**Tribute to late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi**

The State Funeral for the Late Prime Minister of Ethiopia, who passed away on August 19, was held on 2 September 2012, in Addis Ababa.

Prime Minister Meles, was also the Chairperson of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC), an organ which provides leadership to the NEPAD process, sets policies, priorities and the programmes of action.

Over 20 African Heads of State and Government were in Addis Ababa to pay their condolences to the late Prime Minister's family. In glowing tributes, they alluded to his liberation struggle pedigree, high calibre and rare talent, patriotic zeal, along with his political gallantry and dedication to eradicate poverty in Ethiopia and personal selflessness. Most importantly, African leaders agreed that Mr Meles made a lasting impression on Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa sub-region and Africa as a whole. He stood devotedly for social justice, unity, harmony and progress of the peoples of the Continent.

In this edition we feature a personal tribute to Prime Minister Meles, from the NEPAD Agency Chief Executive Officer, Dr Ibrahim Mayaki.

Meles Zenawi came to politics at a very young age, mainly focused on fighting for freedom.

He entered politics with an ideal, and that ideal led him to think strategically about Ethiopia’s interests and about Africa’s role on the global scene.

I remember our first encounter as if it was yesterday: he was a staunch believer in the New Partnership for Africa’s Development - NEPAD as an instrument of transformation, and this subject was our main issue of discussion during the hour-and-a-half that we spent together.

In my view his main quality was the incisiveness of his mind, bright and clear. His mind was always looking for a global and logical approach; always saw it as a solution of a mathematical problem.

Particularly, for NEPAD, we have lost a steadfast visionary, a great mind, a modernizer, an eloquent skilled negotiator and a strong believer and doer who fully epitomized the African Renewal.

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NEPAD support to traditional research methods to cure HIV

Dr. Ludwig Sondashi, a Zambian traditional healer has been in the news over the last few years, because of his claims that he has the cure for the Human Immune-Deficiency Virus (HIV). He claims that he has treated over 1000 HIV positive patients and frequently talks about observing improvements in the health of his patients after administering his “remedy”.

Five years ago, Dr Sondashi approached NEPAD for support in researching his traditional herbs. From 2007-2010 the Southern Africa Network for Biosciences (SANBio), a NEPAD Programme, funded a network of laboratories in Zambia and South Africa to scientifically investigate Dr Songashi’s claims.

He uses a finely grounded powder prepared from the bark of roots of four plants (coded SF2000). A visit to his clinic in the Zambian capital Lusaka, found a number of HIV sufferers, who claimed to have been cured by Dr Sondashi’s concoction.

An attempt to determine the potential of SF2000 in a clinical setting was conducted by the National AIDS Council in Zambia years earlier, but due to limitations in the study design the results were inconclusive.

Following a regional consultative Conference of SANBio in Lusaka in 2007, SF2000 was selected as the first remedy to be investigated under the NEPAD Drug Discovery Bio prospecting Platform.

Through this platform NEPAD with support from the Governments of South Africa and Finland provided US$650 000 for skills training and the purchase of equipment to thoroughly test Dr Sondashi’s traditional plants.

NEPAD established a legal environment for cross-border collaboration among eight research organizations in Zambia and South Africa. The research was aimed at investigating the safety and efficacy of the traditional preparation.

Focus was on isolating and identifying active compounds in the herbs, testing SF2000 on different types of HIVs, determining acceptable dosage, and manufacturing SF2000 into capsules as well as quality assurance.

Extracts of the plants were tested for their action against different types of viruses. Results showed that SF2000 was effective under laboratory conditions on one particular type of virus known as HIV Strain C by reducing the viral load. These results were also validated when SF2000 was tested in the laboratory at Southern Research Institute (SRI) in the United States.

The results have provided the first scientific evidence that SF2000 does have anti HIV activity in a validated laboratory test.

Investigations to isolate the major compounds in each of the four plants used by the traditional healer are currently on-going at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in South Africa.

A more acceptable dosage of SF2000 was developed based on the traditional preparation, warranting safe clinical study in adult male volunteers. In 2010, NEPAD financed and coordinated the development of a Phase I clinical study on the improved remedy. This was submitted to Zambia’s Ministry of Science, Technology & Vocational Training. In July 2012, the Zambian government provided USD133 000 to support the study which will be commissioned later this year.

NEPAD’s SANBio researchers, various experts and Dr Sondashi met in February and March this year, to resolve all issues related to Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and Benefit Sharing on the SF2000 remedy.

In the meantime, NEPAD has just held a conference (Sept 3-6) in South Africa, to evaluate the success of BioFISA, a programme designed to use biosciences to alleviate poverty and enhance sustainable development in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Senior government officials from the South Africa’s Department of Science and Technology, the Finnish Government, development partners, SADC member-states and the NEPAD Agency attended the conference.

Dr Sondashi testing his herbal mixture
Boosting Africa’s most valuable renewable natural assets – Fish

Sierra Leone’s fisheries sector, valued at US$735 million, has received a boost from NEPAD’s Partnership for African Fisheries Programme (PAF), through funding of US$1.4 million disbursed by its West Africa Pilot Project (WAPP). This intervention will provide direct and indirect employment for over 500,000 people.

The Pilot project, which is also managed by PAF, has contributed significantly to combating illegal fishing in the region. It has supported the Government of Sierra Leone to build appropriate policy and legal frameworks to capitalise on fish exploitation and has strengthened regional integration through the building of inshore fisheries infrastructure to stimulate economic growth. Since its establishment in Sierra Leone in 2011, WAPP has increased the country’s food supply by enlarging aquacultures considered to be the fastest growing food-producing sector worldwide.

PAF was established in 2009 as a collaboration between the NEPAD Agency and the United Kingdom’s Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The Partnership builds on earlier fisheries reforms in Africa such as the Abuja Declaration on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture in Africa.

PAF has been working to empower the fisheries sector by facilitating access to financial institutions, particularly to those most vulnerable to fishing such as small-scale and grassroots fishers. It also promotes responsible fisheries management, sustainability in Africa’s fisheries and supports reforms in governance and trade.

The fisheries sector of Africa has the potential to contribute to about six percent of the Continent’s annual economic growth; however, it does not have enough resources to deal with this challenge which is made even more complex by illegal fishing, inadequate management, the threat of climate change, and over fishing.

According to Dr Sloans Chimatiro, Senior Fisheries Advisor at NEPAD, in order to deal with these challenges, PAF established and oversees continental working groups in key policy areas such as Good Governance; Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing; Fisheries Investment; Fisheries Trade and Access to markets; and Aquaculture.

“The working groups are composed of African and non-African experts in fisheries and aquaculture. They draw on experience in fishing communities, industry, government and educational institutions,” said Dr Chimatiro.

In 2010 PAF hosted the first Conference of African Ministers of Fisheries and Aquaculture (CAMFA) in Banjul, the Gambia. This African Union (AU)-led conference was the first of its kind and facilitated information sharing and promoted dialogue on the role and importance of the fisheries sector. CAMFA was established as a policy organ of the AU to provide high-level guidance for continent-wide reforms. In January 2011, the 16th Summit of the AU endorsed the establishment of CAMFA. Through a Comprehensive African Fisheries Reform Strategy by 2013.

This was a milestone for the fisheries sector since fish is one of the leading export commodities for Africa, with an annual export value of nearly 4.8 billion and 614 million US dollars for intra-African trade. So for countries like Sierra Leone and others in Africa, where fishing is one of the key mainstays, it also makes a valuable contribution to food and nutrition security feeding 200 million people annually. For millions on the continent, fish is the only protein food and represents the sole source of essential elements and fats to vulnerable rural African consumers, especially women and children.

However, Africa is still unable to meet its own fish consumption needs due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of financial resources, technologies and mismanagement and therefore has to import fish products.

Hence, fisheries is also integral part of the agenda of NEPAD’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) aimed at increasing food supply and reducing hunger through national budgetary allocation. So far, 30 African countries have signed the CAADP Compact to commit at least 10 per cent of their national budgets to agriculture. PAF supports these efforts and is being incorporated into their national CAADP food security investment plans, one of the key drivers to raise agricultural productivity on the continent to at least 6 percent annually.

In essence, PAF is about increasing, sustaining and protecting Africa’s assets – fish - and to stimulate growth across the continent. This means strengthening Africa’s capacity to consider, determine and implement responsive reforms in fisheries governance and trade.
The Empowerment of African Women: Voices from a Kenyan Community

By Dr. Justina Dugbazah, Anglophone Project Manager for the Gender, at NEPAD

On 14 February 2012, I travelled to Kibate, 300 kilometers from the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, for an evaluation of women’s empowerment projects funded by the NEPAD-Spanish Fund. Created in June, 2007 between NEPAD and the Government of Spain, the Fund promotes women’s empowerment objectives and ensures that they are integrated into Africa’s development agenda.

In Kibate, 250 women were selected by the AFFRO project. They were trained to operate the mills. They also received seeds to plant in their gardens and to grind into flour. Life in the community has improved in the last three years because the grinders have lessened the time and energy it previously took to ground corn. Villagers often travelled long distances to use grinders in other communities. Members of the project are scheduled on a rotational basis to work on the mills.

The women have been empowered in business and agro-processing skills, which involve turning primary agricultural products into other commodities for market. This has the potential for increased value and income opportunities. Prior to the project, the women would sell corn at a lower cost. Now they grind the corn into mealie meal which is used to prepare a Kenyan staple meal known as “Ugali”. Mealie meal costs more on the market because it is ready to use and saves time. As a result the women make more money selling mealie meal rather than corn. This has increased their profit margin.

Surrounding communities also make use of the mills at a small fee. Money gained is invested into a revolving fund which provides loans to members of the community. Through this initiative, villagers have been able to set up secondary businesses.

Meeting the key project managers, staff and beneficiaries provided first-hand knowledge regarding the success and challenges of implementing the project.

One of them, Wilfred Kavu, who has very little formal education, told me: “The small loan I got from the fund has helped my peanut butter biscuit business. I sell the biscuits to school children. I use the profit to buy paper and pencils which I also sell. I am able to take better care of my needs and I feel good about myself.”

The women’s community group has also become a source of psycho-social support. Beatrice Mwaniki, a retired education officer, told me that the women have an unwritten “pledge” to informally provide guardianship to each other’s children. This reminded me of a popular Swahili Proverb: “A single hand cannot nurse a child”.

“When I was sick,” said one member of the group, some women came to visit me and others sent their daughters to fetch water for my family. They even cooked for us. With such good support, I was able to recover quickly.”

The NEPAD-Spanish Fund has made a positive impact on the lives of the women of Kibate and their households, by enhancing their primary and secondary livelihoods; adding value to agro-processing; increasing the skills of these women and enhancing their self-confidence. It has improved social cohesion, not only amongst the group members but also within families and the communities. But, there is still need for further financial and technical support; this sentiment was echoed by Mr. Joel Mwati, a community leader, who attended some of the meetings we had with the women.

My field visit to Kibate showed a fair level of success. It did not only help me assess the impact of the projects NEPAD has been supporting, but was also a journey of personal growth. I was reminded once again of our African values of hospitality and deep rooted community values and support systems.

A woman operating a posho mill funded by the NEPAD Spanish Fund in Kibate, Kenya

Although the projects I visited have already utilised their allocated funds, they are still receiving technical support from NEPAD. The evaluation included assessing the impact on the women beneficiaries and community members, and exploring options for continued support.

Kibate is one of the communities in which the African Women Foundation (AFFRO) a non-governmental empowerment group is supporting women’s projects. AFFRO received 100,000 Euro from the NEPAD-Spanish Fund in 2008 to support asset building for poverty eradication among women.

Between 2008 and 2009, AFFRO installed of 16 grinding mills and trained more than a dozen women’s groups in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia in leadership skills and business development.

My field visit to Kibate showed a fair level of success. It did not only help me assess the impact of the projects NEPAD has been supporting, but was also a journey of personal growth. I was reminded once again of our African values of hospitality and deep rooted community values and support systems.

Members of the African Women Foundation (AFFRO) briefing Dr. Justina Dugbaza on their project
Football match celebrates National Women’s day, strengthens partnerships, and connects people

By Millicent Seganoe

When it was suggested that NEPAD organise a football match to mark South Africa’s National Women’s Day, held annually on August 9 to commemorate the women’s protest march of 1956 against the “pass”, law which curtailed black people’s freedom of movement during the Apartheid era, I remember thinking to myself, ‘this must be a joke’.

I was quite nervous. To start with, we did not have a women’s football team and we had to build and train one very quickly. We needed the right kit; time to train and importantly, a coach. None of us knew much about football. Besides, where would we find the time in our busy schedule to turn 11 women into football players?

Even more interesting was the team which was chosen to play against us; the women’s football club of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, or the German International Development Agency, known as GIZ.

The GIZ is actively involved in football through its implementation of the Youth Development through Football (YDF) Programme in partnership with Department of Sport and Recreation South Africa. Enthusiastic young girls and boys in under-privileged communities play games to raise awareness about anti-discrimination, gender equality, health and environmental issues.

As an already established team which trains and plays competitive matches frequently, they were fit and ready to take us on!

The aim of the tournament was to draw attention to what NEPAD is doing on Gender issues in Africa, as well as to promote camaraderie among colleagues in the Agency. In addition, GIZ is an important development partner, which provides technical and financial support to organisations such as NEPAD and the Pan African Parliament, so we felt the need to bond more, outside our usual business routine.

After we nominated a coach from among our colleagues … he had to be a man … a team of eleven eager ladies formed the Mighty NEPAD team and began training! But the coach had his job cut out for him. He had to give us a quick crash-course in football terminology like, ‘Offside!’, ‘Corner kick!’, ‘Goal kick!’
Prior to the match, NEPAD’s Anglophone Project Manager for the Gender Programme Dr. Justina Dugbazah outlined some of the Agency’s programmes on a live Television programme in South Africa.

"With support from the Spanish Government to the Gender Programme, NEPAD provides assistance through requests for proposal from mainly grassroots women’s organisations, which benefit from funds that help them set up small businesses; we also provide support in training business and trade skills.” said Dr Dugbazah.

In South Africa the NEPAD Gender Programme works closely with the South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID) body, to train auxiliary social workers who make up for the shortage of such staff in various communities. They in turn give assistance and guidance on gender issues related to health care, human rights and education, through the skills which they receive from trainers.

NEPAD has also established business incubators in two African economic regions; the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS). These provide business development skills to rural women as well as revolving funds for them as start-up capital for their enterprises. These activities have been effective in bringing down poverty levels.

On the day of the friendly match, and the NEPAD team looked confident and happy in its newly acquired football gear. Almost a hundred supporters from both organisations including their families and friends turned up with vuvuzelas to cheer us on.

The referee was from NEPAD, but he showed no bias. We were secretly hoping he would! Instead he handed out a few yellow cards to the NEPAD team.

As was expected, the game was a tough one, with GIZ scoring twice in the first and second halves. But NEPAD put up very good defense, with great goal-keeping skills from our goal-keeper, Eva Rankoko.

After the match, we had a much needed lunch and light refreshments and interacted with our ‘opponents’. It was during our casual conversations that I realised that although we were a bit disappointed that although we did not score a goal against GIZ, we were all winners after all! The game was fun; we learned a lot about each other, improved on our football skills and created some awareness about what we do.

As I limped to my car, I reflected on a quote by the famous boxing Champion, Muhammad Ali: ‘Champions aren’t made in gyms. Champions are made from something they have deep inside them: a desire, a dream, a vision!’
Quick facts on NEPAD and Gender…

- Hundreds of thousands of women will benefit from 20 million Euros being disbursed by the NEPAD Spanish Fund to improve their access to micro-finance schemes, HIV/AIDS, prevention, education, leadership and ICT and entrepreneurship skills,ency’s workforce.

- NEPAD’s Peer Review Report on Rwanda, released in 2006, found that in addition to constitutional provisions, Rwanda has created a dozens of institutions and development programmes to enhance the status and welfare of women in all walks of life.

- Rwanda has been a leader in the number of women elected to parliament. The constitution mandates that at least 30 per cent of parliamentary deputies be women, but the strong push to support women candidates during elections resulted in women holding 56 per cent of seats.

- 50 women are currently working for the NEPAD Agency, making up 58 per cent of the Agency’s workforce.

Improving frontline healthcare in Africa

Hundreds of millions of women and children globally have no access to potentially life-saving health care with often fatal results. According to recent estimates by the World Health Organization (WHO), 358,000 women died due to complications in pregnancy and childbirth in 2008, with 99 percent of the deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

The NEPAD Agency has been at the forefront in mobilising funds from bilateral partners to support the training of nurses and midwives across the continent and enhance African-led health care research. So far, five million dollars have been earmarked for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) for training programmes in community health nursing, maternal and child health, mental health nursing, critical care and trauma nursing.

In 2007, NEPAD embarked on training dozens of nurses and midwives in East and Southern Africa, in various health care subjects. An initial group of 100 medical workers are expected to complete their master’s degrees by 2013.

The trained nurses will go back to their communities, mostly in rural and remote areas, to support health-care needs in the neglected parts of their countries.

“The current workforce in some of the most affected countries in sub-Saharan Africa would need to be scaled up by as much as 140% to attain international health development targets such as those in the Millennium Declaration”, according to 2009 estimates by the World Health Organization (WHO).

As part of the nurses and midwifery project, a consortium of Southern African universities is assisting five countries to establish advanced training programmes in community health nursing, maternal and child health, mental health nursing and critical care and trauma nursing.

We are working with these institutions to set-up centres of excellence for participating countries to build health curriculums, research capacities and health-care training.

Mozambique, Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya and most recently the Democratic Republic of Congo now have at least one such specialist health programme. In Kenya specialists in community health nursing, maternal and child nursing graduated recently, whilst students in Tanzania specialised in psychiatric nursing, critical care and trauma also completed their training. In the Democratic Republic of Congo the specialist training is focused on maternal and child nursing. This training provides not only specialist practitioners, but also researchers in these fields and people who can train others.

Plans are advanced to extend the project to countries of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), namely Chad, Gabon and the Republic of Congo. The three-year master’s programme will commence in these countries in early 2013 and will provide 75 students the opportunity to study to post-graduate level a health-care course.

The project will run over a period of ten years and will seek to mobilise ten million dollars from bilateral partners so as to contribute towards achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals.
Thoughts on Africa’s performance at the recent 2012 London Olympics

“African athletes are opting to pry their trades in richer Arabic, European and American countries due to better incentives like better remuneration and facilities.”

“To paraphrase Muhammed Ali, for an athlete to shine in the light, s/he should work very hard in the dark. Success comes only through hard work, consistency and the will to take oneself to the limits in search of excellence. South Africa, Ethiopia and Kenya have continued to demonstrate that we rank among the best in the world.”

“Africa’s performance at the Olympics was not exceptional. The gold medals that African countries won did not outweigh those medals that were won by China and the United States.”

“It is interesting to note that Africans are predominantly better at power sports such as track, relay and marathon running, whereas the other races are better at water sports like swimming and rowing.”

African athletes play for countries that pay well. There is a French saying: “Everybody goes where their interest is”

Upcoming events

2 - 6 September 2012: Celebrating four years of BioFisa
5 - 7 September 2012: Establishment of Science, Technology and Innovation indicators in the ECOWAS region (national & regional level), Togo
17 - 20 September 2012: FP7 EVAL-Health Consortium Project Meeting, Durban, South Africa

See also online at: www.nepad.org/events

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