

GLOBALIZATION AND THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD): RELEVANCE FOR SOCIAL WORK

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ABSTRACT

The neo-liberal ideology that underscores the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), rather than providing strategies for the salvation of Africa holds the possibility for further marginalisation of the poor, for entrenching inequality, and for worsening the plight of the most vulnerable of our society. Social workers are expected to work against poverty, and towards sustainable people-centred development. Yet, macro economic policies and strategies seem to be designed to work against these objectives. NEPAD, instead of representing the interests and the will of the African people, serves more the interests of the world capitalistic order, with African leaders capitulating to the demands of the G8 and to the international financial institutions. Despite their active roles in perpetuating poverty and inequality, there is the protest from government that the welfare sector, and social work more specifically, lacks the skills and expertise to achieve the objectives of poverty alleviation and sustainable development. As social work educators and practitioners, we need to critically interrogate those factors that impact the welfare sector and social work, and that deny people the opportunities for survival, let alone gainful and healthy living. As international social work and global movements around anti-oppressive practice, human rights and social justice evolve, social work must meet its ethical obligations in respect of collective responsibility and collective action.

INTRODUCTION

The psychological, communication, cultural and economic forces of globalisation impact the lives of people in very direct and profound ways. Social work, as a human service discipline, that embraces as its most valued objectives the pursuit of social justice and of human rights cannot remain outside of the dominant discourse of globalisation. Asamoah, Healy and Mayadas (1997) argued that there is no firm conceptual framework for incorporating awareness of a global reality for understanding social issues. As national and regional borders become more permeable, as the global economic order places larger numbers of people on the margins, and as inequality between the rich North and the poor South becomes more entrenched, we recognise that social analysis and social policy critiques cannot remain within national boundaries only. Despite its immediate salience for the people whom we work with, and for the discipline of social work, social work practitioners and academics in South Africa have been relatively silent on the discourses contained in NEPAD. In this paper the historical antecedents to the development of NEPAD will be discussed, some of the potential opportunities offered in the document, the contradictions and limitations contained in the document primarily in relation to globalization, African governance, ownership, and NEPAD and the issue of gender.

BACKGROUND TO NEPAD

The African Renaissance and NEPAD, around which there has been a great deal of international campaigning, did much to bring a more positive response towards Africa and to negate the perception of a continent beyond remedy. There is no doubt that the architects of NEPAD (Thabo Mbeki from South Africa, Obasanjo from Nigeria, Bouteflika from Algeria and Abdoulaye Wade

from Senegal) had the best of intentions as they sought the objectives of poverty eradication; sustainable development; peace, security and stability; and democratic political and economic governance. NEPAD, which was finalised and adopted at the Heads of State Implementation Committee in October 2001, represented a merger of the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP) and the OMEGA Plan developed by President Wade to form the New African Initiative (NAI). NAI, which later came to be known as NEPAD, was approved by the OAU in Lusaka, Zambia on 11 July 2001 and endorsed by the leaders of the G8 on 20 July 2001.

Through NEPAD Mbeki hopes to "...inscribe a joyous, triumphant Africa into the history book of the world" by redefining Africa as "...something other than a place of suffering, a place of wars, a place of oppression, a place of hunger, disease, ignorance and backwardness" (Mbeki, 2001). Africa's development rests on regional initiatives. Thus the formation of the African Union, and its accompanying NEPAD initiative toward such regional integration is clearly a step in the right direction. The smallness of African countries and the generally weakened economies of Africa, render the development of local resistance to global influences difficult. Part of the answer might lie in regionalisation and the operationalisation of the African Union, which was formed in July 2001, and inaugurated in July 2002 (Sewpaul, 2003a). The call for African integration is echoed by Muchie (2003:370) who argued that: "There is a clear need to forge an African nation going beyond the existing fragile, ineffective and fragmented state system." However, the rhetoric of NEPAD in respect of regional integration, poverty eradication and people-centred development is certainly marred by some critical contradictions. This has very specific relevance for social work, and the welfare sector whose primary mandates are poverty eradication and people-centred sustainable development.

NEPAD is not the first document to propose strategies for the economic, social and political revival of Africa. However, it is the first document to embrace the neoliberal economic framework with advocacy for *the greater integration of Africa into the world economic order*. For the first time perhaps in African history has the ideological framework of the international financial institutions, and the capitalist superpowers and that of African leadership coalesced. NEPAD has brought development thinking strikingly close to those of the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation and the G8. While NEPAD is not the first home-grown solution to Africa's crises (Bond, 2002; Turok, 2002; Owusu, 2003), past initiatives were not considered by the international community, largely on account of disparate accounts for Africa's crises and the policy contradictions between African leadership and the international community. While African leadership saw Africa's under-development to be largely as a result of external factors, including colonialism and the effects of the world capitalistic system, the Western world saw Africa's failure to rest primarily in its inadequate and corrupt economic and political arrangements. The demand for structural transformation in the global political economy has been at the heart of past initiatives that NEPAD has abandoned. Such demand for structural transformation is consistent with the more radical, structural approach in social work education and practice, which calls for an analysis of the impact of the structural forces of oppression, exclusion and marginalisation on the lives of people, and for structural changes (Dominelli, 1996; Mullaly, 2000; Sewpaul, 2003b).

NEPAD places the responsibility for cleaning up the mess on Africa. Owusu (2003) surmises that NEPAD might be a pragmatic strategy by contemporary African leaders to bring the continent's problems to global attention, while Bond (2002) and Terreblanche (2002) view NEPAD as symptomatic of Africa's elite co-option into the global economic order. Owusu (2003) provides a summary of several previous initiatives proposed by African leaders during 1980 and 2000, the most comprehensive of which was Adedeji's Lagos Plan of Action (LPA). These initiatives

include the Abuja International Conference in the "Challenges of Economic Recovery and Accelerated Development in Africa", the Khartoum report on "Human Dimensions of Africa's Recovery and Development", the "African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation" produced by the Economic Commission for Africa in 1991 and the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA). The LPA called for collective economic self-reliance, an inward looking strategy, the need to move beyond removing trade barriers, the prioritisation of production, and the creation of suitable infrastructure.

Turok (2002) contends that Adedeji was ahead of his times and proposed many of the progressive reforms contained in NEPAD with regard to people-centred development; democracy, work ethics, investment habits, skills development and improving social systems. The LPA, and the consequent African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) which advocated a far reaching regional approach based primarily on self-reliance, were ignored by the international community. The international community was not ready for African-based solutions whose development policies were not consistent with theirs (Owusu, 2003). Also, as pointed out by Turok (2002:123) "...external forces saw African regional integration and unity as a threat to foreign interests." While the international community has received NEPAD with a great deal of enthusiasm, it will be interesting to follow up and observe whether or not the G8, the IMF and the World Bank continue their support in the future. Apart from the dramatic shift in embracing neoliberalism, NEPAD also offers the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) that past initiatives did not do. The APRM, which has raised questions around the governance doctrine of sovereignty and responsibility, is discussed later.

NEPAD AND GLOBALIZATION

Some world leaders, such as Tony Blair, have heralded NEPAD as providing the capacity for Africa to rewrite its history and to shape a true development path into its future. However, Amuwo (2003) and Bond (2002) are of the opinion that by being an essentially a-historical document, NEPAD constitutes an inadequate response to the continent's underdevelopment. How can Africa re-author its story if there is inadequate acknowledgement of the forces that impacted its history? According to Amuwo (2003:2):

"In NEPAD's attempt to grapple with that history, it seems to have treated the 'international community' with kid gloves. And, what is more, this has been done in a rather simplistic manner, in an A then B explicatory schema: If Africa puts its house in order, the continent's 'traditional' trading partners will fund its development. It is as if the authors of NEPAD have turned the history of Africa's relations with the West on its head. It is as if contemporary globalization – particularly in the trade practices of the North in relation to the South – has no abiding hard lessons to teach Africa's political leaders."

NEPAD does not take cognisance of the impact of the twin effects of: (1) the history of the slave trade, slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism, and (2) poor political leadership and governance in much of Africa that had been either ignored or actively supported by the West during the Cold War period (Amuwo, 2003). Related to the latter, there is also the active destruction of any attempts toward socialist democracy on the continent and elsewhere in the world, especially by the United States. Turok (2002:128) cited *The Economist* which stated that: "During the Cold War, rich countries were happy to prop up corrupt regimes, fight wars through African proxies, sell weapons to suppress their subjects, and swell their foreign debt. The debt has been crushing for Africa: some countries spend more in service payments than on education and health. Aid has been tied to Western exports. Official aid has fallen from \$32 per African in 1990 to \$19 in 1998."

According to Hutchful (1991:183) between January 1956 and the end of 1985 there were sixty successful coups in Africa. Shivji (2003) claims that behind every coup was the hand of an imperial superpower, and more often than not the United States. "Overthrowing nationalist regimes and installing tyrannical dictatorships was, then, 'fair game' for today's champions of democracy and 'good governance'" (Shivji, 2003:2).

NEPAD begins with a pledge that African leaders "have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path to sustainable growth and development" (NEPAD, paragraph 1). The mechanism for pursuing this self-reliant strategy is, paradoxically, by ensuring Africa's greater integration into the globalised world economy. Muchie (2003:359) poses the following salient questions in relation to the inherent contradiction: "Given the bad record of Africa's participation and inclusion in the world economy since the time of slavery, what is new in 'NEPAD' that will make a difference? Can the leaders' expressed deontological commitment to 'eradicate poverty' and embark on 'sustainable development' be attained while participating in a world economy whose *modus vivendi* has not changed, in the main, in relation to Africa since the fifteenth century?"

NEPAD presents globalisation as an a-political and neutral process. According to NEPAD: "The current economic revolution has, in part, been made possible by the advances in information and communications technology (ICT) ... We readily admit that globalisation is a product of scientific and technological advances, many of which have been market driven" (Paragraphs 29 & 39). The focus on science and technology de-politicises globalisation, belies the skewed power relations between the North and the South, and the enormous poverty, hunger, suffering, illness and death, all of which are central to social work, that have accompanied neoliberal globalisation. This response from African leaders is unfortunate in the face of even the President of the World Bank, James Wolfenshon acknowledging that: "...global poverty is getting worse. The debate on globalisation and its effects on the poor is legitimate and necessary" (cited in Turok, 2002:127).

Bond (2002:2) asserts that "It is quite evident that economic globalisation – by which is generally meant free flows of trade, finance and direct investment, under conditions of overwhelming transnational corporate power, underpinned by a system of global embryonic-state institutions based mainly in Washington – *simply does not work for South Africa, or Africa*" (emphasis, original).

The social and economic consequences of Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) (Ministry of Finance, 1996), South Africa's neo-liberal economic policy, has been well documented (Sewpaul, 2001; Bond, 2002; Terreblanche, 2002). Instead of the additional 1.3 million jobs that was supposed to have been created by 2001, more than 1 million jobs have been destroyed since 1996 (Terreblanche, 2002). The corporate sector's obsession with first-world efficiency and high capital intensity has constrained job-creation capacities as they preclude large proportions of the population that are unskilled. Rather than deliver on the promise of fundamental restructuring of the South African economy, the strategies adopted over the past nine years viz., privatisation, black empowerment, and the establishment of a globally oriented and first world capitalistic enclave, have aggravated the "...deep-seated structural crisis..." (Terreblanche, 2002:438). Trade liberalisation has contributed to massive foreign imports with consequent large-scale local deindustrialisation and job losses. According to Bond (2002:6):

"At grassroots level, other manifestations of neoliberalism during the late 1990s included unprecedented municipal bankruptcies (which forced cuts in water and electricity to the poorest citizens and exacerbated apartheid geographical segregation), the failure of the highest-profile microcredit schemes and most small banks, and, in the

wake of a million jobs lost under ANC rule, the rise of the unemployment rate to 45%, higher than at any other time in the country's recorded history. Under these conditions, a host of diseases – cholera, diarrhoea, TB, Aids – flourished as never before, with five million South Africans HIV+ by 2002.”

The capitalist macro-economic strategy adopted by Government does not augur well for a country with the highest rate of inequality in the world. Recent trends indicate that the Gini Coefficient, which measures inequality with one being most unequal and zero being most equal, within Black communities is almost as high as the national norm, which is 0.65. This is on account of the very rapidly emerging black middle-class, which has not altered the quality of life for the masses of people. Fanon (1970) cogently elucidated the dynamics of such phenomena in respect of deepening discontent. As wealth and material goods are no longer seen to belong to the *other* - the colonial whites - they are seen to be more accessible yet unattainable. When members of one's own reference group succeed, one's own deprivation becomes more pronounced. Thus, it is not poverty per se but poverty linked to inequality that constitutes a greater source of discontent. In the face of such poverty and inequality, it is unfortunate, and perhaps to South Africa's peril that it has reneged on its earlier promise of democratic socialism. Social work is committed to working against structural sources of exclusion and poverty and to working towards changes in socio-economic conditions that maintain people in disadvantages positions. The task becomes increasingly challenging as nation states adopt the neoliberal capitalistic order that work against job-creation, poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods (Bond, 2002; Sewpaul, 2001; Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004).

NEPAD is based on the premise that there can be an equal and genuine partnership between Africa and its Western counterparts, and it does not call for a restructuring of the existing rules of the contemporary global economic system. All evidence points to the fact that this is a flawed premise. The World Trade Organisation has, more than ever before, institutionalised unfair trade practices to the benefit of the United States and the European Union. President George Bush's signing of the farm bill in May 2003 is cause for concern (Tillin, 2003). The farm bill will provide an extra \$19 billion year in subsidies to American farmers, thus contributing to a dumping of surplus agricultural goods on African markets at heavily subsidised prices that the African market cannot compete with.

While NEPAD is touted as the African-inspired plan for people-centred development, the continent's realities, as it reels under the pressures of free-market ideology and structural adjustment programmes, remain bleak. Sixty-five percent of Africa's population live on under \$1 a day; 40% do not attend primary school; 28 million have HIV/AIDS and 40% of wealth is held overseas (Tillin, 2003). NEPAD acknowledges that "...greater integration has (also) led to the further marginalisation of those countries that are unable to compete effectively. In the *absence of fair and just global rules*, globalisation has increased the ability of the strong to advance their interests to the detriment of the weak, especially in the areas of trade, finance and technology" (paragraph 33, emphasis by author). Given contemporary evidence with respect to prevailing power relations, with the US, the EU and Japan being the greatest beneficiaries of economic globalisation (Amuwo, 2003) and rising US aggression (Bond, 2002) it is unlikely that the global rules are to be changed to become just and fair. NEPAD does not make any such demands but has capitulated to the demands of the G8 and the international financial institutions. The more the global economy drops trade barriers, the more unfair capitalism becomes as rich countries benefit at the expense of poor countries. Given their vested interests, and the nature of capitalism, it is unlikely that transnational companies in the G8 countries will work to make the world a fairer

place (Sewpaul, 2003a). Yet, as pointed out by Tchangari (2002:2) "NEPAD does an excellent job of taking the concerns of the G8 and the international financial institutions into account."

While acknowledging that stronger countries have benefited at the expense of weaker countries through the process of globalisation, NEPAD goes on to propose the following:

What is needed is a commitment on the part of governments, the private sector and other institutions of civil society, to *the genuine integration of all nations into the global economy and body politic*. This requires the recognition of global interdependence in respect of production and demand, the environmental base that sustains the planet, cross-border migration, *a global financial architecture that rewards good socio-economic management*, and global governance that recognises partnership among all peoples (Paragraph 41, emphasis by author).

Given the foregoing discussion, the author finds little option but to concur with the conclusion of Bond (2002:103) who argued that: "The alternative case is that the responsibility of the world's citizens is to disempower the main agents of corporate-dominated globalisation (multilateral agencies, transnational corporations and imperialist states), and allow the space for national authorities to *deglobalise*, in order to better serve the interests of their citizens." Drawing sharp attacks on the effects of capitalist production and expansion, and of foreign aid in engendering inequality, several authors (Amuwo, 2003; Bond, 2002; Muchie, 2003; Randriamaro, 2003) and civil society organisations such as Jubilee 2000, the Gender and Trade Network in Africa, and anti-privatisation groups have called for total debt cancellation. NEPAD does not address the severe effects of SAPS and debt repayment on African countries. Muchie (2003:361) cites activist groups that have called for the abolishment of the Bretton Woods Institutions (the IMF and the World Bank), adding that "...the entire political and economic system of global capitalism needs to be overhauled. This is to be achieved by a global movement of solidarity opposed to the neoliberal model imposed by the multinational companies, the rich countries, and their minions at the World Bank and the IMF." A more modest goal is that the rules that shut out Third World economies from influencing and managing international financial institutions be changed (Hormeku & Barr, 2002; Sewpaul, 2003a), as it is ethically unacceptable that the majority of the world's population remains excluded from macro-economic policy formulation. All this has direct relevance for social work. SAPS do not exist merely as a policy or a theoretical abstraction; it is people's lives that immediately become structurally adjusted in the process. When a national government is ordered to cut back expenditure on health, education and welfare for example, it is **this** mother who cannot afford to send her child to school and it is **this** mother who cannot prevent her child from dying. And it is usually **this** mother, who represents the failures of international and national policies, that the social worker is engaged with attempting to pick up the pieces and to work against ever-increasing economic pressures. As social work educators and practitioners, we need to critically interrogate those factors that impact the welfare sector and social work, and that deny people the opportunities for survival, let alone gainful and healthy living.

The notion of the 'global financial architecture' rewarding 'good socio-economic management' sounds ominously akin to the good governance impositions of SAPS, the effects of which in Africa have been disastrous. Bond (2002) argues that it is not appropriate for Africans to engage in illusory global-governance exercises. He proposes the following instead: "The role for genuine African leaders, activists and humanists, is to establish much more durable and trust-building people-to-people partnerships with the aim of intensifying the lobbying capacity of progressive advocacy forces in the West and across the world" (Bond, 2002:103-104). He cited as examples the South African NGO, Treatment Action Campaign and the Aids Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) in the United States that enforced pharmaceutical companies and the US Government

to back down from imperialist positions. NEPAD makes no mention of mass mobilisation and popular movements, despite their success in mobilising for social and economic justice in both pre- and post apartheid South Africa. What NEPAD does not advocate is critical engagement, reflection and enabling of people to become "masters of their own destiny", as claimed in paragraph 54, but mobilisation and action in favour of the NEPAD initiative (Paragraph 56). The NEPAD proposals might do quite the contrary and entrench further dependency amongst African peoples, and deny self-determination through curbing opportunities for employment and emancipation from the traps of poverty, all of which have direct implications for social work. There is already as Amuwo (2003:12) claims "...too much of the West in Africa to allow Africa to design its own future." The dynamics of dependency between donors and recipients is poignantly captured in an African proverb cited by Muchie (2003:353): "The hand that receives is always under the hand that gives."

Given the increased emphasis on militarisation post September 11, and increased military spending (which diverts scarce resources from essential services and the poor), it is likely that civil society struggles for progressive social transformation would be threatened by the association of protest with terrorist action. Thus, there may be intensification of repression by military means (Randriamaro, 2003). The consequences of globalisation, which have specific gender dimensions disadvantaging women, are discussed below.

NEPAD and the issue of gender

It is not within the scope of this paper to do a full analysis of NEPAD's gender considerations, or lack thereof. It is important to note that linked to globalisation, and Africa's capitulation to the international financial institutions, is the issue of gender. Apart from the inequalities engendered by global capitalism, that disproportionately disadvantages women, what is of particular concern to gender analysts, is NEPAD's failure to call for debt cancellation of poor countries, and for the removal of structural adjustment conditionalities attached to debt relief. Women suffer the most acute effects of the debt crises and reduced public expenditure in their roles as care-givers. The bias in favour of corporate welfare over the welfare of citizens contradicts the claim of NEPAD for people-centred development. Equating people-centred development with market-oriented economies does not take into account the social relations and rules within the market that determines access to and control over resources and decision-making. NEPAD does not consider gender inequality, along with its complex interaction with differences in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, language, and regional/urban/rural location. Gender is mentioned specifically four times in the document in paragraphs 45, 49, 67 and 68.

Bond (2002) and Randriamaro (2003) point to the fact that NEPAD promotes the same economic policies under which women have suffered extreme suffering and inequality. Randriamaro (2003) warns that NEPAD's narrow conceptualisation of poverty may actually serve to increase social vulnerabilities and gender inequalities rather than eradicate poverty. NEPAD's emphasis on economic growth as the most important strategy for poverty eradication, precludes the understanding that "...while growth is critical for sustained poverty reduction, equally critical is the nature of growth generated: to be developmentally beneficial, growth must be socially equitable, pro-poor and environmentally sustainable" (Randriamaro, 2003:2). In many African countries where economic growth occurred under SAPs, such growth has been a jobless and inequitable growth with high social costs that have been borne mainly by women. The document also does not address the impact of globalisation on the gendered division of labour. Where women have had gains in participation in the labour market, these gains have been accompanied by jobs with low wages, low standards of health and safety, poor workers' rights, low security and limited career opportunities. Of particular concern to Randriamaro (2003) is the document's

silence on the issue of job creation for women, which she claims should be the first option in terms of mobilising domestic resources. Women's participation in the labour market is referenced through income-generating and poverty reduction activities. It is possible that job-creation is subsumed in "...assuring their (women's) participation in the political and economic life of African countries" (Paragraph 49). NEPAD does not speak of fundamental redistributive measures at any level; the focus is on the symptoms of poverty instead of the interlocking structural causes of poverty and its perpetuation. This is antithetical with the more radical and structural approach to social work. The document does not only exclude the specific concerns and needs of women but the voices of African citizens, both men and women. This is discussed in the following section.

NEPAD - an African owned initiative?

NEPAD consistently makes the claim that the document is an African inspired and an African owned initiative. If the voices of civil society were represented in the document, it is hardly likely that the ideological position in relation to globalisation, and Africa's proposed relationship with the capitalistic structures would have prevailed, given the attacks on NEPAD by civil society organisations. The following are examples of the document's claim to being African inspired, and African owned:

- The *New Partnership for Africa's Development* centres around African ownership and management. Through this programme, African leaders are setting an agenda for the renewal of the continent. The agenda is based on national and regional priorities and development plans that must be prepared through participatory processes involving the people. We believe that while African leaders derive their mandates from their people, it is their role to articulate these plans as well as lead the process of implementation on behalf of their people (paragraph 47).
- The programme is a new framework of interaction with the rest of the world, including the industrialised countries and multilateral organisations. It is based on the agenda set by African peoples through their own initiatives and their own volition, to shape their own destiny (paragraph 48).
- The *New Partnership for Africa's Development* will be successful only if it is owned by the African peoples united in their diversity (paragraph 51).
- (...) The present initiative is an expression of the commitment of Africa's leaders to translate the deep popular will into action (paragraph 54).
- The *New Partnerships for Africa's Development* is envisaged as a long-term vision of an African-owned and African-led development programme (paragraph 60).

The validity of the above claims is questionable. NEPAD was not formulated by the people of Africa but by a few elite African leaders. The drafting of NEPAD's main component, the Millennium Africa Recovery Programme (MAP) involved a few select elite mainly from the North. This included the US President, Bill Clinton, heads of transnational corporations, economists from US universities, the President of the World Bank, James Wolfenshon, leaders from the G8 countries, and representatives from the European Union (Bond, 2002; Randriamaro, 2003). If there is truth to Paragraph 51, it need to be asked if the converse argument would be equally true. As NEPAD does not represent the ownership or the will of the people, but those of a few African leaders in collaboration with capitalistic institutions, is it likely to fail?

Several grassroots organisations in South Africa and other parts of Africa have demonstrated their 'deep popular will' *against* neoliberalism and globalisation. Bond (2002:116) points out that "...even the ANC's alliance partners reject the same policies of alleged 'macroeconomic stability'

(fiscal and monetary austerity) and privatisation which NEPAD promotes". Various groups of civil society find themselves in a *war of position* (Gramsci, 1971) with the South African government in respect of issues such as globalisation, neo-liberal economics, privatisation and access to health and welfare services (Sewpaul, 2003a). With regard to the claim to preparing plans 'through participatory processes involving the people', which are key features of social work, Bond (2002:109) claims that contemporary African leaders do not have such commitment. He cites Thabo Mbeki's response in June 1996 with regard to GEAR in which Mbeki said: "...the programme is non-negotiable" and added, "Just call me a Thatcherite." Mass protests against GEAR have not opened it to negotiation. While citizen participation is central to democratic governance, it seems that African leaders are trading democratic governance in favour of good governance imposed by the IMF, the World Bank and the G8 countries. This is discussed in the following section.

NEPAD and African Governance

NEPAD is a regional initiative that aims to place Africa on a path of sustainable growth and development by integrating the continent fully into the global economy and body politic. Its goals include GDP growth of at least 7% per annum in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015. The MDG goals, which were adopted by world leaders in 2000, include reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than \$1 day; to enroll all children of school age in primary schools; to move toward gender equality and remove gender disparities in elementary and secondary enrolment; to reduce infant and child mortality ratios by two-thirds: to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters; and to provide free access for all who need reproductive health services. Despite promises of the G8 to support NEPAD, it is unlikely that the 7% GDP growth over the next 15 years would be realised. Since the early 1980s, real GDP has averaged only 2.5% per year (Funke & Nsouli, 2003). Harsch (2003) contends that aid flows to Africa would have to increase by 50 to 100% to attain the levels of economic growth necessary for significant reduction in poverty. Over the past ten years overseas development assistance (ODA) to Africa fell sharply by about 35% between 1992 and 2001. Aid flows are unlikely to be enough to achieve NEPAD's goals. While flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) increased over the past decade, sub-Saharan Africa attracted only 8% of total FDI flows to the developing world in 2001 (Harsch, 2003).

In an effort to achieve its ambitious goals NEPAD identifies a set of conditions for achieving sustainable development and sets up special initiatives for achieving them. The conditions for sustainable development include the Peace and Security Initiative, Democracy and Political Governance Initiative and Economic and Corporate Governance Initiative. NEPAD also selects priority sectors with a focus on bridging the infrastructure gap, human resource development, agriculture, the environment initiative, culture and science and technology. The initiative requires \$64 billion, much of which is expected to come from debt reduction, ODA and private capital, which as noted above has actually decreased in recent years. The pledge so far from some of the G8 countries (\$5 billion from the USA and \$7 billion from the EU) is nowhere near the required \$64 billion. It is widely accepted that aid, loans and FDI have negative consequences; they can help but they can also hurt. According to Ragumanu (cited in Amuwo, 2003:12) "...the debt burden, not economic development has become the legacy of 40 years of foreign aid." NEPAD's over reliance on aid, ODA and FDI do not augur well for Africa's development. A major challenge from a governance perspective is how are internal funds mobilised to support Pan-African development. Dependence on external funding is said to be the result of lack of resources in Africa. Questioning the validity of this claim Amuwo (2003:10) is of the opinion that the logic of economic and political accountability should consist "...foremost of working towards

downsizing plethoric, over-bloated and highly centralized bureaucracies that have proved economically and politically ruinous.” He goes on to state that: “Slimmer, stronger states capable of creating a conducive environment for both the public and private sectors to generate wealth, redistribute prosperity, create employment and reduce poverty, would benefit from a vigorously pursued anti-corruption campaign.” Amuwo cites the case of Nigeria that spent no less than 80% of its annual revenue on running government in 2002.

NEPAD commits African leaders to setting and policing standards of ‘good governance’ across the continent, respecting human rights and working for peace and poverty reduction (all of which are central goals of social work) in return for increased aid, private investment and a reduction of trade barriers by rich countries. It is interesting to note that the G8, at their Summit in Genoa asked Thabo Mbeki to include ‘good governance’ in his plan (Ngwane, 2002). Shivji (2003) and Amuwo (2003) claim that ‘good governance’ has been used as conditionality for continuing aid to developing countries. In this respect ‘good governance’ reflects a technocratic/economic approach calling for orthodox economic reforms of trade liberalisation, subsidy withdrawal from agriculture, curbing of state expenditure, privatisation of state assets, and emphasis on the private sector as the engine of development. In short ‘good governance’ equals SAPS. Shivji (2003:4) contends that ‘good governance’ has “...become a flexible tool in the hands of global hegemonies to undermine the sovereignty of African nations and the struggles for democracy of the African people.”

While governance implies the institutions and relations of power, the discourse on ‘good governance’ gets removed from relations of power and aligned with moral discourses of ‘goodness’ and ‘badness’ which are relative concepts (Shivji, 2003). Thus what actually constitutes ‘good governance’ or ‘bad governance’ becomes an issue. Robert Mugabe’s reign in Zimbabwe is a case in point. While Mugabe is applauded for taking decisive action against the vestiges of colonial rule by some, he is seen as one of the most autocratic rulers who has grossly violated the human rights of his people, and ruined the economy of his country by others.

Democratic governance, on the other hand, is based on accountability to the people, on the rule of law and on legitimacy, transparency, responsibility and citizen participation. Shivji (2003) asserts that a new democracy (actually socialist democracy) involves two important criteria: (1) the extent to which the will of the popular classes enters decisions that affect their lives; and (2) the extent to which their means of livelihood are guaranteed, implying equitable (not equal) distribution of resources. Given the capitalist paradigm embraced in NEPAD, these are certainly not contained in the document. The Africa Civil Society (2003:1) declared that: “While we are committed to good government in Africa, we do not accept the interpretation and content that this is given in NEPAD, including questionable economic policies that we do not accept embedded within ‘good governance’”. NEPAD addresses issues of both good governance and democratic governance. It is hoped that NEPAD will involve the citizens of Africa, and that the scope for reformulation of the document would be made available so that it comes to reflect an African inspired and African owned initiative. The call for involvement of citizens in the implementation of NEPAD is morally indefensible, given the fundamental market-oriented ideology that the document supports. Given that the majority of people do not know what NEPAD is in South Africa (e.g. in a class of 160 university students only three knew of NEPAD but had not interrogated its main messages) the task of leadership, including social work educators is to raise awareness about what the document is really about and the implications of NEPAD for Africa’s development. It is unethical that on account of available resources the South African Government appeals to the public, via well-designed and expensive newspaper and television advertisements, to support NEPAD.

The accountability of political leaders through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) makes NEPAD unique, and given the extent of corruption and the history of human rights abuses

on the continent it is a real necessity in Africa. For far too long foreign imperialists have been monitoring and imposing control in Africa. It is about time that African leaders took responsibility for developing its own monitoring and review system. However, developing consensus around what constitutes good governance remains a challenge, and what the exact role of the members of the APRM will be needs to be clearly elucidated. The first six members of the APRM¹ have been appointed.

The propriety of peer review vis-à-vis national sovereignty has been raised as an issue. Some leaders such as Nelson Mandela support the notion of sovereignty with responsibility and accountability, thus supporting mandating the African Union and NEPAD with peer review functions. Others see this as an infringement on national self-determination, and possibly as a symptom of imperialist and hegemonic aspirations by some African countries – especially South Africa. Negotiating tensions around these issues is not easy. While some see Mbeki's silence on the Zimbabwe issue as an indication of the death of NEPAD (Taylor, 2002) others see his quiet diplomacy as a prudent and strategic move, as any decisive action might reinforce fears of South Africa's hegemonic aspirations on the continent (Stremlau, 2003). Given Africa's colonial legacy, the power of loyalty and solidarity among African leadership must not be under estimated. If domestic tensions, ethnic strife, civil wars, human rights violations, corruption and poor political and economic governance are perceived to be primarily linked to colonialism, directed against the colonial white, then African leaders will be hard pressed to negatively sanction those countries that do violate the 'appropriate standards and codes of good practice' (NEPAD, Paragraph, 89) established by its leadership. Yet, given the political and economic degeneration of Zimbabwe, its gross violation of human rights and its atrocities against women and children, Mbeki's quiet diplomacy is immoral and indefensible. How the APRM is instituted, and whether or not it will be successful remains to be seen, but the writing on the wall has already appeared.

CONCLUSION

The neo-liberal ideology that underscores NEPAD, rather than providing strategies for the salvation of Africa, holds the possibility for further marginalisation of the poor, for entrenching inequality, and for worsening the plight of the most vulnerable of our society. Social workers are expected to work against poverty, and towards sustainable people-centred development. Yet, macro economic policies and strategies seem to be designed to work against poverty alleviation and sustainable development. NEPAD instead of representing the interests and the will of the African people serves more the interests of the world capitalistic order, with African leaders capitulating to the demands of the G8 and to the international financial institutions. Despite their active roles in perpetuating poverty and inequality, there is the protest from government that the welfare sector broadly, and social work more specifically lacks the skills and expertise to achieve the objectives of poverty alleviation and sustainable development (Department of Welfare and Population Development, 1996, 1997). Social work educators and practitioners need to critically examine the factors that impact the welfare sector and social work, and that deny people the opportunities for survival. Failure to do so means increasing the tendency of welfare and social work to reinforce and reproduce its own marginalisation (Sewpaul & Holscher, 2004) and its failure to adopt an alternative language, and strategies to that offered by the free market ideology.

1. These are Ms Graca Machel (South Africa and Mozambique); Prof Adebayo Adedeja, Nigerian Economist and former head of the UN Economic Commission for Africa; Ms Marie-Angelique Savane, former head of the UN Population Fund's for Africa from Senegal; Mr Bethuel Kiplagat, Kenya's former ambassador to France and the UK; Ms Dorothy Njeuma, Chancellor of the University of Buea, Cameroon; and Mr Chris Stals, former head of the South African Reserve Bank. At the time that the APRM panel was named, only 15 countries signed the APRM's memorandum of understanding: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda.

The regional approach proposed in NEPAD is essential to the survival of Africa. However, this ought to be used for the development of regional resistance to the forces of globalisation rather than for the further entrenchment of Africa into the global market economy. There is a need to move toward the development of a collective African interest, beyond parochial national self-interests (Sewpaul, 2003a) and divisions based on criteria such as language, ethnicity or political affiliation (Muchie, 2003). Muchie, however in making such a call, denies the reality of national identification, claiming that: "All nations are imagined communities" (Muchie, 2003:370). Whatever the origins of the nation state, the power of national identification cannot be underestimated. National identification and the development of a collective African identity are not necessarily antithetical. The vision of an absolute African identity, to the exclusion of national identification, is perhaps an utopian ideal that will not be realised. There is, however, the possibility that trans-continental identification might be supported through consolidation of national identities. The more national identification becomes consolidated, the more people might be able to move towards collective regional and international development initiatives, and the realisation that the well being of the nation is bound to the well being of the continent and the global order. The underlying epistemologies to this debate are perhaps a topic for another paper, as they cannot be accommodated within this discussion. The author do, however, concur with Muchie's (2003) call for a common conception of collective action in relation to an integrated and structural transformation of Africa, and a united approach to dealing with a system that has been massively unfair and unjust to Africa. As international social work and global movements around anti-oppressive practice, human rights and social justice evolve, social work must meet its ethical obligations in respect of collective responsibility and collective action.

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