

## **GREENPEACE BACKGROUNDER – New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD)**

**website** (English): [www.nepad.org/Documents/AA0010101.pdf](http://www.nepad.org/Documents/AA0010101.pdf)  
(French): follow links from [www.nepad.org](http://www.nepad.org)

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### Background

In October 2001, African heads of government launched the *New Partnership for Africa’s Development* (NEPAD) at a meeting of the African Union (the successor of the Organization of African Unity). Earlier, in July 2001, led by South Africa President Mbeki, the leaders of several African heads of state presented the G8 with the *New African Initiative*, an African call for a renewal of African development. NEPAD, a revision of the *New African Initiative*, brought together strategies of several African leaders to focus global attention on poverty and development in Africa.

The authors state that the purpose of NEPAD is to set ‘an agenda for the renewal of the continent’ in order to ‘eradicate poverty in Africa and to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path to sustainable growth and development’ (NEPAD, 15). It is a commitment from African heads of state to initiate and lead a process which they hope will end African exclusion from globalization. NEPAD is ‘a call for a new relationship of partnership between Africa and the international community, especially the highly industrialized countries, to overcome the development chasm that has widened over the centuries of unequal relations’ (NEPAD, 2).

Emphasizing the promises of neoliberal globalization, NEPAD sets out a number of initiatives to achieve very ambitious goals around the following themes:

- The Peace, Security, Democracy and Political Governance Initiatives
- The Economic and Corporate Governance Initiative
- Bridging the Infrastructure Gap
- Human Resource Development Initiative (including reversing the brain drain)
- Agriculture
- The Environment Initiative
- Culture
- Science and Technology Platforms
- Capital Flows Initiative
- The Market Access Initiative

Last year at the G8 Summit in Genoa, the G8 leaders agreed that they would respond to NEPAD at the 2002 G8 Summit in Canada with a concrete G8 Action Plan. Over the last year, NEPAD has been discussed in various multilateral forums. Under Canadian leadership, representatives for the G7 countries have been meeting in various African capital cities to hear African perspectives and to elaborate their Action Plan.

### Concerns

Greenpeace agrees that it is high time for the international community to pay more attention to the problems of Africa and its isolation. However, Greenpeace shares the concerns expressed by representatives of African environmental and development non-governmental organizations regarding several aspects of NEPAD. While our basic recommendation is that the G8 should not act on NEPAD until there has been adequate consultation with African civil society, it is the view of Greenpeace that it is important to address some of the issues raised by NEPAD since they are an indication of many questionable choices being considered. Furthermore, many of the issues raised in NEPAD have been raised for years and there is some action that the G8 could take now, ***outside the context of NEPAD***, to support efforts to address some of Africa's greatest problems.

#### i) Exclusion of civil society

Greenpeace's primary concern is that there has been virtually no consultation with African civil society and the broader African public regarding NEPAD. While NEPAD emphasizes the importance of both African ownership of the plan and of altering the relationships that have traditionally characterized development, the exclusion of African civil society severely diminishes the legitimacy of NEPAD. Greenpeace supports the calls from African civil society demanding that before NEPAD is developed any further it be returned to Africa for consultation with and review by civil society.

Over the last few years, many of the G8 member states have remarked that transparency and participation are crucial elements of developing and implementing the globalization agenda. However, NEPAD is characterized by a remarkable lack of transparency and participation. In developing its Action Plan for NEPAD, Greenpeace urges the G8 to be cautious not to legitimize a document with huge implications for Africans, but which few Africans currently know about.

#### ii) The failures of neoliberalism

Secondly, Greenpeace is concerned that while NEPAD's rhetoric stresses new relationships and new approaches to development, the proposal closely follows an old structural adjustment model based on neoliberal economics which fails to take issues of social, economic and environmental justice seriously. The basic premise of NEPAD is that if Africa was to be 'better integrated' into the globalization process great gains could be made in terms of economic growth, development and the eradication of poverty. It is well known that the current processes of globalization, which prioritize open markets and

liberalized trade, are significantly contributing to environmental damage, the growing gap between the rich and the poor and the undermining of democratic rights. The current form of globalization increases corporate power, rather than the power of citizens and their governments to work cooperatively to protect the global commons and ensure real security and peace. Thus, Greenpeace is concerned that if Africa is 'better integrated' into the globalization process, its efforts to eradicate poverty and establish models of sustainable development will be thwarted rather than enhanced.

### iii) Energy

Greenpeace's third concern is regarding the discussion of energy in NEPAD. Greenpeace agrees with the authors of NEPAD that energy is a critical component of development and also that the lack of access to energy for millions of Africans is an issue of paramount importance. However, there are strong reasons to question the development of large scale hydro projects and gas pipelines as the appropriate approaches to energy provision (NEPAD, 29).

In contrast, Greenpeace strongly supports the assertion in NEPAD that, 'Africa should strive to develop its abundant solar energy' (NEPAD, 29) and we urge the G8 to support Africa's efforts in this area. Greenpeace also agrees with the recommendation that a task team be established to accelerate the development of energy supply to low income housing (NEPAD, 30). Towards that goal, Greenpeace urges the G8 to adopt the recommendations of its own Task Force Report on Renewable Energy. Specifically, Greenpeace calls on the G8 to announce *new* money to support efforts to bring renewable energy to the two billion people who currently do not have access to electricity – many of whom are in Africa. Relatedly, Greenpeace also urges G8 countries to announce that 20% of their energy sector lending and support via their Export Credit Agencies will be dedicated to renewable energy development – much of which would benefit Africa.

### iv) Forests

Fourthly, Greenpeace is concerned that NEPAD's call to open up markets and encouragement of greater foreign investment could be disastrous for the ancient forests of Africa if appropriate regulations and supporting mechanisms are not established.

Greenpeace agrees with the authors of NEPAD that '[t]he open, uninhabited spaces, the flora and fauna, and the diverse animal species unique to Africa offer an opportunity for humanity to maintain its link with nature' (NEPAD, 4). Indeed, the forests of Africa are of crucial value to Africans and are also a vital global common. Protecting them is of utmost importance. Open markets and foreign investors are a threat because their primary motivation is to achieve maximum profit. The security and well-being of the people who rely on the forests and the well-being of the forests themselves are not a concern for markets and investors eagerly seeking unencumbered paths by which to make profit.

Given the importance of Africa's forests, Greenpeace calls on members of the international community, particularly rich countries such as G8 member states, to

acknowledge their responsibility in protecting this vital environment. More specifically, Greenpeace urges the G8 to renew the commitments it made in Birmingham to combat illegal logging. In Africa, Greenpeace is calling for a moratoria on logging in the African Forest of the Great Apes. At the same time as Greenpeace stresses the need for a moratoria, however, we agree with the authors of NEPAD that ‘unless the communities in the vicinity of the tropical forests are given alternative means of earning a living, they will cooperate in the destruction of the forests’. Thus, Greenpeace recommends that resources be allocated to ensure sustainable livelihoods are available to people.

#### v) Biotechnology

Fifthly, Greenpeace is deeply concerned with the references to biotechnology in NEPAD. The authors of NEPAD, like many governments, international financial institutions and development agencies are failing to take the threats posed by genetically engineered organisms seriously. Despite mounting evidence to the contrary, it is often *assumed* that biotechnology will contribute to greater food security and sustainable agricultural practices. The health, environmental, human, social and economic risks are often not adequately considered. Evidence of risks has emerged such as gene flow to wild plants and harm to beneficial organisms, threats to biodiversity, outcrossing to conventional and organic crops leading to crop management problems in agriculture and the potential creation of unanticipated allergens, toxins, antibiotic resistance and nutritional changes to food. Further, biotechnology has failed to produce higher yields, reduce pesticide use or increase incomes for farmers.

While Greenpeace understands that there is an urgent need to achieve food security in Africa, we disagree with the analysis that ‘inadequate agricultural systems’ (NEPAD, 38) are at the root of the problem. Further, we are deeply disturbed by claims from the biotechnology industry and various governments that biotechnology will help address hunger and starvation. ‘Inadequate agricultural systems’ are not to blame for hunger and starvation, rather unequal food distribution is largely to blame; this is a political problem, not a technological problem. Thus, the solution to world hunger is not biotechnology, but rather the establishment of just and equitable food distribution, the maintenance of centers of diversity and local food crops, support for local farmers and access to land for poor and small farmers.

Greenpeace is concerned by the vague call in NEPAD for ‘support investment in research in the areas of high-yield crops and durable preservation and storage methods’ (NEPAD, 50). High-yielding crops that are often naturally pest-controlled already exist. Thus, even if genetically engineered (GE) crops had not failed to significantly increase crop yield, they would still not be necessary. What is needed is support for non-GE crops that are appropriate to the bioregion in which they are being grown.

Greenpeace is concerned that in many countries, such as the United States and Canada, indirect subsidies are being provided to farmers and seed companies producing GE seeds and crops. As a result, the market is being flooded in such a manner that great difficulties are faced by organic farmers and farmers who do not want to farm GE crops. To achieve

real food security, such indirect and hidden subsidies must be removed. Governments, especially G8 governments, should take action to ensure non-GE farmers have a fair chance on the market. Further, the G8 should support processes by which non-GE farmers in both the North and the South can share resources and technology that support sustainable, eco-friendly, healthy farming practices.

Relatedly, Greenpeace is concerned that NEPAD fails to address the issues of intellectual property rights (IPRs) and the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs). TRIPs is a major obstacle to food security in Africa, and globally. Greenpeace shares the deep concern held by people around the world that in order to achieve real food security, governments must intervene to prevent the patenting of life forms. Such patenting poses not only ethical questions, but also further undermines the equitable sharing of benefits between the North and the South. IPRs can restrict access to medicine and food, as well as prevent the transfer and sharing of technology, research and other information. Such transfers are crucial not only to the sustainable development of Africa, but to the whole world, including the West. Additionally, patenting of seeds and other life forms fails to acknowledge and compensate what are often centuries of work done by indigenous and traditional communities with various seeds and plants so that humans can effectively use them. Thus, IPRs can also prevent the legitimate transfer of wealth to Africa. Greenpeace, therefore, urges the authors and allies of NEPAD to demand that patents on life forms not be allowed.

In sum, Greenpeace is concerned, for the reasons outlined above, that the use of biotechnology will actually undermine some of the very goals outlined in NEPAD including: increasing the productivity of small-scale and women farmers, ensuring food security for all people and encouraging environmentally sustainable production methods (NEPAD, 48).

### Recommendations

Greenpeace urges the G8 to adopt the following recommendations:

- Support the call for NEPAD to be returned to Africa for civil society consultation before any announcing support;
- Agree to launch a global initiative on renewable energy to provide energy services, by 2015, to the two billion people who currently do not have access to adequate energy services, many of whom are in Africa;
- Announce a commitment to an immediate target of 20% of energy sector lending and support via Export Credit Agencies to renewable energy and energy efficiency development;
- Suggest that priority be given to agricultural practices that respect traditional knowledge and the environment;
- Suggest that the establishment of moratoria on logging and other industrial scale projects in the African Forest of the Great Apes.