

**EMPLOYERS' SYMPOSIUM FOR SELECTED AFRICAN COUNTRIES ON THE
ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICAN
DEVELOPMENT**

(Dakar, 17-18 January 2002)

The first meeting on the New Partnership for Africa's Development of the Pan African Employers' Confederation representing the private sector in Africa was held in Dakar, Senegal on 17-18 January 2002.

It was organised in collaboration with the International Labour Office, the International Organisation of Employers' and the Conseil National du Patronat du Sénégal on the key theme of the "Role and Place of the Private Sector in the New Partnership for Africa's Development".

On this occasion, the participants adopted the following final document: Employers Strategies to Support NEPAD initiative, which is based on the following themes:

1. The General Environment
2. Global and Sectoral Presentation of the of NEPAD
3. Institutional Measures
4. Strategic and Operational Measures
5. Ethical Commitments

1. A CONDUCTIVE GENERAL ENVIRONMENT IN AFRICA

The strategic role of the State has evolved in the early eighties and it is today recognised that the State should improve the functioning of the Administration, provide effective services, be a catalyst, a partner and a facilitator in the development process for the achievement of harmonious and sustainable development.

Simultaneously, it is recognised that the private sector is the engine of growth and a generator of decent employment. In fact, this is a dynamic process of complementarity between the State and the private sector through a concerted and consensus-building approach based on structured dialogue. The formulation, implementation and evaluation of socio-economic policies should be conducted within this framework.

Therefore, the State should carry out macro-economic, structural and sectoral reforms in order to create an environment conducive to investment and set up structures and institutions with a view to enhancing competitiveness.

In this constantly changing world, characterised by an increasingly rife competition, competitiveness should not be taken for granted; otherwise countries may lose their competitive edge as well as their markets in the long term. Indeed, in the context of globalisation, competitiveness is increasingly understood as a dynamic concept based on the capabilities of a country to sustain long term competition to adapt to the needs of national, regional and international markets. It is now accepted that the competitiveness of a country and of enterprises does not depend on the size, abundance of resources, low wages or of advantages derived from the non-observance of fundamental principles and rights at work.

In fact, there are various examples of small countries and small enterprises which have been able to remain competitive on international markets by developing the skills of their population and by taking advantage of appropriate Government policies regarding investment and trade with a view to promoting equitable and sustainable economic and social development.

In the light of the complementarity between evolving role of the State and the partners in development as well as the reforms undertaken, the situation in Africa is today favourable to the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

2. AFRICAN EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS SUPPORT FOR THE NEPAD

Participants consider that NEPAD holds high hopes for Africa, its population and enterprises. Its greatest strength is that it embodies a common vision for the development of Africa designed by Africans for Africans. Its merit is that it encompasses a global and concrete action plan aimed at transforming the face of Africa in the next decades. Its advantage is that it tries to address the shortcomings of the industrial and economic fabric in Africa, the weaknesses of the private sector, the inadequacy of domestic savings, the flight of capital, the gaps in the rule of law, the level of corruption, the poor quality of infrastructure and the lack of integration of the continent in world trade.

NEPAD is therefore an appropriate response to these shortcomings that have contributed to the marginalisation of the continent. While congratulating Heads of States who initiated this

laudable move, participants strongly support this new action plan for Africa's recovery and express the wish that employment, human resource development and social dialogue issues be integrated as far as possible in the main NEPAD document.

Recognising that the Dakar Conference was the first occasion of associating the private sector with NEPAD and the importance of facilitating its full participation in the implementation of the programme, priority should be given to the popularisation of NEPAD, particularly within the African private sector.

As a result, participants pledged their support for NEPAD through the following measures.

3. INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES

Creation of a NEPAD Committee at the level of Executive Committee of the Pan African Employers' Confederation which will be the link between the private sector in Africa, the Steering Committee, the social partners, other stakeholders and any other institutions responsible for the implementation of NEPAD.

The Committee should

- (1) Obtain information from the Steering Committee on investment projects, their costs and their programme schedules in the context of NEPAD.
- (2) Be entrusted with the mission to ensure the involvement of employers' organizations at the continental level in all activities aimed at helping implement this plan for Africa's socio-economic development.
- (3) Study the regulatory and legal framework for the promotion and security of investment on the one hand and for the award of contracts and procurement policies to guarantee transparency and provide security against risks of private investment.
- (4) Creation of "NEPAD sub-regional committees" in sub-regional employers' organizations (CEMAC, ECOWAS, WAEMU, SADC, COMESA, AMU) with the mission to ensure that the private sector is encouraged to participate in establishing the NEPAD at sub-regional level.
- (5) Creation of a support committee under the aegis of the national employers' organisation for the implementation of the NEPAD at the country level.

At the international level, participants invite the International Organisation of Employers and the International Labour Office to pledge their support for African employers' organisations as a priority in order to strengthen their institutional capacities within the framework of support measures and strategies for NEPAD.

4. STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL MEASURES

On the basis of technical papers presented at the conference and fruitful discussions, participants proposed that all decision-makers, actors and partners should focus on the following lines of action to promote the effective implementation of NEPAD:

As far as resource mobilisation is concerned

- Promoting social peace and political stability at the national level;
- Monitoring the overall economic situation at the national level (macro-economic situation, balance of payments, budget deficit and inflation);
- Ensuring availability and quality of banking and financial systems indispensable for support initiatives taken by economic operators in order to create and develop enterprises;
- Ensuring that economic, monetary and fiscal policies are designed to enhance the competitiveness of our economies.
- Ensuring availability, quality and accessibility of basic infrastructure indispensable to provide impetus to and support the actions of the private sector within the framework of socio-economic development (roads, airports, ports, railroads, telecommunications);
- Finally, promoting the enterprise culture through the provision of quality educational system in general, and of technical and vocational training in particular.

As far as trade is concerned

- Promoting a new type of trade relations between the North and the South based on reciprocal interest and equity in commercial activities and transactions in order to

bridge the potential gap between the winners and the losers of globalisation and liberalisation of trade;

- Involving employers' organisations in the negotiation processes of trade-related bilateral and multilateral agreements;
- Informing and encouraging Employers' Organisations and enterprises in order to avail of the opportunities of partnerships and cooperation offered by the multilateral system (support to organisations provided in the framework of the WTO and Cotonou Agreements);
- Launching specific training programmes and disseminating information on the challenges and opportunities in the wake of WTO agreements for the benefit of managers;
- Encouraging the differentiation systems granted to Least Developed Countries to facilitate their integration into world trade through a special treatment justified by the level of development and vulnerability of their situation;
- Encouraging African economic operators to invest in local raw material intensive sectors so as to guide them into creating value added and to facilitate a smooth integration of Africa into the world trade.

As far as regional integration is concerned

- Encouraging and intensifying the creation of viable regional markets and the establishment of links between them so as to encourage freer flow of capital and movement of people on the continent and between Africa and the rest of the world. The objective is to reverse the present trends in order to improve Africa's share in world trade, which at present stands at about 1%;
- Continuing to sensitise the public at large, decision-makers and partners on the need to review the mechanisms of subsidies granted to farmers in developed countries in order to promote a fair and more acceptable model of trade;
- Sensitising enterprises and economic operators on the need for, and the advantages of, regional integration;

- Informing the private sector of the regulatory legal arrangements relating to regional integration under way in Africa.

As far as NEPAD support operational measures are concerned

Participants have decided on the following specific measures:

- Institutionalisation of a “NEPAD International Forum” to be annually organised under the supervision of the Employers’ Organisation of the country chairing NEPAD, in consultation with the General Secretariat of the Pan African Employers’ Confederation. Participants strongly encourage the Employers’ Organisation concerned to subcontract with national private enterprises so as to ensure sustainability and pass on the cost of such a forum to participants coming from Africa and other parts of the world. Potential partners will be the enterprises, financial and development support institutions and project implementation agencies. This Forum will also allow the private sector and employers’ organisations to take stock annually of their contribution to NEPAD;
- Creation of a private investment fund to participate in NEPAD funding. The General Secretariat of the Pan African Employers’ Confederation will, as soon as possible, undertake the feasibility study, identify the strategic technical partners for the effective setting up of this fund. Its budget will be mainly funded through the contributions of enterprises, private economic operators and national and international institutional donors and partners;
- Setting up, as soon as possible, by the General Secretariat of the Pan African Employers’ Confederation of a practical guide for Employers’ Organisations to help them in their role as a promotion and support structure for NEPAD;
- Creation of a private African Observatory on AIDS control at the workplace where composition and operation of this body will be defined by the Executive Council of the Pan African Employers’ Confederation.

5. ETHICAL COMMITMENT

In order **to encourage, provide security and a sound and safe environment** in the participation of African and foreign operators in the establishment of the NEPAD, the African Employers' Organisations have adopted the appended Code of Good Conduct.

Applying this Code will, amongst other things, help promote the investment required for the creation of wealth, migration from the informal sector to the modern sector and therefore, promote decent work and poverty alleviation.

Lastly, participants to the Conference express their thanks to the Senegalese authorities who provided their full support for the organisation of this important event, and congratulate the International Labour Office, the International Organisation of Employers, the Pan African Employers' Confederation and the Conseil National du of Senegal, for this successful event.

