

The Problems and Prospects of the New Partnership for Africa's Development in the 21st Century

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Abstract: The New Partnership for Africa's Development has in the past twenty-four (24) years undertook several economic development programs on behalf of the African Union for the continent. Within this period, the agency has experienced several problems and challenges including limited funding capacity, reliance on external aid, lack of technical expertise and human capacity as well as limited access to technology and innovation. However, the agency has also recorded some remarkable strides within the same period of its existence including the promotion of regional integration with the potential for enhanced economic cooperation, reduced trade barriers and increased economic efficiency among African countries. This study attempts an analysis of the problems and prospects of the agency in the twenty first century with a focus on the extent to which the organization has been able to fully implement its mandate. It adopts a qualitative research method with a content analytic approach and relies solely on the secondary sources of data. The study argues that given the myriads of unsuccessful past economic initiatives in Africa, there seem to be an understandable pessimism and even cynicism directed at the agency by both scholars and researchers alike. It recommends the need for African leaders to look inwards by mobilizing and harnessing the abundant human and natural resources in the continent for sustainable development, investment promotion alongside regional and sub-regional economic cooperation and integration and concludes that a judicious implementation of these recommendations could take the agency to another level in sustainable African development.

Keywords: Africa, New Partnership for Africa's Development, Problems, Prospects, Sustainable development

Introduction

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has been around for almost twenty-four (24) years now. It can within this period be said to have made significant progress in various areas since its inception. In fact, one of its notable achievements is the implementation of the Pan-African E-Network, which aims to establish policies and strategies for transformative e-applications and services in Africa, especially the intra-African broadband terrestrial infrastructure (NEPAD, 2023). The Agency can also be accredited with facilitating the review and expansion of the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa (PMPA Technical Committee, leading to the development of the PMPA Business Plan aside from its role in optimizing supply chains, particularly in the management of COVID-19 vaccinations all in the health sector (NEPAD, 2023). But the question is: has NEPAD been able to fully implement its mandate? Has it been able to surmount its problems and does it have prospects for a better future for the African continent? These questions and more is what this study attempts to address.

From the 1960s, when some of the African countries started attaining their political freedom, efforts have been made by their leaders to forge continent-wide development blueprints aimed at bringing about economic growth,

development and integration. Some of the earlier initiatives include the Monrovia Strategy for Economic Development of Africa, the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Final Act of Lagos. The basic objectives of these initiatives were, firstly, to promote increasing measure of self-reliance. Secondly, to accelerate “internally located” and relatively autonomous process of growth and diversification. Thirdly, they aimed at progressively eradicating unemployment and mass poverty and a just distribution of incomes and benefits of development among the population (Asante, 1991, p.46).

The Final Act of Lagos (FAL) envisaged the eventual establishment of an African Common Market (via regional economic blocs) leading to the creation of an African Economic Community (AEC) by the year 2000. The concretization of this objective took place in Abuja in June 1991 when the treaty establishing the Community was signed. Consequently, by the 1990s the African landscape was replete with all kinds of development plans and programs. These initiatives however, failed for a variety of reasons including lack of political will, external interference and lack of resources (Aluko-olokun, 2001:1). These failed attempts were particularly perplexing when one bears in mind that although the continent of Africa was richly endowed, today in developmental terms it is the poorest region in the world, with half of its population living on less than USD\$1 per day (NEPAD, 2001, p.4).

It was therefore in an effort by some corps of African leaders namely Presidents Abdulaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria (all former presidents) to find a lasting solution to the present dismal socio-economic condition of the continent, that another program, NEPAD was designed. Unlike the past initiatives, NEPAD was conceived and managed by African leaders. “It seeks cooperation with and assistance from the developed world under a transformed partnership which underscores mutual responsibilities, mutual accountability and mutual benefits. This is the new credo to guide Africa with new century of development” (Aluko-olokun, 2002, p.4).

A unique feature of NEPAD is the increasing recognition by African leaders that they can no longer depend on the generosity, goodwill and magnanimity of developed countries. The program is centered on ‘African ownership and management’. It is based on an “agenda set by African peoples through their own initiatives and their own volition to shape their own destiny” (NEPAD, 2001, p.4). Re-christened the African Union Development –New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AUDA-NEPAD), the agency has been refocused to promote collective action and address global systemic risks in the 21st century. Currently led by Ms. Nardos Bekele-Thomas from Ethiopia, who assumed office in May 2022, the agency has recorded great strides in the pursuit of Africa’s development by not only achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) but improving infrastructure and regional integration. It is these unique achievements that has propelled this study as it sets to examine the problems and prospects of this AU agency in taking Africa to its developmental peak in the new millennium.

Statement of Problem

Given the myriads of unsuccessful past economic initiatives that have piled up in Africa (about 37) especially from the 1960s to 1990s, there is understandable pessimism, even cynicism, directed at yet another African Program. In spite of the laudable plans contained in the initiatives such as the LPA (1980), the Africa’s Priority Program for Economic Recovery, 1986-1990 (APPER), United Nations Program of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UN-PAAERD) and the African Economic Community (AEC), the depressing African economic condition has not changed. In fact, in some cases, they even worsened as the following stark realities at the beginning of the 21st century indicated:

340 million Africans (about half the population) live in abject poverty, mortality rate of children under 5 years of age is over 140 per 1000, and life expectancy at birth is only 54 years. Only 58% of the population has access to safe water and the rate of illiteracy for people over 15 is 41%. There are only 18 mainline telephones per 1000 in Africa compared to 146 for the world as a whole and 567 for high income countries (NEPAD, 2001, p.5).

Against this backdrop, the study examines the feasibility of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development turning these depressing statistics around and achieving its principal objective of giving impetus to Africa’s development. To do this there will be need to shift Africa’s development nexus from an external orientation to that based on “a genuine authentic strategy” that is both ‘self-reliant and self-sustaining’ (Shaw, 1982, p.22). Further, it was posited

that “endogenous African institutions” should formulate ‘African solutions to Africa’s economic problems’ (Obasanjo and d’Orville, 1990, p.12). However, 24 years down the line, NEPAD has been able to prove a point that it can make the difference in taking Africa to its highest development destination. But the fact remains that the agency is still faced with numerous challenges in the midst of the prospects setting it apart from previous initiatives in the continent. Truth be told, Africa is yet to realize that dream of a truly developed continent in spite of some of the successes recorded by NEPAD.

Therefore, this paper is tight to three (3) pertinent questions which borders on the core mandate of NEPAD viz: What is the nature of the partnership and the relative strengths of the partners? What are the politics and dynamics of ‘development’ as far as the African continent is concerned? Lastly, given the liberal (capitalist) connotations in NEPAD such as “free market”, private sector, good governance, economic and corporate governance can Africa rightly claim ownership of NEPAD or is it a subterfuge for the developed countries to continue tele guiding the African economies? These questions are designed to serve as the building blocks needed to examine the challenges and possible prospects of NEPAD taking Africa to the much needed Eldorado of development.

Methodology

This study has been approached in an admixture of analytical and narrative styles. NEPAD is a relatively new initiative which has aroused a great deal of interest and attracted constant attention and commentary in the media principally by stakeholders both within and outside Nigeria. The debates have centered on a general review of the initiative and developments relevant to aspects of the initiative. Nigerians and other Africans sometimes express skepticism over the feasibility of the initiative in view of the lack of success of similar initiatives in the past. An attempt has been made to assess the impact of the NEPAD initiative on the sectors identified in the program such as agriculture and market access, education, health, information and communication technology (ICT), infrastructure and poverty reduction.

Literature Review

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) is a relatively new concept in African development vocabulary. But within the 24 years of its existence, it has generated a lot of debate and analysis from numerous scholars and analyst alike, many of whom have out rightly condemned the initiative, thus giving it no marginal chance of success in addressing the developmental challenges of the continent. Others have been somewhat pessimistic adopting a wait and see attitude partly because of the failures of similar initiatives in the past but the truth remains that NEPAD has come to stay as one sure means of addressing the gamut of problems of development in Africa. Given this background, it follows rightly that a lot of scholars have undertaken various researches and studies on NEPAD and it is stating the obvious to assert that a lot of literature abound on the initiative.

For instance, Yusuf, Sule, and Ejima (2020) in their study on the impact of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) on Economic Development in Nigeria covering the period of 2001 to 2018 undertook an assessment of the efficacy of the NEPAD initiative on Nigeria’s development indicators such as poverty rate, unemployment and income inequality. The findings revealed that the trends of poverty rate, income inequality and unemployment rate still remained worrisome issues given the continuous increase in ratios even in the midst of several policies and programme, rising government expenditure and steady growth rate within the period of the study. This study is a gross deviation of this present one which focuses on the problems and prospects of the agency.

In their study on “NEPAD and Right to Development in Africa: A Critical Review” Oji-Lanre & Amodu (2024) traced the historical origin of NEPAD. In their submission, the African Union's programme for economic growth is called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and in July 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia, at the 37th meeting of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, NEPAD was approved. In order to hasten economic integration and cooperation between African states, NEPAD intends to create a policy framework and a comprehensive vision for Africa (Dickson, 2021). According to them, the Millennium Alliance for the African Sustainable Construction (MAP), championed by the then South African president Thabo Mbeki in collaboration

with former presidents Olusegun Matthew Obasanjo of Nigeria and Bouteflika Abdelaziz of Algeria, and the OMEGA Plan for Africa created by Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade, was combined to form NEPAD. They concluded that the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) had decided that OMEGA Initiatives as well as MAP Plans be combined at a conference in Sirte, Libya, in March 2001 (Dickson, 2021). This study though on NEPAD does not in any way address the problems and prospects of NEPAD and as such is not in league with this present one.

However, closely related this study is the work of Osee, Pascal, Pembe, Kambala, Bokombe & Omombe (2024) titled "Shaping the Future of Africa: The Efficiency of NEPAD in Promoting to Develop Africa" where they evaluated the efficiency of NEPAD in promoting development across Africa. Drawing on empirical evidence and scholarly analysis, their study explores the successes and challenges faced by NEPAD in achieving its objectives. It examines the organization's role in leveraging international partnerships, promoting good governance, and fostering socioeconomic progress. Ultimately, their study provides a nuanced assessment of NEPAD's contributions to African development, offering insights into its potential for advancing the continent's growth and prosperity in the future. Further it analyzes the efficiency of NEPAD in some areas, such as the promotion of regional integration, the empowerment of women and youth, infrastructure development, as well as the challenges and opportunities of NEPAD. They concluded that NEPAD represents a crucial framework aimed at advancing sustainable development, economic growth, and regional integration across the African continent. However, as closely related as this study is to our present one, it still not focused extensively on the problems and prospects of NEPAD which this study is meant to address.

Writing on NEPAD as an agency developing the African Union's "AUDA NEPAD" as a strategic approach to achieve comprehensive African development, Chouaib (2024) evaluated the role of the African Union Development Agency, AUDA NEPAD, in leading comprehensive development initiatives across Africa. He sought to determine how AUDA NEPAD's advisory capacity to member states on development strategies and capacity building can alleviate underdevelopment and promote sustainable growth. The study analyzes the agency's programmatic activities aligned with its recalibrated focus, which includes human capital development, enterprise, technology and innovation, digitization, industrialization, environmental sustainability, economic integration, and knowledge management and equally examines the agency's effectiveness in fostering regional and global partnerships and integrating these sectors to boost development. He further argues that AUDA NEPAD has shown substantial progress and promising results, especially in its role as a pivotal executive agency for the African Union. To him, NEPAD has successfully empowered member states to lead their own development initiatives by providing comprehensive advisory support and promoting best collaborative practices. Chouaib (2024) concluded that the AUDA NEPAD's renewed mandate is crucial in empowering African nations to capitalize on regional and global partnerships, covering all facets necessary for inclusive and sustainable growth and that this executive agency is instrumental in transforming the development landscape of Africa, reinforcing its position as a central vehicle for achieving development goals across the continent. This study presents a new perspective into this literature as it focuses on the new AUDA NEPAD.

On his part, Deinibiteim (2018) examined the conditions for sustainable development strategy which is one of the three key strategies of NEPAD development programme and reiterated that Nigeria began the implementation of the programme in 2003. The study found that while it is true that the government has domesticated and began implementation of the programme, the elements of the conditions for sustainable development such as peace and security, democracy and good governance, human rights protection, infrastructural development, etc. are far from being attained. This paper is also far from our present one because of its focus on sustainable development strategy and not the problems and prospects of the agency.

Equally of relevance to this study is the work of Agbu (2005) on "NEPAD: Origin, Challenges and Prospects" where he observed that NEPAD is a comprehensive and integrated initiative for the revival of Africa through a constructive partnership between Africans themselves and between Africa and the developed world. It can be regarded as a philosophy of development which appears to have a lot in common with the neo-liberal approach to development. NEPAD is basically couched within five core principles seen as constituting the preconditions for Africa's renewal. Agbu (2005) went further to list the core principles as good governance, entrenchment of democracy, peace and security, sound economic policy-making and execution, productive partnership, domestic ownership and leadership. He concluded that the whole essence of the diverse African development initiatives

including NEPAD were for African self-reliance and integration, popular participation in development, the importance of the state as a catalyst in development, removing the inequalities and iniquities in the global market system, and providing an African alternative to market led growth. The focus of Agbu's work aligned perfectly with this present study as it discussed in great details the challenges and prospects of NEPAD.

From the viewpoint of NEPAD being an instrument of capitalist exploitation, Ogbinaka (2006, p.5) submits that slavery, colonization, capitalism/socialism, structural adjustment programs, liberalization, etc. (and now New Economic Partnership for Africa Development?) are a few obstinately designed Euro-American principles or models of socio-economic control and dominance over the less-developed economies of African states and people. Unfortunately, these 'philosophies' that are being paraded as economic policies/programs, blueprints/initiatives or measures are also instruments of exploitation. This may pass for what is today called 'Afro-pessimism', but the apostles of NEPAD say that what they are offering in NEPAD is '*new*' and different from the past.

He went further to observe that previous development policies for Africa implemented by African leaders shared a common family semblance; they are Western initiatives, often mounted to stall self-driven indigenous developmental programs by Africans. As with their forebears, they are incapable of achieving any good purpose for Africa, and once these policies have done the jobs for which the initiators installed them, or if they are perceived as not serving the interest of their initiators, they are dismantled without apologies, hence the goals of such policies (which the Asians did not get themselves fooled about) operate to (1) make the African economy subservient to the Euro-American economy; (2) cause socio-economic- political dislocation in Africa; and (3) disconnect African self-reliant resources (human and natural) from sustainable development (Ogbinaka, 2006, p.5). These works on NEPAD though inciting and critical of the initiative fails to properly address the problems and prospects of the agency and as such leaves a gap which our current study is out to fill.

From all of the above, it is glaring that numerous scholars have taken turns to examine this new initiative called NEPAD. They have written for and against the organization depending on which side of the divide they have found themselves. In all these, one glaring fact has emerged and that being the notion by many that NEPAD has survived better than past initiatives through the implementation of its policies and programs so far. However, not much has been done in the area of addressing directly the problems and prospects of NEPAD, a development which gives this study an edge over many others. It is our intention to fill this vacuum and stimulate fresh debates and studies in this direction.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts modernization theory as a framework of analysis. The basic reason for the formation of NEPAD remains the issue of African backwardness and the need to engender development in the continent. As earlier seen in this study, NEPAD came into existence to replace other continental plans of action which were all geared towards the development of the African continent. Modernization theory seems suitable for this theory since it is not only one of the theories of development, but one which has the ability to propel the continent to greater economic growth that is needed to drive the overall development of Africa. Modernization theory is used to analyze ways in which modernization processes in societies take place. The theory looks at which aspects of countries are beneficial and which constitute obstacles for economic development. The idea is that development assistance targeted at those particular aspects can lead to modernization of 'traditional' or 'backward' societies. Scientists from various research disciplines have contributed to modernization theory (Preston, 1996, p.16).

From the sociological and anthropological perspective, the earliest principles of modernization theory can be derived from the idea of progress, which stated that people can develop and change their society themselves. Marquis de Condorcet was involved in the origins of this theory. This theory also states that technological advancements and economic changes can lead to changes in moral and cultural values. The French sociologist Durkheim (1997, p.39) stressed the interdependence of institutions in a society and the way in which they interact with cultural and social unity. His work 'The Division of Labor in Society' was very influential. It described how social order is maintained in society and ways in which primitive societies can make the transition to more advanced societies. Other scientists who have contributed to the development of modernization theory are: David Apter, who did research on the political system and history of democracy; Seymour Martin Lipset, who argued

that economic development leads to social changes which tend to lead to democracy; David McClelland, who approached modernization from the psychological side with his motivations theory; and Talcott Parsons who used his pattern variables to compare backwardness with modernity (Durkheim, 1997, p.40).

Critics of modernization theory contend that the theory observes traditions and pre-existing institutions of primitive societies as obstacles to modern economic growth. Modernization which is forced from outside upon a society might induce violent and radical change, but according to modernization theorists this is generally worth it. Critics point to traditional societies being destroyed and slipping away to a modern form of poverty without ever gaining the promised advantages of modernization. The criticisms notwithstanding, it is the view of many scholars that NEPAD has the capacity to change the backwardness of Africa to a modernized continent where the entire citizenry will be better for it. It is therefore the position of this study that NEPAD has the capacity to deliver the expected gains from modernization theorists.

From NEPAD to AUDA-NEPAD: Delivering Results for Agenda 2063

The New Partnership for Africa's Development was established in June 2001, at the 37th Ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Lusaka, Zambia. In July 2002, NEPAD was launched at the first African Union (AU) summit in Durban, South Africa while the NEPAD planning and coordinating agency (NPCA) was established to replace the NEPAD Secretariat in 2010. In 2018, the African Union (AU) Assembly decided to integrate NPCA into the AU system, leading to the creation of AUDA-NEPAD which was officially launched in January, 2019, marking a new era in Africa's development agenda. AUDA-NEPAD's mandate is to coordinate and implement Africa's development agenda, promote regional integration and economic development, and support member states in achieving their development goals. Its key areas of focus include infrastructure development, agricultural development, industrialization, human development, governance and capacity building. Today, AUDA-NEPAD plays a crucial role in shaping Africa's development agenda and promoting regional integration (African Union Commission and African Union Development Agency – NEPAD (2022)).

AUDA-NEPAD is the implementing agency for agenda 2063, Africa's long term development blueprint as it responsible for implementing the agenda's programs and projects including coordination, monitoring and evaluation, resource mobilization while using Agenda 2063 as its strategic framework for promoting Africa's development. In fact, there is serious partnership and collaboration between AUDA-NEPAD and agenda 2063 as its programs and projects are aligned with the Agenda's aspirations and flagship projects. The AUDA-NEPAD focuses on the theory of change as it believes that the African Union, its Member States and regional bodies have primary responsibility for development policies, strategies, programmes and projects that integrate the African continent and positively impact the livelihoods and wellbeing of all Africans. AUDA-NEPAD also believes that instruments should be put in place to ensure equitable access by all Africans to the fruits of their development interventions, so as to achieve "The Africa We Want" (AUDA-NEPAD, 2020).

Objectives of NEPAD

NEPAD's four primary objectives are: to eradicate poverty, promote sustainable growth and development, integrate Africa in the world economy, and accelerate the empowerment of women. It is based on the underlying principles of a commitment to good governance, democracy, human rights and conflict resolution; and the recognition that maintenance of these standards is fundamental to the creation of an environment conducive to investment and long-term economic growth. NEPAD seeks to attract increased investment, capital flows and funding, providing an African-owned framework for development as the foundation for partnership at regional and international levels (Hope, 2006, p.388).

The main goals of *The New Partnership for Africa's Development* are "to help eradicate poverty in Africa and place African countries ... on the path of sustainable growth and development and thus halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process." According to the NEPAD document issued in October 2001, the requisite conditions towards achieving these lofty goals include 'selecting' 'urgent priorities' that 'would have catalytic effect for the intervention in other priority areas in the future.' This will include factors such as "infrastructure, capital accumulation, human capital, institutions, structural diversification, competitiveness, health and good stewardship

of the environment.” NEPAD is conceived to be a long-term developmental plan floated on short-term reinforcing goals, and envisaged as a long-term vision of an African-owned and African led development program (section IV, paragraph 60) (Ogbanika, 2006, p.8).

NEPAD and its Mandate: The Journey So Far

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development has made significant progress in fulfilling its mandate since its inception in 2001. Although much of the achievements could be attributed to its new found status of AUDA-NEPAD, the traditional initiative of the agency has equally recorded giant strides in engendering sustainable development in Africa. The table below gives a summary view of the extent to which the agency has been able to deliver on its avowed mandate.

Table 1 NEPAD’s Mandate and the Extent of its Implementation

S/N	NEPAD’s Mandate	Extent of Implementation	Prospects for further Action
1.	Promotion of Good Governance	NEPAD has encouraged democratic transitions and competitive politics in several African countries including Ghana, Kenya, Mali and Zambia. It must also be noted that the NEPAD initiative is premised on African states making commitments to achieving good governance, democracy, and human rights, while endeavoring to prevent and resolve situations of conflict and instability on the continent. Coupled with these efforts to create conditions conducive for investment, growth, and development are initiatives to raise the necessary resources to address the development chasm in critical sectors of the African economy.	NEPAD should embark on strengthening democratic institutions, transparency and accountability in governance among member countries.
2.	Conflict Resolution	In league with the AU, NEPAD has played a key role in restoring peace in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Liberia. It has also been involved in post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Libya, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Rwanda and Mozambique.	NEPAD should do all within its capacity to promote good governance by supporting democratic transitions, competitive politics, and transparent and accountable leadership so as to reduce the risk of conflict in the continent.
3.	Regional Integration	NEPAD has supported regional economic communities aside from strengthening linkages among most countries in Africa. In addition, NEPAD has aided the acceleration of the process of regional economic integration by selecting and implementing regional infrastructure projects in energy, information technology, water, and sanitation, by strengthening and rationalizing the RECs, and by addressing issues of intra-African trade, as well as the diversification of production and export.	There is need to strengthen regional integration by enhancing economic cooperation and collaboration in order to foster growth and stability within the continent of Africa.

4.	Infrastructure Development	The agency has initiated and executed several infrastructure projects including the construction of the Kazungula bridge linking Botswana and Zambia. It has also been involved in the creation of green infrastructure corridors to promote sustainable development and environmental protection, gas pipeline initiatives and investment in optic fibre networks.	NEPAD should focus on creating transportation networks, energy facilities and digital connectivity so as to address and bridge critical infrastructure gaps.
5.	Capacity Building for Member States	NEPAD has focused on building capacity within African countries and institutions in order to facilitate their involvement in the effective implementation of its initiatives.	There is need to focus on education, healthcare, skills acquisition and entrepreneurship in order to empower African populations and as well build their capacity for inclusive economic growth.
6.	African Integration into the Global Economy	NEPAD represents a pledge that African leaders have a pressing duty to their people to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development and, at the same time, to participate actively in the world economy and body politic.	NEPAD should leverage on technology to foster sustainable development, economic growth and stability that could bolster the presence of African countries at the world economic stage.
7.	Poverty Eradication	NEPAD aims to eradicate poverty by accelerating the process of regional economic integration by selecting and implementing regional infrastructure projects in energy, information technology, water, and sanitation, by strengthening and rationalizing the RECs, and by addressing issues of intra-African trade, as well as the diversification of production and export.	NEPAD should further address the level of poverty and inequality in Africa through targeted socio-economic empowerment programs.
8.	Increased Development Assistance	By forging global partnerships, NEPAD has attracted increased development assistance flows to the African continent. It has equally mobilized resources through domestic savings, and by improving the management of public revenue and expenditure, increasing capital inflows through further debt relief, larger targeted flows of overseas development assistance (ODA), and foreign direct investment (FDI).	NEPAD should mobilize domestic resources such as taxes and private sector investment, to complement external assistance and as well promote south-south by encouraging cooperation among African countries to share knowledge and resources.
9.	Building Partnerships	NEPAD has forged a constructive partnership between African countries and the international community based on mutual interest, obligations and equality.	Partnerships should be strengthened with international donors, development agencies and private sector organizations for resource mobilization.

10.	Implementation of Agenda 2063	This has rested solely on the AUDA-NEPAD which has the mandate to drive the implementation of agenda 2063, the continent's long term development blueprint.	NEPAD should coordinate and collaborate with member states and regional economic communities to monitor progress on the agenda's implementation, provide technical support and also promote partnerships. It should aside from raising awareness about the agenda, encourage member states to take ownership of Agenda 2063's implementation.
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Source: Compiled by Author with additional notes from Aluko-Olokun (2003).

Problems and Prospects of NEPAD

Problems

The New Partnership for Africa's Development just like other initiatives preceding it has been plagued by numerous problems which tend to slow down the pace of the initiative in achieving its mandate many years after it was established. This section is therefore devoted to examining the various problems afflicting the initiative and its prospects of meeting the development needs of Africa and some of which are:

Funding

The central problem of NEPAD remains the issue of funds which it needs to fund its programs and activities. That NEPAD has to rely on member countries for funding would definitely not allow the initiative to have sufficient funds for the implementation of its lofty programs and projects. It is noteworthy that NEPAD has not changed its hopes on foreign assistance and donors as had been the practice with past plans. Thus, even when it places profound emphasis on mobilizing resources within the continent while external sources are to complement those internally mobilized, mobilizing internal resources has remained a daunting task though it is believed that with concerted action, transparency and commitment, Africa has abundant material and human resources to fund the NEPAD program and make a difference in its hitherto bleak fortunes. Equally, the other possible internal sources of funding which include repatriation of an estimated \$350 billion owned by Africans in foreign accounts is not an easy task to undertake as most of those countries hosting such monies have been reluctant in releasing them. But if that could be achieved, it would definitely free the needed resources for socio-economic development of the continent and this is yet to happen, thus, leaving NEPAD at the mercy of foreign donors and aid providers with their strangulating conditionalities.

Charge of Neo-liberalism

Some commentators and close watchers of Africa's development scene have faulted the NEPAD initiative as being neo-liberal. Their arguments are basically that NEPAD contrary to being an indigenous initiative, has in fact been foisted on the African leadership by the Western donor communities. It is argued that NEPAD and SAP were two sides of the same coin imposed on Africa by the Bretton Woods financial institutions. The proponents of this view buttress this argument by asserting that the enthusiasm with which the Western donor countries have received NEPAD was because some of its main features such as democratic governance, free market and emphasis on the private sector align with some of the core ingredients of SAP conditionalities. NEPAD's strength, they argue, lies more on its wholesome embrace of the kind of orthodox, narrowly focused market economic policy framework that underpin the SAP (Bracking, 2002:12).

Another critic stated that NEPAD is "marketization of governance by which the state is rolled back and reorganized in the form of deregulation from public interest to regulation in terms of private interests". Further, it is claimed that NEPAD has been packaged the way it is because its promoters were keener on securing international support than securing the backing of the whole of Africa (Obadare and Oyewole, 2002:32). These criticisms are not totally misplaced, in fact, some ring very true when one carefully appraises not only Africa's

economic and political scenes vis-à-vis the trauma of SAPs of the 80s and the 90s, but also the ongoing phenomenon of globalization. True, the Western donor agencies, through the instrumentalities of the Bretton Woods international financial institutions imposed debilitating structural adjustment conditionalities on the economies of most African countries and ended up impoverishing the mass of the people and adversely affecting the social sectors, all in the name of promoting their brand of economic growth and development.

Since some NEPAD features smacks of Structural Adjustment Programs' (SAP) ingredients, one cannot blame the critics from drawing parallels between SAP and NEPAD features. Equally, one cannot completely absolve NEPAD as not being an instrument of globalization. In fact, as the NEPAD basic document states "Africa does not want to be excluded from a globalizing world" (NEPAD, 2001:1). It has been observed that an economic objective of globalization is to merge and homogenize economic activities of all countries with a single centralized system, an unending search for access to national resources, a new and cheaper labor source and finally privatization in the strive for private sector led growth (Bayart, 2002:5).

Nevertheless, one should be wary of throwing out the baby with the bath water. NEPAD leadership fortunately seemed to have taken cognizance of the negative drawbacks of both the SAP and globalization. On SAP it stated "the SAP of the 80s provided only a partial solution. They promoted reforms that tended to remove serious price distortions, but gave inadequate attention to the provision of social services (NEPAD, 2001:8). On globalization it stated "globalization has increased the cost of Africa's ability to compete. Consequently, in NEPAD it is envisaged that through some of its novel features like the interdependent partnership, peace and security and good economic and corporate governance the negative impacts of globalization would be minimized.

Furthermore, while many of the critics that laid the charges of neo-liberalism against NEPAD do have very genuine grounds and basis for their fears, one cannot discount the fact that there are ideologues perennially opposed to anything smacking of Western economic reforms which the Bretton Woods system and SAP have come to symbolize. It should be borne in mind that the international climate is changing and more prominence is inexorably being given to market forces and the private sector. Heavy state intervention is being de-emphasized. NEPAD was packaged just about 13 years ago in this milieu and it would have been a deficient document. Indeed, if it had failed to take due cognizance of the prevailing international economic and political environment.

Lack of Wide Consultation

Another important challenge to NEPAD is that there is still a serious gap between the leadership of NEPAD and the critical mass of followership in the society concerning the dissemination of the idea and essence of NEPAD. This flaw has led some keen watchers of the initiative to observe that in aggregating the program, not enough consultations were carried out neither with the people nor the civil society. The issue has pointedly been raised "where are the people in the plan? They were not involved in the formulation, NEPAD is top-down". It was further asserted that NEPAD is "gender blind" and not "pro poor" (Ikokwu, 2003:33). Without any doubt, the need for widespread consultation between NEPAD promoters and the people cannot be over-emphasized. Their participation and active involvement should be encouraged. Without the people, it would be difficult for NEPAD's vision to be realized. If the people acknowledge that they have a stake in the NEPAD project, self-interest would dictate that they defend it.

Meeting International Development Goals (IDGs)

Another major hurdle before NEPAD is the extent to which it would be able to meet the IDGs which it had set for itself. Among these goals are the reduction of people living with poverty line by half within the next two years from 2001, enrolment of all children of school age in primary schools by 2015, achieving gender equality and enrolment of girls in primary and secondary education by 2005 and reducing infant and child mortality rates by two thirds by 2015 (NEPAD, 2001:3). The problem here is that the IDGs were adopted by the International Development Community in early 90s. By adopting IDG goals, NEPAD aimed at playing a complementary role for the benefit of the African continent but it is already about 12 years behind. Given the closeness of the time frame, it is doubtful if the initiative can meet the time frames specified in the IDGs. In some cases, it has 2 years for the targets set for 2015 while that of 2005 had passed development unattainable (Akopari, 2003:16). The current general economic situation in Africa characterized by weak and small economies, low income levels, huge

debt overhang and financial outflows makes the attainment of these goals a very difficult task for the continent.

A Test Case for Africa

One other problem for the NEPAD initiative is that given the prominence it has been enjoying in the African development agenda, it would serve as an important test case for measuring the continent's commitment to its development to enable the continent grow out of poverty. It therefore cannot afford to fail. NEPAD is therefore a critical test Africa must pass. This test would basically be at two levels. The first level is the test of the extent to which the African leadership is committed to turning the Africa's dismal economic fortune around positively. The second level is a test of the extent to which the developed partners would live up to their commitments under the NEPAD project. As had been stated in the previous chapters, NEPAD is not the first Africa-wide development program. It is however, the most carefully laid out program of goals and strategies of achieving the objectives and the most promising thus far. It would be a convenient reference point to which all other Africa-related programs would be assessed. Consequently, the onus is on the African people and in particular, the leadership to make a success of NEPAD. Thus, result oriented economic programs should be embarked on by individual African countries targeted at boosting the industrial, manufacturing and effects on economic development and growth (Ashaolu, 2002:6).

Prospects

As weighty and formidable as the problems already highlighted may seem, they can be surmounted if there are dedicated and visionary leadership, deep and serious commitment to resource mobilization, thorough and transparent implementation of NEPAD projects. Consequently, one can discern some prospects in the new initiative especially when one bears in mind those dynamics that led to its conception, the commitment and political will of its founding fathers, its unique features and the fact that it is increasingly becoming a reference point for all issues relating to Africa's development. Some of the factors that give room for optimism will now be examined.

Philosophy and Strategy for Africa's Development

NEPAD differs in its approach and strategy from all previous plans and initiatives on Africa. It has a vision; it acknowledges the practical realities of the African condition and is determined not to lay all its hopes on external donors for support but on constructive partnership and concerted mobilization of internal resources. A distinguishing feature of NEPAD is that for the first time, an African-wide development program attempts to be composite and integrative not only focusing on a set of indicators but having a holistic approach embodying, peace, security and good governance as pre-conditions for effective and sustainable growth and development. These are necessary ingredients for a balanced development. This approach is different for instance from the LPA which only emphasized sectors including food and agriculture, industry, science and technology in a generalized manner without clearly stating targets and strategies for meeting them. These flaws have been remedied in NEPAD and make the initiative a welcoming departure from previous ones. Consequently, NEPAD is in a better position to serve as a guiding philosophy and practical strategy for Africa's development. This is already being borne out as NEPAD has become a rallying and reference point for international organizations, with foreign donors, local and foreign private businessmen jockeying to have stakes in NEPAD process (This Day, 2003:14).

African Ownership

NEPAD's antecedents could be traced to some thoughtful African leaders concerned with Africa's worsening socio-economic condition. This is the genesis of NEPAD. It is therefore, not a foreign imposed idea. The idea was conceived by two statesmen but got immense support from other key and committed Africans such as former President Obasanjo of Nigeria and former Abdulaziz Bouteflika of Algeria. Coincidentally, these two eminent Africans held strategic positions at the time in world bodies. Obasanjo was chairman of G77 while Bouteflika was OAU chairman. The seeds that finally germinated to NEPAD were sown by these Africans. NEPAD can therefore be described as "African owned and African led". This characteristic tends to stand NEPAD apart from other past programs on Africa such as LPA, APPER among others. These did not originate from Africans, they were mostly from the Economic Commission of Africa (ECA), the OAU and the UN. NEPAD is different in

spite of some understandable reservations; it can be described as being home grown. Thus, its African paternity imbues it with the necessary support and political will that the initiative would definitely need for survival. For example, Presidents Obasanjo, Mbeki, Wade and Bouteflika have seized every available fora and opportunity in the UN, G8, EU, Commonwealth and G77 for advocacy and canvassing support for NEPAD and being their brainchild, they would always defend it (Nkhulu, 2003:22).

Focal Point for Africa's Development

NEPAD has become a reference point for issues relating to African development programmes. For example, the United Nations had created an office of the Under Secretary-General and Special Adviser for Africa which is occupied by Nigeria's Ibrahim Gambari. This office is expected to review and report on the support for NEPAD provided by the UN and the international community. The office would also coordinate global advocacy in support of NEPAD. This symbolizes the high pedestal NEPAD has attained within the period of its existence. Given NEPAD's carefully conceived programmes and popularity, it provides a suitable repository for "linkage and synergies" between it and other existing initiatives that have bearing on Africa such as EU/Africa Cairo Plan of Action, the Cotonou Agreement, Copenhagen Declaration, G8 Okinawa Declaration etc. NEPAD provides a sound basis for these sectoral and cross-cutting sustainable priorities for Africa and presents a major and crucial opportunity to mobilize universal political consensus at the highest level (Nkhulu, 2003:23).

Constructive Partnership

The spirit of constructive partnership ingrained in NEPAD is equally a departure from Africa's past "begging bowl" syndrome. The basis of the new partnership is borne out of mutual realization that in an age of globalization, poverty and insecurity anywhere will sooner or later affect prosperity being "enjoyed" somewhere else. Therefore, it is in the enlightened self-interest of the West to complement the effort of the leaders of Africa in pulling the continent out of its economic morass. Besides, Africa has comparative advantages of its own with abundant natural, human, mineral material resources and a large market of about 770 million people. The developed partners need these resources, market and opportunities for investment. There is therefore a mutuality of responsibility and shared obligations with each party having a stake in the progress of the other. As observed, "Africa's huge untapped industrial raw materials and wide market remained central to the survival of the transitional capitalism in the North. NEPAD is ready and determined to lay to rest the era of aid assistance and concessions by looking inwards for resources to develop the African continent and it is our hope that it will succeed in this ideal.

Conclusion

As succinctly captured in this study, Africa's lingering socio-economic problems have not been due to lack of efforts in the past to draw up continent-wide plans and programs to address the problems afflicting the development efforts of the continent. These plans and programs have been in abundance but they failed to turn the continent's fortunes around for the better. This was largely due to a combination of internal and external factors including the programs not being in tune with Africa's realities, resource constraints and lack of commitment on the part of the leadership.

NEPAD was born out of deep reflection by a corps of African leaders on Africa's endemic socio-economic malaise. These leaders were determined to map out strategies to reduce Africa's poverty, put the continent on the path of sustainable and halt its increasing marginalization. What sets NEPAD apart from the past programs include the fact that it is a holistic, integrated and carefully drawn up program with defined objectives and specifying how such objectives would be achieved. NEPAD has as a matter of priority some areas, which are critical to Africa's growth and development. Such areas include infrastructure, human resource development and agriculture. Sectors in these broad areas were further targeted for special attention such as poverty reduction, health, education, water, sanitation and information and communications technology. In the areas of resources to fund the program, it is noteworthy that NEPAD has not changed its hopes on foreign assistance and donors as had been the practice with past plans. It places profound emphasis on mobilizing resources within the continent. External sources are to complement those internally mobilized.

However, for the period NEPAD has existed, there is room for hope that the African resources will be harnessed for proper development. The initiative has engaged the serious attention of the eight most industrialized countries (G8) which is already supporting a good number of NEPAD related projects especially in the health sector. The partnership with the developed donor communities and international institutions under the NEPAD initiative is a constructive one. It is based on mutual interests, obligations and benefits. These set it apart from the beggarly, donor-recipient relationship of the past. Within the continent, its innovative initiatives such as democracy and good governance and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) have started showing results with the restoration of constitutional governments in Madagascar and Sao Tome and Principe and dousing of conflicts in Cote D'Ivoire and Liberia. NEPAD is an African owned, led and managed initiative and would strengthen Africa's capability to implement its program and project. NEPAD potentially may be Africa's "passport to prosperity".

The road to prosperity may be a hard one for the continent. Apart from resource constraints, Africa would need to put its economies and institutions in order for it to be able to compete successfully in the global market place. The continent would have to improve the quality of its products, standardize them and ensure that they have value addition especially in agro, energy and mineral based products where it has comparative advantage. In this connection, Nigeria should seize the opportunity provided by NEPAD and, make improvement of her economy a top most priority. The government should, as a matter of deliberate policy, provide the enabling environment and let the private sector drive Nigerian economy

NEPAD'S vision coupled with its integrated and innovative features has very bright chances of succeeding where previous attempts have failed. It is like a "compass" with which Africa should be equipped to chart the difficult terrain in the new millennium. If the leadership and followership in Africa are committed, determined, focused, disciplined and transparent, the continent should claim the 21st century. To assist in achieving this objective, some recommendations are hereby proffered both for Africa and the developed partners.

Recommendations

Arising from the above conclusion, this study proffers some recommendations that touches on three segments of NEPAD's activities namely Africa, developed partners and the G8 countries.

Africa

1. Mobilization of Internal Resources

For NEPAD's funding, African leaders should look inwards and mobilize resources by harnessing the abundant natural resources and gear them towards productive ends, plug all avenues for wastage, leakages and corruption, encourage domestic savings by firms and households, put in place more effective tax collecting system from both the public and private sectors, encourage the repatriation of the huge sums of money owned by Africans in foreign banks by putting in place laws granting amnesties from prosecution and statute of limitation on illegally acquired funds (Aluko-Olukun, 2003:4).

2. Inward looking Policies.

There are needs to unleash the great potentials of individual African countries for self-reliant development by looking inwards and effectively harnessing available natural and human resources by:

- (i) visionary and committed leadership
- (ii) reduction of reliance on foreign aid
- (iii) provision of conducive environment for private sector activities
- (iv) development and promotion of micro, small and medium scale enterprises
- (v) legitimization and integration of the huge informal sectors to the developmental process and
- (vi) banning the importation of all non-essential consumer items among others (Aluko-Olukun, 2003:6).

3. Promotion of Investment

For growth and development, Africa needs a large infusion of investments both public and private and both local and foreign by:

- (a) changing the current risk profile of Africa by effecting the democracy and good governance and economic and corporate governance initiatives
- (b) ensuring adequate security for life and property
- (c) promoting of the operation of financial and capital markets in individual African countries and also cross-countries
- (d) introduction of appropriate policies to discourage capital flight
- (e) full participation of the private sectors in the economies and
- (f) the creation of enabling environments for investments (Asante, 1991:32)

4. Promotion of regional and sub-regional Economic Cooperation and Integration

Africa's regional and sub-regional integrative process need to be expedited by:

- (i) re-invigorating the existing sub-regional economic blocs such as ECOWAS, ECCAS, SADC, AMU and IGAD as building blocks for Africa's prosperity
- (ii) promotion of the sectoral integration of their economies
- (iii) development of effective network across countries in the continent in areas such as agriculture, industry, manufacturing and infrastructures (Obadare and Oyewole, 2003:22).

5. Human Resource Development

There are needs to build capacity to effectively and efficiently execute NEPAD programmes by:

- (i) the intensification of capacity building, especially in science, technology and management
- (ii) practical training for acquisition of skills towards reducing unemployment and poverty
- (iii) provision for training women and youths
- (iv) reversal of the brain drain

6. People centered development

NEPAD should ensure that any development project embarked upon is self-reliant, sustainable and the development process democratized. The people, in particular civil society should be actively involved while the generality of the people should feel the impact of development by the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) ensuring that these basic conditions are met in project and programmes of NEPAD. Similarly, NEPAD offices in member states should always make conscious effort to ensure that the people and the civil society are carried along in the formulation and execution of NEPAD projects and programmes and also ensure that concrete results are achieved for the benefit of the people (Aluko-Olokun, 2002:2).

Developed Partners of NEPAD

7. Market Access

Market access should be granted by the developed partners of NEPAD to encourage exports and improvement of African products by granting of preferential tariff conditions to African made products, the dismantling of fortresses erected against imports in the spirit of free enterprise and free trade and the reduction of subsidies to allow African products compete in the areas they have comparative advantages (Nyong'o and Lamba, 2002:66).

G8 and NEPAD

The G8 should continue to constructively engage with NEPAD by providing additional financial and technical assistance to its programs and projects, invitation and engagement of the leadership of NEPAD in the annual summit of the G8 as well as the engagement of the major international institutions and creditor nations to support

and complement the efforts of NEPAD. Finally, the G8 leaders' personal representatives should continue their constant dialogue and exchange of views with the NEPAD leadership.

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