to dialogue and engage with civil society organizations. In Maputo, last July, the African civil society movement pronounced itself clearly in favour of a greater involvement in the implementation of NEPAD. This would enhance considerably, the ownership of the Initiative as we are making every effort to reach out to all Africans in and outside Africa.

The dialogue and interaction with the private sector has also been pursued. On the margins of the AU Summit in Maputo, an important Roundtable has provided a golden opportunity for the business community to interact with African leaders. Indeed, the partnership with the business community is growing, particularly in light of progress made in identifying and outlining clear projects in the area of infrastructure.

## **International partnerships**

Since its inception, the NEPAD Initiative has enjoyed wide support from the international community. Furthermore, NEPAD has been accepted as a platform for support to

Africa's development as clearly demonstrated by the United Nations System, the G8, and other international partners. With the G8 countries, we just had another interaction a few days ago in New York, as a follow-up to the very fruitful dialogue held in Evian, last June. The partnership with the G8 is a long-term process whose foundations are being consolidated and strengthened. At the same time, NEPAD is exploring ways and means of expanding the partnership to other developed countries, but also some developing countries in Asia and Latin America. In this regard, the TICAD process is a very important framework and instrument to consolidate and enlarge the partnership between Africa and Asia. I am convinced that our present Conference would contribute a lot to this end.

### **The Future**

I observe that what TICAD I and TICAD II expected from Africa has been put in place through NEPAD. The emphasis of TICAD I was political and economic reform, private sector development and regional cooperation and integration. TICAD II emphasized poverty reduction through accelerated economic growth and sustainable development and effective

integration of African economies into the global economy. For TICAD III, let us take stock and assess the progress or lack of it in the past ten years and channel a new course. We have a new base for such reforms in NEPAD which emphasizes PARTNERSHIP. **TICAD which predates NEPAD and for which all African leaders are grateful to Japan should dovetail into NEPAD.** And five years from now we should be able to assess the progress and success of Africa-Japan partnership on total resource flow from Japan to Africa, increased trade between Africa and Japan, involvement of Japan in African infrastructural development, and how far in general Africa has been empowered to meet the Millennium Development Goals. That should be the yardstick of assessment of success.

I thank you.