The *New Partnership for Africa's Development*: Social, Economic and Environmental Contradictions

By Patrick Bond

1. Thabo Mbeki's Predicament

In August-September 2002, 190 heads of state and 60,000 delegates will attend the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Under South Africa's leadership, a "New Deal" is being proposed for North-South relations on global environment and poverty issues. Top G-8 politicians, managers of international financial institutions, UN bureaucrats, and high-profile capitalists all claim they want to open up globalization "so the benefits can reach everyone."

And here we find a central role being played by the South African president, Thabo Mbeki, a man who from 1999-2002 chaired or hosted the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth, the Organisation of African Unity, the Southern African Development Community and the World Conference Against Racism. This article tackles Mbeki's analysis of globalization, his strategy and demands for global-scale and continental socio-economic progress, and his preferred alliances. These topics arise because of his stated intention, in the October 2001 *New Partnership for Africa's Development* (*Nepad*), to establish a "new framework of interaction with the rest of the world, including the industrialized countries and multilateral organisations" — one that is sufficiently "radical" to lift African GDP growth to seven percent per annum.[1]

[1]*New Partnership for Africa's Development*, October 23, 2001, http://www.nepad.org, pp. 40, 70.

Not long after becoming president in May 1999, Mbeki and his key economic diplomats began high-profile international discussions with G-8 leaders about Africa: from Okinawa to Genoa to Alberta, and at the Seattle and Doha WTO Summits, the Washington, Prague and Ottawa meetings of the World Bank and IMF, the UN Millennial Summit in New York, the Davos and New York World Economic Forum meetings, and many other platforms in between. The more Mbeki is welcomed at these events, the more that protesters who support the cause of global environmental, social and economic justice are told, in effect, "Don't worry, you can go home, because Thabo Mbeki is resolving globalization's shortcomings."

As is evident in the *Nepad* document, Mbeki's approach is consistent with what has been termed *compradorism*. Mbeki and his main allies have already succumbed to the *class* (not necessarily personalistic) limitations of post-Independence African nationalism, namely acting in close collaboration with hostile transnational corporate and multilateral forces whose interests stand directly opposed to Mbeki's South African and African constituencies. This was the premonition, 40 years ago, of Frantz Fanon, in his chapter on "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

> The national middle class discovers its historic mission: that of intermediary. Seen through its eyes, its mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neocolonialism. The national bourgeoisie will be quite content with the role of the Western bourgeoisie's business agent, and it will play its part without any complexes in a most dignified manner. But this same lucrative role, this cheap-Jack's function, this meanness of outlook and this absence of all ambition symbolize the incapability of the middle class to fulfill its historic role of bourgeoisie. Here, the dynamic, pioneer aspect, the characteristics of the inventor and of the discoverer of new worlds which are found in all national bourgeoisies are lamentably absent. In the colonial countries, the spirit of indulgence is dominant at the core of the bourgeoisie; and this is because the national bourgeoisie identifies itself with the Western bourgeoisie, from whom it has learnt its lessons...

> In its beginnings, the national bourgeoisie of the colonial country identifies itself with the decadence of the bourgeoisie of the West. We need not think that it is jumping ahead; it is in fact beginning at the end. It is already senile before it has come to know the petulance, the fearlessness, or the will to succeed of youth.[2]

No doubt, such a charge would be rejected by Mbeki and his two main internationally oriented cabinet colleagues. Finance minister Trevor Manuel was co-chair (with Michel Camdessus) of the March 2002 UN Financing for Development conference in Monterey, Mexico, chair of the IMF/World Bank Development Committee in 2001-2002, and chair of the IMF/World Bank board of governors in 1999-2000. Trade minister Alec Erwin held the presidency of the UN Conference on Trade and Development from 1996-2000, and helped broker the November 2001 Doha deal. These men locate not only their own (national) ambition but also the continent's potential transformation not in lucrative personal accomplishments or Western-style bourgeois decadence, but rather in the further integration of Africa into a world economy, that is itself (they would also concede) in need of better regulation and fairer economic rules.

The project, therefore, is to reform inter-state relations and the embryonic world-state system. As *Nepad* explains,

> While globalization has increased the cost of Africa's ability to compete, we hold that the advantages of an effectively managed integration present the best prospects for future economic prosperity and poverty reduction....The case for the role of national authorities and private institutions in guiding the globalization agenda along a sustainable path and, therefore, one in which its benefits are more equally spread, remains strong....Africa, impoverished by slavery, corruption and economic mismanagement is taking off in a difficult situation. However, if her enormous natural and human resources are properly harnessed and utilized, it could lead to equitable and sustainable growth of the continent as well as

[2]Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York, Grove Press, 1963), pp.152-153.

> enhance its rapid integration into the world economy.[3]

But to the contrary, the evidence thus far is that "equitable and sustainable growth" and Africa's "rapid integration into the world economy" are mutually exclusive. Although Africa's *share* of world trade declined during the 1980s-1990s, the *volume* of exports increased, while the *value* of sub-Saharan exports was cut in half relative to the value of imports from the North.[4] Such marginalization occurred not because of *lack* of integration, but because of *too much*, of the wrong sort. For while integrating more rapidly into the world economy via "export-led growth," as demanded by Washington, Africa's ability to grow — either equitably and sustainably, or even inequitably — actually declined, in comparison to the period prior to structural adjustment.

Thus, the reform strategy will fail, although not because of Pretoria's lack of positionality and international credibility to carry out *Nepad* and win endorsements from global elites. Instead, the failure is already emanating from the very project of global-reformism itself, namely, Mbeki's underlying philosophy and incorrect analysis, ineffectual practical strategies, uncreative and inappropriate demands and counter-productive alliances. But if, in the process, Mbeki *cannot* establish a new framework of interaction with the rest of the world, and instead merely fronts for a slightly modified residual version of "global apartheid," we are obligated to suggest more hopeful analyses, strategies, demands, and alliances as alternatives.

2. Analyzing "Global Apartheid"

What to make of a world economic system that has been, in the main, responsible for Africa's dramatic backsliding (of several decades' progress in virtually all cases) in relation, for example, to per capita incomes and longevity? *Nepad* concedes that Africans should exhibit skepticism and even an ominous tone when considering the implications:

> The continued marginalization of Africa from the globalization process and the social exclusion of the vast majority of its peoples constitute a serious threat to global stability....In the absence of fair and just

[3]*New Partnership for Africa's Development*, *op. cit.*, pp. 28, 40, 52.
[4]E. Toussaint, "Debt in Sub-Saharan Africa on the Eve of the Third Millennium," Discussion paper, Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt, Brussels, 2001.

> global rules, globalization 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....Africa's inability to harness the process of globalization is a result of structural impediments to growth and development in the form of resource outflows and unfavorable terms of trade....The increasing polarization of wealth and poverty is one of a number of processes that have accompanied globalization, and which threaten its sustainability....The closing years of the last century saw a major financial collapse in much of the developing world, which not only threatened the stability of the global financial system, but also the global economy as a whole.[5]

The nature of threats and power. Several follow-up questions immediately arise. How serious a "threat to global stability," really, is African alleged "marginalization?" *Nepad* dares not admit it, but weak governments have very few threats to make against the strong.[6] Perhaps the best example, to date, was the denial of consensus by the Organisation of African Unity at the December 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) summit in Seattle. In contrast, trade minister Erwin was notably peeved at the failure of Seattle to establish a new WTO round, and only joined the OAU caucus statement at the last moment, grudgingly, and demanding edits. He then actively pursued a new round during 2000-01 in meetings with both intransigent and weak African trade ministers. And according to press reports which went unrefuted, he worked very hard to split the African delegation in November 2001 at Doha to prevent another Seattle debacle.[7] (*Nepad* neglects to mention such trade conflicts, or to draw lessons.)

The more profound hazards for Western prosperity — most likely associated with US financial and trade-deficit crises, Japanese depression, geopolitical tensions, dire environmental damage or debilitating oil shortages — go unremarked upon in *Nepad*. And in mentioning "major financial collapse in much of the developing world,"

[5]*New Partnership for Africa's Development*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2, 33, 34, 35, 36.
[6]Fake-threats such as counter-productive radical-Islamic terrorism (which strengthened not weakened the forces of reaction in the United States) are no substitute for the potential threat of a united Africa which acts in its self-interest.
[7]*Mail and Guardian*, November 9, 2001.

Nepad fails to more forcefully hint that there will be additional crises like those suffered by East Asia, Russia, Latin America and South Africa during 1997-1999 — where currency values fell by a third in most cases and repayment of foreign debt became onerous. The 2000-2001 Turkish and Argentine meltdowns suggest that the problem was not limited to "the closing years of the last century" and might be far more persistent if globalization continues its current trajectory. In Argentina's case, as well as Russia's in 1998, the only feasible answer was to default on tens of billions of dollars worth of unrepayable foreign debt coming due. Here we have the kind of "threat" that might make sense for *Nepad* to foment.

However, to do so would in turn require two other corollaries: collective repudiation of African and Third World debt so as to again "threaten the stability of the global financial system" and thereby gain leverage for genuine debt-cancellation negotiations;[8] and prohibition on the use of developing country funds to be invested in the IMF/World Bank (e.g., South Africa's one percent share) to bale out Western investors, as ordinarily transpires in the case of a Third World financial crisis. Tellingly, *Nepad* does not mention that although poverty increased dramatically in the wake of the 1997-1999 emerging markets crisis, foreign investors (especially New York and London financiers) generally recovered their funds, and new US investors in debt-ravaged Asian firms were able to pick up assets at fire-sale prices.

In the same spirit, there are other questions that bear asking. If "fair and just global rules" are impossible to establish, as they appear to be under prevailing power relations and rising US belligerence, then is it not time to question the imperatives of globalization? Moreover, if the rules were not fair and just — e.g., in the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) (1993) and subsequent trade agreements, and in relation to international flows of financial capital, including debt repayments under Washington's Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative — then why did South Africa's post-apartheid rulers join GATT in 1994, sign on to various subsequent free-trade agreements with the European Union and United States in 1998-2000, lift the country's main defense against financial capital (the

[8]Similarly, sovereign debt defaults by 30-35 percent of all countries occurred during the early 1830s, late 1870s and mid-1930s. In contrast, during the 1980s more than a third of all countries would have defaulted, but external debt restructuring allowed new loans to pay the interest on old debt coming due, thus simply displacing the problem into the future. World Bank, *Global Finance Tables* (Washington, DC, 2000), Figure 6.3.

financial rand) in March 1995, and repeatedly promote HIPC? The reason, simply, is that the South African elites *believe* in the neoliberal project, to the extent that they make every effort to disguise its real impact, even misconstruing the link between free markets and free politics.

Optimism of the will, and the intellect. "There are already signs of progress and hope," *Nepad* asserts. "Democratic regimes that are committed to the protection of human rights, people-centred development and market-oriented economies are on the increase."[9] The discursive strategy is to convince readers of the (untenable) neoliberal conflation of free markets and free societies, which typically came unstuck in Africa during the 1990s through IMF Riots. To this end, *Nepad*'s core elements include more privatization, especially of infrastructure (no matter its failure, especially in South Africa); more insertion of Africa into the world economy (in spite of fast-declining terms of trade); more multi-party elections (typically, though, between variants of neoliberal parties, as in the US) as a veil for the lack of thorough-going participatory democracy; grand visions of information and communications technology (hopelessly unrealistic considering the lack of simple reliable electricity across the continent); and a self-mandate for peace-keeping (which South Africa has subsequently taken for its soldiers stationed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi).

To sum up the ideological partnership Mbeki proposed, consider the way that the 1980s-90s neoliberal recolonization of African economic policy is explained in *Nepad*:

> The structural adjustment programs 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. As a consequence, only a few countries managed to achieve sustainable higher growth under these programs.[10]

One test of robust analysis is to pose the opposite premise, and to see whether the subsequent hypotheses are worth exploring:

- What if structural adjustment represented not "a partial solution" but instead, reflecting local and global power shifts, a

[9] *New Partnership for Africa's Development, op. cit.*, p. 7.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

profound defeat for genuine African nationalists, workers, peasants, women, children and the environment?

• What if the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s-1990s were the result not of independent Africans searching honestly for "solutions," but instead mainly reflected the dramatic shift in power relations at both the global scale (where financial and commercial circuits of capital were in ascendance) and within individual African states, away from lobbies favoring somewhat pro-poor social policies and (at least half-hearted) industrial development, towards cliques whose strategies served the interests of acquisitive, overconsumptive local elites, Washington financiers, and transnational corporations?

• What if "promoting reforms" really amounted to the IMF and World Bank imposing their cookie-cutter neoliberal policies on desperately disempowered African societies, without any reference to democratic processes, resistance or diverse local conditions?

• What if the removal of "serious price distortions" really meant the repeal of exchange controls (hence allowing massive capital flight), subsidy cuts (hence pushing masses of people below the poverty line), and lowered import tariffs (hence generating massive deindustrialization)?

• What if "inadequate attention to the provision of social services" in reality meant the opposite: excessive attention to applying neoliberalism not just to the macroeconomy, but also to health, education, water and other crucial state services? And what if the form of IMF/Bank attention included insistence upon greater cost recovery, higher user-fees, lower budgetary allocations, privatization, and even the disconnection of supplies to those too poor to afford them, hence leading to the unnecessary deaths of millions of people?

• What if "inadequate attention to the provision of social services" is not anywhere correlated to the inability of countries to "achieve sustainable higher growth," but rather serves as a nice-sounding justification for "adjustment with a human face," as UNICEF coined the compromise that *Nepad* apparently seeks?

If these hypotheses are reasonable, and if the implication is to proceed no further with structural adjustment — human face or not — then a central task of *Nepad* was posed: to slip around such arguments without reference to their relevance. In doing so, *Nepad* fit into the globalizers' modified neoliberal project, by which it was even more vigorously asserted, ever more incongruously, that integration into global markets solves poverty. To carry this off, in turn, requires the *Nepad* authors to explain globalization in highly technicist language.

Technological determinism. The driving force of international economic integration boils down, in Mbeki's neutral story, to little more than technological determinism. According to *Nepad*,

> The current economic revolution has, in part, been made possible by advances in information and communications technology (ICT), which have reduced the cost of and increased the speed of communications across the globe, abolishing pre-existing barriers of time and space, and affecting all areas of social and economic life....It has made possible the integration of national systems of production and finance, and is reflected in an exponential growth in the scale of cross-border flows of goods, services and capital....We readily admit that globalization is a product of scientific and technological advances, many of which have been market-driven....While no corner of the world has escaped the effects of globalization, the contributions of the various regions and nations have differed markedly. The locomotive for these major advances is the highly industrialized nations.[11]

Immediate corrections are in order. In reality, while there has been rapid growth in world trade since the US-led, international recession of the early 1980s, the level of globalization (measured by trade as a percentage of national output) is still in the range it was in 1913, long before the ICT revolution. More importantly, world economic growth slowed dramatically during the two-decade period of the alleged economic revolution, compared to the prior two decades, and the lowest-income countries' economies were worst affected.[12] Moreover, the fastest-growing economies during the 1980s-1990s were not those of the highly industrialized West or Japan, but the Newly Industrializing Countries of East Asia. As for the trajectory of the West's alleged economic "locomotive," it was certainly possible by October 2001 to remark upon the New Economy's train smash — but to do so would spoil *Nepad*'s techno-driven story.

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[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 39, 31.
[12] http://www.cepr.net

In any case, the technology-centric "admission" is fundamentally apolitical, and disguises the reality of dramatic changes in class relations, especially the resurgent power of US and EU capital in relation to working classes there and across the world (as reflected in stronger state-corporate "partnerships" and the decline of the social wage during the Reagan, Thatcher and Kohl administrations). Ironically, in contrast, a far more insightful explanation of globalization came from the ruling party of South Africa in October 1998, at a time when it needed to engage in left-wing rhetoric so as to pull its political Alliance (with trade unions and communists) together in preparation for a forthcoming national election:

> The present crisis is, in fact, a global capitalist crisis, rooted in a classical crisis of overaccumulation and declining profitability. Declining profitability has been a general feature of the most developed economies over the last 25 years. It is precisely declining profitability in the most advanced economies that has spurred the last quarter of a century of intensified globalization. These trends have resulted in the greatly increased dominance (and exponential growth in the sheer quantity) of speculative finance capital, ranging uncontrolled over the globe in pursuit of higher returns.[13]

If this assessment is valid, then in addition to technological change — which *facilitated* but did not cause or catalyze globalization — the more fundamental factors would include

- profound changes in the incentive structure of investments, especially the decline in manufacturing profits during the late 1960s and, consequently, the geographical search for new markets and cheaper inputs, and a switch by many major firms of productive reinvestment into financial assets;

- institutional factors associated with financial sector deregulation, concentration and centralization, which permitted banks and other financiers to escape national boundaries and search out far-flung borrowers;

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[13]ANC Alliance, "The Global Economic Crisis and its Implications for South Africa," ANC Alliance Discussion Document, Johannesburg, reprinted in *The African Communist*, Fourth Quarter, 1998.

• the decaying power of nation-states and increased power of the Bretton Woods Institutions and trade agencies; and

• shortened investor time horizons.

All of these factors can, and should be, reversed. None are inevitable. Tellingly, none are even mentioned in *Nepad*. The analysis, thus is wanting — and so too are the mildly-reformist strategies that Mbeki subsequently endorses.

3. Drawing Out the Strategic Implications

Nepad's public reading of globalization is blinkered and unrealistic, and so too are Mbeki's plans for reform. Here, South Africa's own experience is instructive, both in relation to lessons learned and actions taken to combat the excesses of global apartheid.

Decline, unemployment and polarization economics. For post-apartheid South Africa, the mood of liberation shifted quickly to despair during three periods of powerful international financial discipline, currency crashes and capital flight, in early 1996, mid-1998 and 2000-2001. The prime culprits in making South Africa so vulnerable were, firstly, the government's March 1995 decision, under intense pressure from local and international financiers, to discard the "financial rand" dual-rate exchange control mechanism, and, secondly, the permissions granted from 1999-2001 to allow the largest South African firms to relocate (or delist entirely) their financial headquarters from Johannesburg to London.[14]

As the key decision-maker even under Nelson Mandela's presidency, Mbeki authorized both neoliberal strategies. The initial effect of financial liberalization was to attract enormous speculative financial inflows in 1995, which in turn fled rapidly as conditions changed and the investor-herd turned. All efforts to reverse flows failed in 1996, including the announcement of partial privatization of the telephone company Telkom, and the adoption — without consultation and at the risk of ongoing, intensive political turmoil amongst Mbeki's Alliance partners — of the misnomered *Growth, Employment and Redistribution* (*Gear*) program. All of that program's targets failed from year one, with the exception of extremely low annual budget deficits and inflation rates, by recent historical standards. Although widely acclaimed by South African capital, *Gear* did not change capitalist minds, and net disinvestment continued. The permission to grant the largest firms offshore status ensures South Africa's permanent decline;

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[14]*Mail and Guardian*, December 6 and 13, 2001.

dividends and profit repatriation were the main reason for the 50 percent crash of the currency during 2000-2001.

Even aside from damage done by both major financial liberalizations, the country's allegedly "sound economic fundamentals" had deteriorated markedly during the late 1990s. Growing foreign imports amplified local deindustrialization and job loss, while trade with Africa became extremely biased, contributing to geopolitical tensions and economic refugees from neighboring lands (and resulting world-class xenophobia by South African workers). Notwithstanding the battered currency, the consequent rapid rise in exports did not trickle through the rest of the economy. There was, moreover, a net outflow of international direct investment from South Africa during the first five years of democracy, while the uneven dribs and drabs of incoming foreign investment were largely of the merger/acquisition variety rather than for new fixed-investment ("greenfield") projects.

Simultaneously, economic advice poured in from international financial centers, based upon persistent demands not only for macroeconomic policies conducive to South Africa's increased global vulnerability, but also for social policies and even political outcomes that weakened the state, the working-class, the poor and the environment. The country's per capita living standards sunk to levels last seen during the early 1960s, while the world's worst inequality intensified. By 1998, real interest rates had reached their highest-ever levels in modern South African history, and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange crashed further than ever before in its history. At the 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 percent, higher than at any other time in the country's recorded history. Under these conditions, a host of diseases flourished as never before, with five million South Africans HIV+ by 2002, a cholera outbreak affecting more than 140,000 people during 2000-2002, and more than 43,000 annual children's deaths attributable to diarrhea.

Mbeki could have learned from such homegrown problems, in considering how to implement an Africa-wide plan that also entailed reform of global economic institutions and processes. His ambitious lobbying schedule of world leaders during 2000-01 suggests he had all the access he required. However, what he said and wrote during this period confirms that instead of identifying how to uproot the causes of worsening global apartheid, Mbeki preferred to work on the symptoms (when, as in the case of AIDS, he wasn't simply denying the problem).

Mbeki's self-mandate. The world was becoming an increasingly brutal place when Mbeki assumed the South African presidency in May 1999, as testified to by rising levels of mass popular protest, both at meetings of the global elites and in numerous Southern settings, from Argentina to Zimbabwe, where neoliberalism was generating intense pain.[15] In 1999, the main Northern protests occurred in London (June), at the G-8 Cologne meeting (July) and WTO Summit in Seattle (November). In 2000, demonstrations against corporate globalization and the Bretton Woods Institutions were held in Davos (January), Washington (April), Windsor (July), Okinawa (July), Melbourne (September), Prague (October), and Nice (November). During 2001, the main protest sites were Gothenburg (March), Quebec City (April), London (May), Genoa (July) and Brussels (December). Momentum picked up in 2002 when protests targeted the World Economic Forum in New York (February) and EU leadership meeting in Barcelona (March).

South Africa, too, witnessed mass protests against neoliberalism: by the Congress of South African Trade Unions in May 2000 and August 2001, at the World Conference Against Racism in September 2001, and in repeated local settings (against, for example, water/electricity cutoffs and evictions due to poverty) in the ghettoes of Soweto, Chatsworth, Mpumalanga, Bredell, Tafelsig and many other sites. Yet rather than responding by changing the local policies which were causing such grievances, Mbeki and his colleagues claimed a unique noblesse oblige, namely that Pretoria could help bridge the gap between the world's rich and poor.

For example, explained Mbeki to his party's National General Council in July 2000, in the wake of defeating apartheid, the ANC, in particular, must dramatically expand its objectives:

> When we decided to address the critical question of the ANC as an agent of change, the central subject of this National General Council, we sought to examine ourselves as an agent of change to end the apartheid

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[15]For details, see Patrick Bond, *Against Global Apartheid* (London: Zed, 2001), Chapters 8-12, and documentation by the World Development Movement: http://www.wdm.org.uk/cambriefs/DEBT/unrest.htm, and at *GreenLeft Weekly* newspaper.

> legacy in our own country. We also sought to examine the question of what contribution we could make to the struggle to end apartheid globally.[16]

Mbeki had earlier embarked upon a late 1990's "African Renaissance" branding exercise, which he endowed with poignant poetics but not much else. The contentless form was somewhat remedied in the secretive *Millennium Africa Recovery Plan*, whose powerpoint skeleton was unveiled to select elites in 2000, during Mbeki's meetings with Bill Clinton in May, the Okinawa G-8 meeting in July, the UN Millennium Summit in September, then a subsequent European Union gathering in Portugal. The skeleton was fleshed out in November 2000 with the assistance of several economists and was immediately ratified during a special South African visit by World Bank president James Wolfensohn "at an undisclosed location," due presumably to fears of the disruptive protests which had soured a Johannesburg trip by new IMF managing director Horst Koehler a few months earlier.

By this stage, Mbeki managed to sign on as partners two additional rulers from the crucial North and West of the continent: Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Olusegun Obasanjo from Nigeria. Unfortunately, both continued to face mass protests and widespread civil/military/religious/ethnic bloodshed at home, diminishing their utility as model African leaders. (Obasanjo, for example, spent February 2002 coddling the Mugabe dictatorship in Zimbabwe, jailing his trade union leaders when they engaged in a national strike against him, and saying, on CNN, "Shut up!" to angry mourners whose family members had been among at least 2000 people killed by a Nigerian military arms depot explosion in a residential neighborhood.)

To his credit, though, the erratic Obasanjo had led a surprise revolt against Mbeki's capitulation to Northern pressure at the World Conference Against Racism in September 2001, when he helped generate a split between EU and African countries over reparations due the continent for slavery and colonialism. Tellingly, even loose talk of reparations is purged from *Nepad*.

But that incident aside, 2001 was a successful year for selling *Nepad*. Another pro-Western ruler with a deplorable recent human rights record, Tanzania's Benjamin Mkapa, joined the New Africa leadership group in January at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. There, Mbeki gave the world's leading capitalists and state elites a briefing, which was very poorly-attended. A few days later, an effort

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[16]Mbeki, "Keynote Address."

was made in Mali to sell West Africans on the plan, alongside Wolfensohn and Koehler. The July 2001 meeting of the African Union in Lusaka gave Mbeki the opportunity for a continent-wide leadership endorsement, once his plan was merged with an infrastructure-heavy initiative — the "Omega Plan" — offered by the neoliberal Senegalese president, Abdoulaye Wade, to become the *New African Initiative*. Next, the Genoa G-8 summit provided soothing encouragement, as 300,000 protesters gathered outside the conference accusing the world's main political leaders of running a destructive, elitist club.

Likewise, Mbeki's October visits to Japan and Brussels confirmed his elite popularity, perhaps because there was no apparent demand for formal monetary commitments. The same month, enthusiastic endorsements of Mbeki were published in the *Financial Times* by lead representatives of Johannesburg capital (Anglo American/DeBeers) and Washington multilateral banks.[17] After another name change, *Nepad* was publicly launched in Abuja, Nigeria, by several African heads of state on October 23, 2001. In February 2002, global elites celebrated *Nepad* in sites ranging from the World Economic Forum meeting in New York City to the summit of self-described "progressive" national leaders (but including the neoliberal Tony Blair) who gathered in Stockholm to forge a global Third Way. All elite eyes were turning to the world's "scar" (Blair's description of Africa), hoping that *Nepad* would serve as a large enough bandaid. On environmental issues, in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), much the same will be expected of Mbeki: putting a bandaid on global ecological crisis on behalf of the Northern polluters.

African ecological modernization. The environmental analysis that *Nepad* promotes combines bland sustainable development rhetoric with faith in global eco-reform processes (like the WSSD) based on market mechanisms, augmented by an implicit and sometimes explicit Malthusianism. Thus, "The expansion of industrial production and the growth in poverty contribute to environmental degradation of our oceans, atmosphere and natural vegetation."[18] Several contradictory processes are conflated in this pop-environmental reading of the relationship between poverty and ecological degradation. Africa's main

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[17]J. Mills and J. Oppenheimer, "Partnerships only way to break cycle of poverty," *Financial Times*, October 1, 2001; G. Gondwe and C. Madavo, "New swipe at fighting poverty," *Financial Times*, October 7, 2001. See also South African Institute of International Affairs, *Breaking the Cycle* (video), Johannesburg, 2001.
[18]*New Partnership for Africa's Development*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

economic problem is not excessive pollution-intensive industrialization, but insufficient industrialization, which in turn leads to greater reliance for export earnings upon ecologically-destructive raw material extraction (e.g., the rain-forests and strip-mines, or the substitution of cash crops for food crops). Globalization has exacerbated these processes, because the "environmental degradation of our oceans, atmosphere and natural vegetation" is mainly a function of transnational and local corporate irresponsibility: e.g., overexploitative EU and East Asian fishing trawlers, pollution-intensive South African mines and metal companies which defile the air and water without paying the externality costs, and forestry companies whose alien-timber plantations destroy the integrity of African soils.

In some cases, the colonial/apartheid displacement of large populations from good farms to infertile areas led to worsening soil degradation, for which the solution is a thorough-going land reform and rural development program — that is, the opposite of the extremely meager efforts the South African government is making (less than one percent arable land redistribution during the first term of ANC rule, 1994-1999, and an even slower pace since). But more generally, to ascribe environmental destruction to "growth in poverty" is to blame the victims: the masses whose poverty has worsened in part because of corporate-led globalization.

Again, by way of distorting complex socio-environmental processes, *Nepad* announces, "It is obvious that, unless the communities in the vicinity of the tropical forests are given alternative means of earning a living, they will co-operate in the destruction of the forests."[19] Here would have been an opportunity to target the transnational corporations and banks involved in rainforest destruction,[20] as well as mercenary armies from Zimbabwe, Angola, Uganda, Rwanda and other countries which are presently stripping timber and raw materials from the DRC, but *Nepad* fails to do so.

Another crucial example of *Nepad* ducking the issue is its two-sentence note on how the Environmental Initiative will tackle global warming: "The initial focus will be on monitoring and regulating the impact of climate change. Labor-intensive work is essential and critical to integrated fire management projects."[21] Starting at home, if Mbeki were serious about offering strong leadership, he would address the fast-

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[19]*Ibid.*, p. 13.
[20]http://www.ran.org
[21]*New Partnership for Africa's Development*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

growing contribution of South Africa to greenhouse gas emissions. Pretoria's industrial policy is premised upon minerals beneficiation which requires vast amounts of electricity, for the sake of glutting already-saturated metals markets. South Africa, as a result, ranks among countries with the most greenhouse gas emissions per person, corrected for income levels.[22] (The alternative would be to demand far stronger treaties and agreements on the need to reduce in absolute terms the production of global warming gasses by moving to genuinely sustainable development strategies — which is off Mbeki's agenda in South Africa.)

Nepad's overarching ideology of market-led growth with sustainable development comes together in this paragraph:

> While growth rates are important, they are not by themselves sufficient to enable African countries achieve the goal of poverty reduction. The challenge for Africa, therefore, is to develop the capacity to sustain growth at levels required to achieve poverty reduction and sustainable development. This, in turn depends on other factors such as infrastructure, capital accumulation, human capital, institutions, structural diversification, competitiveness, health and good stewardship of the environment.[23]

There is, here, an annoying combination of progressive and neoliberal objectives: infrastructure, human capital, institutions, structural diversification, health and good stewardship of the environment in the first category, and capital accumulation and competitiveness in the second. Objectively, neoliberal policies have, during the past two decades, destroyed Africa's infrastructure, human capital, institutions,

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[22]As a palliative, Mbeki has authorized the development of a Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) prototype, mainly designed by the World Bank, so that South Africa can help to pilot the idea of carbon trading in the Third World. Consistent with the most questionable characteristic of the Kyoto Protocol, the CDM effectively means that wealthy countries and transnational corporations can *buy* the right to continue destroying the environment. Pretoria has also confused its own environmental community by accepting the use of appallingly destructive alien-invasive forest plantations as alleged Kyoto carbon "sinks," and is also firmly promoting the Pebble Bed Nuclear Reactor concept which industry advocates also hope to make a Kyoto sink as part of the Protocol's weakening, in order to bring the US back in.

[23]*New Partnership for Africa's Development*, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

structural diversification, health and stewardship of the environment. The failure to come to grips with this contradiction is emblematic of *Nepad*'s double-talk, and helps explain why the program's core strategies and demands are so weak.

4. The Core Strategies and Demands

Aside from the Environmental Initiative described above, *Nepad*'s main elements include:

- more privatization, especially of infrastructure — no matter its failure, especially in South Africa;

- more insertion of Africa into the world economy — in spite of the even more rapid decline in terms of trade since the late 1990s;

- more multi-party elections — typically, though, between variants of neoliberal parties, as in the US, which serve as a veil for the lack of thorough going participatory democracy (and in any case, the theft of elections during 2002 by ruling parties in Congo-Brazzaville, Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe occurred thanks in part to the lethargy of Africa's leaders, including Mbeki);

- grand visions of information and communications technology — hopelessly unrealistic considering the lack of simple reliable electricity across the continent; and

- a self-mandate for peace-keeping — which South Africa has subsequently taken for its soldiers stationed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.

What concrete demands are made in exchange for these concessions to Washington's logic? *Nepad* only rarely criticizes the *status quo* power relations, and aside from predictable hopes that aid will be increased, the program mainly requests more conditional debt relief, financial inflows, privatized investment and technology transfer. We can consider each in term.

More debt, less relief. Typical is the treatment of HIPC, which "still leaves many countries within its scope with very high debt burdens....In addition, there are countries not included in the HIPC that also require debt relief to release resources for poverty reduction."[24]

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[24]Presumably Nigeria is the main country in mind, since post-apartheid South Africa has always aimed to avoid lowering its credit rating by questioning its own debt repayment.

Rather than attempting to challenge HIPC forthrightly, the *Nepad* strategy is to:

> support existing poverty reduction initiatives at the multilateral level, such as the Comprehensive Development Framework of the World Bank and the Poverty Reduction Strategy approach linked to the HIPC debt relief initiative....Countries would engage with existing debt relief mechanisms — the HIPC and the Paris Club — before seeking recourse through the *New Partnership for Africa's Development*.[25]

Only later will *Nepad* "establish a forum in which African countries may share experiences and mobilize for the improvement of debt relief strategies" with the aim of ending "the process of reform and qualification in the HIPC process."[26] To be sure, sharing experiences and mobilizing to improve "debt relief strategies" could have potential. But HIPC is already widely derided — especially in the Jubilee South movement — as "a cruel hoax."[27] Along with the IMF/World Bank Comprehensive Development Frameworks and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes, HIPC deals are fundamentally committed to maintaining existing power relations and the neoliberal economic philosophy because they entail only very slight adjustments to debt loads, and in return require the lowest-income countries to further liberalize.

To illustrate, in the main Southern African pilot HIPC, Mozambique's conditionality requirements included quintupling cost-recovery charges (user fees) at public health clinics, privatization of urban and rural water supply systems, and the simultaneous liberalization and privatization of its largest agro-industry, cashew-nut processing, which destroyed the industry. President Chissano publicly complained about the low levels of debt cancellation and the pressure he was under to inappropriately liberalize the economy by the Bretton Woods Institutions.

Nepad takes the African debate on HIPC backwards. Its proposed course of action — namely, prioritizing HIPC and the Paris Club where structural adjustment loans are negotiated — will initially cement African debt-peonage. When Africa is further weakened by further slides down the HIPC slope, as more wretched countries sign up, only then

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[25]*New Partnership for Africa's Development*, *op. cit.*, pp. 118, 149.
[26]*Ibid.*, p. 150.
[27]http://www.jubileesouth.net.

will experiences be shared and the program's neoliberal conditions (perhaps) be contested. At the very time that Argentina was forced to default, a much more profound questioning of the ethics of foreign debt repayment would have been welcome.

Reversing capital flows? Regarding inflows of capital, there are two kinds worth considering: financial and foreign direct investment. It hardly needs arguing that "hot-money" speculative inflows to emerging markets such as South Africa do not by any stretch qualify as "a prerequisite for development."

Nor do the vast majority of foreign loans granted to Third World governments over the past 30 years, including concessional (0.75 percent interest rate) loans through the World Bank's International Development Association and African Development Bank. Those loans serve as the leverage for gaining neoliberal conditions from borrowers. Repayment of even concessional hard-currency loans is extremely expensive once a country's currency collapses, as happens regularly to Africa. Yet *Nepad* calls for more such loans in one of its mandates to signatories:

> Work with the African Development Bank and other development finance institutions on the continent to mobilize sustainable financing especially through multilateral processes, institutions and donor governments, with a view to securing grant and concessional finance to mitigate medium-term risks.[28]

Financing is one of *Nepad*'s Achilles heels, because existing institutions and processes are so destructive. The African Development Bank (AfDB), for example, is an example of a failed institution. The World Bank's own internal assessments of African lending (e.g., the Wappenhans Report) are shocking, with a majority of projects considered failures. There is no logic to the AfDB and World Bank practice of lending in hard currency for developmental goods and services — for example, rural education — whose components are nearly entirely based on locally-sourced inputs (thus, not requiring hard currency repayment). Many donor agencies, especially USAID, suffer from the same problem: lending in extremely expensive hard currency — repayable with high effective interest rates as the value of African currencies fall — for projects with few foreign inputs. The hard currency is then utilized, in part, for import of luxury goods by African

[28]*New Partnership for Africa's Development, op. cit.*, p. 106.

elites. If countries attempt to put on luxury goods import taxes (as did Zimbabwe in 1998), the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation force the countries to remove them.

A more appropriate self-mandate in relation to foreign financiers is readily available in the ANC's 1994 *Reconstruction and Development Programme* (*RDP*):

> [Southern African countries] were pressured into implementing [IMF and World Bank] programmes with adverse effects on employment and standards of living....The *RDP* must use foreign debt financing only for those elements of the programme that can potentially increase our capacity for earning foreign exchange. Relationships with international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund must be conducted in such a way as to protect the integrity of domestic policy formulation and promote the interests of the South African population and the economy. Above all, we must pursue policies that enhance national self-sufficiency and enable us to reduce dependence on international financial institutions.[29]

Regrettably, Mbeki and Manuel ignored this provision, amongst many other progressive *RDP* mandates.

Even if attracting further financial flows of the hot-money and multilateral types is a questionable objective, the second kind of potential capital inflow — plant, equipment and machinery through foreign direct investment — is typically understood as an essential ingredient in any Washington approved development strategy. But after having done all in his power to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), not even Mbeki has succeeded. Good governance and political stability are not the key factors, Africa has learned, otherwise oil-rich Angola and Nigeria would not be the continent's main beneficiaries of FDI inflows.

Privatized investment. *Nepad*'s main solution to the foreign investment drought appears to be the promotion of a foreign stake via "Public-Private Partnerships" in privatized infrastructure: "Establish and nurture PPPs as well as grant concessions towards the construction,

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[29]African National Congress, *The Reconstruction and Development Programme*, Johannesburg, Umanyano Publications, 1994, s.1.4.17,6.5.16.

development and maintenance of ports, roads, railways and maritime transportation....With the assistance of sector-specialized agencies, put in place policy and legislative frameworks to encourage competition."[30]

The lack of justification for this initiative — aside from Africa's capital shortage — is extremely unsatisfying, given that most infrastructure is of a "natural monopoly" type, for which competition is unsuitable. Such natural monopolies include roads and railroads, telephone land lines (including optic-fiber), water and sewage reticulation systems, electricity transmission, ports and the like. *Nepad* does not and cannot make a real case for competition in these areas; there is, in contrast, an extremely strong case, based on "public-good" and "merit-good" features of infrastructure, for *state* control and *non-profit* management. In particular, privatization of infrastructure usually prevents cross-subsidization to enhance affordability for poor consumers, as South Africa has learned from price increases, "cherry-picking" of poor customers and massive service cut-offs as privatization proceeds in telecommunications, water/sanitation, electricity and roads/transport/rail/air.

The case against infrastructure privatization has been very strongly made in South Africa in recent years, because of the failure of a variety of privatized enterprises:

- telecommunications, where the cost of local phone calls skyrocketed as cross-subsidization from long-distance (especially international) calls was phased out, and where at least half a million phone accounts were closed due to unaffordability, leading to both a threat of regulatory intervention and a counter-threat (in March 2002) that the main privatizers would sell their stake;

- water and sanitation, where in 2001 unacceptable problems emerged in key pilot projects run by the world's biggest water companies (e.g., Nkonkobe municipality sued to cancel its disadvantageous long-term contract with Suez due to overpricing and underservicing, including ongoing use of the 19th-century "bucket system" of sanitation, Dolphin Coast where Sauer demanded — and won — a renegotiation of its contract in order to raise tariffs because profits were insufficient, and Nelspruit where Biwater was sharply criticized for failing to extend services and cutting off services to low-income residents);

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[30]*New Partnership for Africa's Development*, *op. cit.*, pp. 115, 106.

• electricity, where the drive towards cost-reflective pricing ("corporatization," to be followed by privatization) led Eskom to charge higher rates in Soweto than Sandton for more than average consumption, and where cut-offs of electricity to hundreds of thousands of low-income customers are occurring without reference to public good issues such as environment, public health or gender equity;

• in the area of transport, toll roads which local residents could not afford, and private kombi-taxi transport (dangerous due to profit pressures), an increasingly corporatized rail service (which shut down many unprofitable but socially useful feeder routes), and air transport (the national airline's disastrous mismanagement and subsequent need for renationalization in November 2001).

The more important financing challenges for Africa are establishing scrupulous, publicly owned development finance institutions and tough financial sector regulations, including effective exchange controls, that would allow for the circulation and reinvestment of the continent's existing financial resources, too many of which are frittered away in debt repayments, speculative projects, luxury real estate development, and capital flight via African branches of foreign banks (typically headquartered in London and Paris) and by corrupt, *comprador* local banks. *Nepad* offers little or nothing to help Africa become more self-reliant in financing the use of such strategies, which were the basis of, for example, Korea's success. One reason is that active state intermediation in financial markets remains out of favor in Washington.

Technology transfer? Finally, what do we learn about the *realpolitik* of technology transfer, by contemplating the high-profile, life-and-death case of AIDS drugs? US Vice President Al Gore began a "full court press" (to quote a US State Department memo) against leading South African politicians so as to have Pretoria repeal "the offending words" in the 1997 *Medicines Act*. The law made provisions for parallel imports and local generic production facilities for life-saving anti-retroviral drugs, so Gore came to the defense of the patent rights of a few multinational pharmaceutical corporations, which not coincidentally were funding the Democratic Party with millions of dollars of soft-money contributions.

A vibrant "Treatment Action Campaign" of grassroots militants emerged in South Africa during 1999, embarked on protests at US consulates in Johannesburg and Cape Town, and began networking with the Philadelphia, New York and Paris chapters of the advocacy group ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power). Gore was confronted repeatedly and aggressively by protests in Tennessee, New Hampshire, California and Pennsylvania at the very outset of his presidential election campaign in mid-1999. Numerous newspapers carried front-page stories on Gore's quandary.

Within weeks, the Vice President's own cost-benefit analysis began to reveal the danger of siding with the pharmaceutical firms to the detriment of his image. In a September 1999 meeting with Mbeki in New York, Gore conceded the validity of the SA *Medicines Act*. With Thailand, Brazil and India also taking strong non-partnership positions by establishing generic production facilities, and with tens of thousands of protesters in the streets, President Clinton agreed at the Seattle WTO summit not to push for harder-line patent protection for US pharmaceutical companies. (The firms reacted with promises of cheaper, though not free, drugs, which in turn were spurned by activists as too little, too late. When faced with the prospect of local production, drug companies changed the subject by announcing offers of free medicine, which subsequently did not materialize.)

The South African government then failed to take advantage of the space won by the activists, as Mbeki searched for excuses — such as a controversial investigation into whether HIV is indeed associated with AIDS, the alleged toxicity of anti-retrovirals, and (artificial) fiscal constraints (which did not prevent Mbeki authorizing $5 billion worth of sophisticated imported weapons) — to *not* implement the parallel importation or generic production options. By the time *Nepad* was launched, Mbeki's HIV/AIDS policies were routinely described as "genocidal" in the local and international press. Mbeki seemed to amplify his extraordinary image as South Africa's "undertaker-in-chief" in December 2001 by authorizing the Constitutional Court appeal of a hostile court judgment that required the state to begin widescale anti-retroviral mother-to-child-transmission treatment. Nelson Mandela had demanded the same of Mbeki, very publicly at the July 2000 Durban international AIDS conference and again in March 2002, but notwithstanding *Nepad*'s brief mentions of a "high priority given to tackling HIV/Aids" and leadership in a "campaign for increased international financial support for the struggle against HIV/Aids,"[31] Mbeki continued to make arguments and policy that classified him as an AIDS-dissident.

But even if in retrospect it was pyrrhic, the joint struggle by the South African government and the activists over Gore and the

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[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 127.

pharmaceutical corporations was instructive. In short, the David versus Goliath battle against pharmaceutical companies — and the White House — was won. Yet Mbeki quickly grabbed defeat from the jaws of victory, and the broader war against AIDS took a quick turn for the worse. South Africans were left wondering whether technology transfer was truly valued in Pretoria, if its outcome included longer lives, increased medical-treatment demands, as well as other expanded social-reproduction requirements of a mainly low-income, unemployed and hence expendable part of the population. Another nagging question, especially posed by environmentalists who will flock to Johannesburg in August 2002, is how Mbeki views his political allies and enemies — especially those like the TAC which have the potential to turn millions of his constituents against his policies.

5. Empowering Allies?

What kind of role did *Nepad* envisage for civil society, aside from "asking the African peoples to take up the challenge of mobilizing in support of the implementation of this initiative by setting up, at all levels, structures for organisation, mobilisation and action?"[32] *Nepad* contains no concrete actions to be taken by the African peoples, no offer of organizational resources, and no civil-society implementation plan. The document itself was available to African civil society only through internet websites (very obscurely). There were no leadership-catalyzed discussions of *Nepad* within civil-society organizations in South Africa itself — which is perhaps explained by the fact that Mbeki's Alliance partners in the trade unions and the SA Communist Party firmly opposed central neoliberal *Nepad* economic and infrastructure provisions via mass protests and stayaways, simultaneous to Mbeki's attempt to sell these in international and a few continental venues.

"Community involvement." Instead, the spirit of grassroots partnerships envisaged is captured in the vague mandate to "Promote community and user involvement in infrastructure construction, maintenance and management, especially in poor urban and rural areas, in collaboration with the *New Partnership for Africa's Development* Governance Initiatives."[33] This is, in principle, a useful strategy. But in practice, it has had the effect of placing financial and technical obligations that are the responsibility of the state in most civilized

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 56.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

societies, onto the shoulders of Africa's most impoverished communities.

In South Africa, for instance, the effect of requiring a greater role for communities in administering full cost-recovery rural water schemes, was to leave most of them broken due to lack of community affordability. The philosophy of user responsibility for maintenance and management — and expenses thereof — already prevails in many African settings, notwithstanding the extreme levels of poverty, mainly because of policy-makers' and program managers' neoliberal ideological commitment to full cost-recovery. As the World Bank recently expressed its mandate to governments which aim to supply rural African villages in desperate need of water and sanitation supplies, "Promote increased capital cost recovery from users. An upfront cash contribution based on their willingness-to-pay is required from users to demonstrate demand and develop community capacity to administer funds and tariffs. Ensure 100 percent recovery of operation and maintenance costs."[34]

A subsequent World Bank initiative — the Kampala Statement on urban water in February 2001 — was similarly naive (or disingenuous) about the politics of water privatization "reform:" "Labor can also be a powerful ally in explaining the benefits of the reform to the general public. It is essential therefore that the utility workers themselves understand and appreciate the need for the reform." The Kampala Statement's bottom line: "an increased role of the private sector in water/sanitation services delivery has been a dominant feature of the reform processes of African countries as it has been recognised as a viable alternative to public service delivery and financial autonomy."[35] Finding an alternative to what the state ordinarily has a responsibility to provide the citizenry, is at the core of Washington's — and *Nepad*'s — notion of civil-society empowerment.

Africans' achievements. What is revealed by these demands of African societies — made by both Mbeki and his Washington partners — is not only the counterproductive and illusory establishment of alliances and partnerships with the forces promoting global apartheid, but also the contradictory character of Mbeki's rhetoric concerning international social change. Notwithstanding the practical hostility

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[34]World Bank, *Sourcebook on Community Driven Development in the Africa Region — Community Action Programs*, Washington, 2000, Appendix 2.
[35]Water Utilities Partnership, "Kampala Statement," World Bank, Washington, DC, March 14, 2001.

Mbeki often shows when dealing with civil-society opposition to his neoliberal policies, he often makes rhetorical gestures to the enormously important role of social change activists. And as in Mbeki's own speeches, there is a high degree of empowerment rhetoric in *Nepad*:

> The *New Partnership for Africa's Development* seeks to build on and celebrate the achievements of the past, as well as reflect on the lessons learned through painful experience, so as to establish a partnership that is both credible and capable of implementation. In doing so, the challenge is for the peoples and governments of Africa to understand that development is a process of empowerment and self-reliance. Accordingly, Africans must not be wards of benevolent guardians; rather they must be the architects of their own sustained upliftment.[36]

This is inspiring, but ultimately is consistent with Mbeki's "talk-left, act-right" discourse. But *Nepad*, in reality, shuns "self-reliance" and the self-upliftment of Africans. To illustrate, none of the social justice "achievements" that cut against the grain of then-prevailing features of globalization — especially mass civil society protests that threw off the yokes of slavery, colonialism and apartheid — are specifically mentioned in *Nepad*. And *Nepad* asks readers to "reflect" — but only in a blinkered way, so as to avoid a more thorough-going analysis and set of policy options. Thus none of the anti-imperialist ideas of the most progressive architects and analysts of 20th century African political and socio-economic liberation — for example, Ake, Amin, Biko, Cabral, Fanon, First, Kadalie, Lumumba, Machel, Mamdani, Mkandawire, Nabudere, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Odinga, Onimode, Rodney, Sankara, Shivji — are considered worthy of reference, much less engagement and endorsement.

Without itself providing the tools to assist with a serious structural analysis, *Nepad* calls Africans to accept their leaders' *bona fides*:

> The present initiative is an expression of the commitment of Africa's leaders to translate the deep popular will into action....The political leaders of the continent appeal to all the peoples of Africa, in all their diversity, to become aware of the seriousness of the situation and the need to mobilize themselves in

[36]*New Partnership for Africa's Development*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

> order to put an end to further marginalization of the continent and ensure its development by bridging the gap with the developed countries.[37]

The hypocrisy in this passage is breathtaking. Africans falling further into poverty as a result of leadership *compradorism* and globalization may be less awake to the need to "become aware of the seriousness of the situation," compared to those elite rulers who generally live in luxury, at great distance from the masses. And when Africans in progressive civil society organizations express "the need to mobilize themselves," they are nearly invariably met with repression by ruling elites.

The "deep popular will." Moreover, *Nepad* could — but tellingly doesn't — document or seriously promote the collective efforts of politicized Africans to build a new continent. That ambition certainly does exist in various civil society initiatives, most of which stand in explicit opposition to *Nepad*. Across the continent, varied grassroots organizations — community-based groups, HIV/AIDS support organizations, traditional and ethnic-based movements, progressive churches, women's and youth clubs, environmental groups and many others — have joined trade unionists and radical intellectuals in diverse struggles against neoliberalism, for democracy and humanity. Many of the strongest expressions of popular will exist in South Africa, and involve Mbeki's Alliance partners who fundamentally reject the same policies of alleged "macroeconomic stability" (fiscal and monetary austerity) and privatization which *Nepad* axiomatically promotes.

The same deep philosophical rejection of *Nepad* and promotion of a genuine human-rights culture exists across Africa. In the political sphere, this led to mass demonstrations during 2001-2002 against unfree, unfair elections in Tanzania, Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe, among other sites. In the economic sphere, trade unions regularly protest structural adjustment, and are joined by diverse citizens' movements. For example, Jubilee Africa branches agitate for full debt repudiation, cancellation and reparations across the continent, and fundamentally reject Washington's debt relief strategies. African initiatives are also evident in the grassroots campaign for the return of Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha's billions in looted funds in Swiss and London banks. Early success helped to break open bank secrecy, following similar campaigns over 15 years waged by citizens' groups

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[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 55.

and governments in the Philippines and Haiti in relation to the Marcos and Duvallier hoards.

In addition, specific World Bank projects in Africa have come under attack by progressive local and international groups, including the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, Namibia's Epupa Dam and Uganda's Bujagali Dam, as well as various Bank attempts to commercialize national water management and privatize urban water/sanitation systems. Other growing campaigns that link African and international civil society organizations include the environmental debt that the industrial North owes the South, and the campaign to ban "conflict-diamond" trade that contributes to civil war in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Angola.

Across Africa, such solidarity is being discussed in relation to concrete and potential linkages between social-justice movements of the North and South. An "African People's Consensus" campaign was catalyzed by Jubilee anti-debt, other church, labor, NGO and community groups in Lusaka in May 1999 and then taken forward at a major Dakar gathering in December 2000 that for the first time linked progressive grassroots and shopfloor activists from English, French and Portuguese-speaking areas of Africa. And likewise, while Thabo Mbeki was gathering international elite support for *Nepad* and only later checking in on African capitals, a "Southern African People's Solidarity Network" headquartered in Cape Town held regular workshops across the region to generate analysis, establish positions and coordinate campaigns against neoliberalism and political repression.

Inevitably, *Nepad* itself would be subject to criticism by progressives across Africa. According to a report on the main commission considering the issue at the Africa Social Forum meeting in Mali in January, 2002, "Most participants in the group rejected *Nepad* and suggested we should come up with alternatives. [It was] recommended [that we] reject the neo-liberal framework in which *Nepad* was drafted and discuss alternative models for development."[38] A fortnight later, at a New York meeting of the most active African NGOs in international financial matters, "apprehension" was expressed over "the prominence given to the *Nepad*....We oppose any attempt to

[38]Africa Social Forum, *The Africa Social Forum Report*, Bamako, Mali, January 9, 2002.

use it to deepen Africa's external dependence and the exploitation of its resources."[39]

Generally, in contrast, the African networks of social justice movements push for what might be termed economic "deglobalization" by their nation-states (e.g., more exchange controls, protection of vital infant industries, debt repudiation), and for greater regional cooperation and mobility of people across Africa's artificial colonial-era borders, with the aim of reorienting domestic political economies away from the financial and trade circuitry which has been so disempowering these past two decades.

Ultimately, a "rights-based" philosophy is emerging that stresses decommodification and destratification in the material sphere, women's rights, and social-environmental harmony. The largest deficits are in the spheres of democracy and basic needs, particularly in relation to rural women, and particularly in areas whose production basis should be easy to expand — rural water/sanitation and small-scale irrigation systems, electricity, public works — without debilitating import requirements. By stressing a for-profit orientation in the supply of infrastructure and services, *Nepad* moves in the opposite direction from Africa's leading popular forces.

Thabo Mbeki is moving against the progressive movements in numerous ways, as will be abundantly evident at the WSSD. To summarize the analytical, strategic, tactical and alliance-building differences between Mbeki and African social movements, consider a bumper-sticker slogan that translates demands often heard in the international social justice movements: *"The Globalization of People, not of Capital!"* It is that edict which says so much more about social progress than can Mbeki, and in turn hints more profoundly about why his initiatives, including *Nepad*, reflect Fanon's warning so disturbingly. In sum, if international capital and its various institutional foundations, including the Bretton Woods Institutions and WTO, represent the "chains" of global apartheid, it is evident in what we have seen above that Mbeki's project has been reduced to shining, not breaking those chains.

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[39]African Caucus, "Statement by the African Caucus on the 4th PrepCom on Financing for Development," New York, January 25, 2002 (http://www.wtowatch.org/library/admin/uploadedfiles/Statement_by_the_African_Caucus.htm).