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**“Opportunities for African Experts in the New
Initiative for African Development”**

PAPER DELIVDERED BY: DR. (MRS.) REMI ARIBISALA
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ECOWAS SECRETARIAT
ABUJA

Mr. Chairman

Members of the Group of African Associations of the International Association of Consulting Engineers,

Members of the Association of Consulting Engineers of Nigeria,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen

I want to thank the Association of Consulting Engineers of Nigeria for inviting me to deliver this paper on the “Opportunities for African Experts in the New Initiative for African Development”, I am indeed honoured and privileged to be at this very important conference of the Group of African Member Associations of FIDIC.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adequate and reliable physical infrastructure is essential for social and economic development everywhere. Together with the development and utilization of appropriate technology, it serves both as a vehicle for and a reflection of economic growth and prosperity. Its inadequacy in any community or environment results in poor quality of services which in turn disrupts current productive economic activities and threatens future industrial and commercial investments.

In Africa today, inadequate infrastructure and under utilization or low accessibility to technology are amongst the most pressing development challenges given the inter-linkages which exist with economic growth, poverty reduction, global competitiveness and trade; hence the pertinence of the theme for this conference.

The infrastructure development problems facing Africa can be attributed largely to low level utilization of modern and appropriate technology arising from insufficient financial resources; inability to develop and mobilize “domestic” expertise; and in some cases inappropriate development goals.

Whilst the need to build human resources capacity must be emphasized, retention of expertise arising from such capacity building remains a key challenge for African countries. In fact African Expertise abounds both at home and in the Diaspora. There is however a vicious circle of continuous depletion of the Expertise we have on the ground due to the uncondusive operating environment. As such, there is a mass exodus of African Experts to virtually all parts of the world.

The effect of this can be noticed in the stagnation of our developmental efforts. Health is one of the most serious casualties consequent on the poverty, social exclusion, marginalization and lack of sustainable development in Africa. It is clear that Africa is not on target to achieve the health goals in the Millenium Declaration of the United Nations.

2. WHAT IS NEPAD?

- It is a holistic, comprehensive, integrated, and strategic framework that addresses key social, economic and political priorities in a coherent and balanced manner for the development of Africa.
- It is a plan that has been conceived and developed by African leaders.
- It is a commitment that African leaders are making to accelerate the integration of the African continent into the global economy.
- It is a call to the rest of the world to partner Africa in her own development on the basis of her own agenda and programme of action.

Background

- NEPAD is a merger of the Millenium Partnership for Africa's Recovery Programme (MAP) and Omega Plan, which was finalized on 3 July 2001.
- Out of the merger, the New Africa Initiative (NAI) was born with the approval of the OAU Heads of State and Government on 11 July 2001 leading to NEPAD.

Goals of NEPAD

- To promote accelerated growth and sustainable development.
- To eradicate widespread and severe poverty.
- To halt marginalization of Africa in the globalization process.

NEPAD: Why this initiative, why now and what is value added?

Africa has been the test bed for many fine initiatives in the past. We are however now at a significant juncture in history with the creation of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). A critical mass of African leadership that is genuinely committed to the regeneration of the continent has emerged. Africa's advances in recent years, the convergence of agreements on international development goals and a common agenda for Africa illustrate this.

NEPA provides three new key elements, namely,

- It is African developed, managed and owned;
- It brings the concept of new partnership (with mutual commitments, obligations, interest, contributions and benefits); and
- Africa is undertaking certain commitments and obligations in its own interest, which cannot afford to fail.

Role of African Expertise in Implementation of NEPAD

It is apparent that earlier continent wide or sub-regional initiatives and frameworks have not worked as well as may have been intended and the exclusion of necessary African Expertise contributed in no small measure to such past failures.

NEPAD on the other hand, provides a myriad of opportunities for African Expertise. It recognizes Africa's poor performance in mobilizing and utilizing the continent's rich resource base for meeting its development goals and aspirations. The Continent has over time been overly dependent upon external sources of support (financial, material and human) usually on terms and conditions that have weakened control over its own resources and national policies and programmes.

In for example the Health Sector, NEPAD has consistently positioned itself behind Africa, committing increased proportions of its budgets towards the UN Millennium target of 15%. It has also been consistent in calling for development partners to put a timetable to committing US\$22 billion per annum in new partnership funding that is required to set Africa on the path to achieving internationally agreed targets. Health systems and services require strengthening, programmes against disease and conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth scaled up, individuals and communities empowered to act to improve their health, mobilizing and effectively using sufficient sustainable resources and sharing available health services equitably within countries. Special attention is afforded HIV/AIDS, in view of the unprecedented challenge that this epidemic poses to Africa's economic and social development and to health services on the continent.

Outline of the Plan for the implementation of the NEPAD Initiative

a) Conditions For Sustainable Development:

As a reflection of its appreciation of the conditions for sustainable development, NEPAD has given rise to a number of sectoral initiatives, viz:

- i. Peace and security Initiative;
- ii. Democracy and Political Governance Initiative; and
- iii. The economic and Corporate Governance Initiative

All these are within sub-regional Approaches to Development

b) Sectoral Priorities

The following are amongst the identified sectoral priorities:

1. Bridging the Infrastructure Gap:
 - i. All Infrastructure sectors
 - ii. Bridging the digital Device: Investing in information and Communication Technologies
 - iii. Energy
 - iv. Transport
 - v. Water and Sanitation

2. Human Resource Development initiative
 - i. Poverty Reduction
 - ii. Bridging the Education Gap
 - iii. Reversing the Brain Drain
 - iv. Health
3. Science and technology platforms

c) NEPAD Implementation Process

The NEPAD Secretariat coordinates the preparation of a business plan for each priority area, with clear objectives, values to be added by the initiative, key partners, required actions (research, consultation, negotiation, ratification, implementation, etc) institutional agreements and resource mobilization strategies where appropriate.

A project leader or task team coordinator is appointed for each project to mobilize expertise from existing institutions, both in the continent and internationally. Experts will be drawn mainly from African countries based on the availability of relevant expertise.

Project leaders and tasks teams work closely with relevant African countries, regional economic structures, African development and finance institutions, relevant multilateral institutions and development partners.

A key criterion in the selection of NEPAD projects is Value Added, either through a new intervention or the strengthening or acceleration of existing processes or programmes.

3. Role of ECOWAS

NEPAD provides the focal point and the overall strategic framework for engagement as Africa's chosen agenda for development. Such engagement also includes aligning NEPAD with work being done within the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The Secretariats of the REC's participate fully in the NEPAD programme development through workshops and consultation.

The ECOWAS Secretariat is accordingly mandated to coordinate and monitor implementation of NEPAD programmes in West Africa. This role, in the area of infrastructure, is essentially one of Coordination, advocacy, and facilitation focused on:

- Mobilizing political will and actions to implement policy and institutional reforms
- Facilitating resource mobilization and investment flow through external partners
- Develop strategic framework to monitor and update programmes, and
- Facilitating knowledge sharing, networking, and dissemination of best practices.

The NEPAD infrastructure programme is composed of Energy, Water/Sanitation, Transport, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT). The plan of action for this programme has two components, viz:

- Short Term Action plan based on projects and programmes already identified by by REC's and member states, and
- Medium to Long term Action Plan for the articulation of strategies, prioritization of programmes and partnerships to best promote integration.

The list of ECOWAS projects under these programmes and plans are as follows:

1. Energy
 - a. West African Power Pool Project
 - b. West Africa Gas Pipeline, and
 - c. Rural electrification

2. Transport
 - a. Sea Port and Container rehabilitation and construction

4. Water/Sanitation:
 - a. Rural Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation
 - b. Development of Trans-boundary River Basins.

5. Agriculture
Transformation of agricultural produce into sustainable raw materials for industry and other agro products.

6. ICT:
 - a. Sub-regional information and communication infrastructure, and
 - b. Administrative Intranet for ECOWAS member states

So far the following 28 projects have been approved by the NEPAD Implementation Committee for West Africa. The African Development Bank is the Implementation Agency. Similarly, the Food and Agricultural Organisation is the Technical Partner for Flagship projects approved for implementation under NEPAD.

SHORT TERM ACTION PLAN ECOWAS PRIORITISATION

| EM | PROJECT | SECTOR | TYPE | STATUS | CATEGORY | PRIORITY |
|----|--|---------------|-------------------|--------|-------------|----------|
| | Project for Air Transport Liberalization for West and Central Africa | AIR TRANSPORT | FACILITATION | STAP | CONTINENTAL | HIGH |
| | Study on the Upper Space Control Centers | AIR TRANSPORT | STUDY | STAP | CONTINENTAL | LOW |
| | Capacity Building Project | ENERGY | CAPACITY BUILDING | STAP | CONTINENTAL | HIGH |
| | Facilitation Project | ENERGY | FACILITATION | STAP | CONTINENTAL | HIGH |
| | Master Plan for Sub-regional inter-Connections (East, West & Central) | ENERGY | Study | STAP | REC | HIGH |
| | West African Power Pool | ENERGY | FACILITATION | STAP | REC | HIGH |

| EM | PROJECT | SECTOR | TYPE | STATUS | CATEGORY | PRIORITY |
|----|--|----------------|-------------------|--------|--------------------|----------|
| | West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP) Project | ENERGY | INVESTMENT | STAP | PRIVATE INITIATIVE | HIGH |
| | ITC policy and Regulatory Framework at Regional Level | ITC | FACILITATION | STAP | REC | MEDIUM |
| | Regional African Satellite Communications Organisation(RASCO) Project | ITC | INVESTMENT | STAP | CONTINENTAL | LOW |
| | SAT-3WASC/SAFE-utilization to improve interconnectivity | ITC | INVESTMENT | STAP | PRIVATE INITIATIVE | LOW |
| | Continental Umbrella Initiative to Facilitate the Utilization and exploitation of ITCs in African Countries | ITC | FACILITATION | STAP | CONTINENTAL | LOW |
| | Development of Telecom Equipment Manufacturing in Africa | ITC | INVESTMENT | STAP | CONTINENTAL | LOW |
| | ITC Human Resources Capacity | ITC | CAPACITY | STAP | CONTINENTAL | MEDIUM |
| | Programme to Broaden and Enhance Africa's Participation in the Global IICT Policy and Design Making Fora | ITC | CAPACITY BUILDING | STAP | CONTINENTAL | MEDIUM |
| | Strengthening of Africa Telecommunication and ICT Institutions | ICT | CAPACITY BUILDING | STAP | CONTINENTAL | MEDIUM |
| | Maritime Pollution | MARITIME | FACILITATION | STAP | CONTINENTAL | LOW |
| | Maritime Security and Facilitation of Maritime Traffic | MARITIME | FACILITATION | STAP | CONTINENTAL | MEDIUM |
| | Rail Inter-Connection Feasibility study for ECOWAS Countries | RAIL TRANSPORT | STUDY | STAP | CONTINENTAL | MEDIUM |
| | Agades-Zinder 130 km upgrading | ROAD TRANSPORT | INVESTMENT | STAP | COUNTRY | MEDIUM |

| EM | PROJECT | SECTOR | TYPE | STATUS | CATEGORY | PRIORITY |
|----|---|----------------|-------------------|--------|----------|----------|
| | Boke-Quebo:206 km construction | ROAD TRANSPORT | INVESTMENT | STAP | COUNTRY | MEDIUM |
| | Kante (Togo)-Burkina Faso border:194 km rehabilitation | ROAD TRANSPORT | INVESTMENT | STAP | COUNTRY | MEDIUM |
| | Kati-KITA (Mali)-Saraya (Senegal):345 km upgrading | ROAD TRANSPORT | INVESTMENT | STAP | COUNTRY | MEDIUM |
| | Munfe-Ekok (Cameroon) Abakaliki (Enugu, Nigeria) 161 km upgrading in Cameroon and rehabilitation in Nigeria | ROAD TRANSPORT | INVESTMENT | STAP | COUNTRY | MEDIUM |
| | Road Transport Facilitation Action Plan | ROAD TRANSPORT | FACILITATION | STAP | REC | MEDIUM |
| | Zinder-Nigeria boarder: 110 km rehabilitation | ROAD TRANSPORT | INVESTMENT | STAP | COUNTRY | MEDIUM |
| | Action Plan for Integrated Water Res. Management in West Africa | WATER | STUDY | STAP | REC | MEDIUM |
| | Strengthening of the Niger River Basin Authority Inter-State Forecast Centre (CIP) & Support of other New & Existing River Basin Organisations | WATER | CAPACITY BUILDING | STAP | NON-REC. | |
| | | | | | | |

The above programmes also include various studies, capacity building activities and facilitation.

OTHER INTERVENTIONS

One of the major principles of the ECOWAS protocol on education and training is the optimal utilization of available expertise, institutions and other educational and training resources in the Region for the purpose of ensuring sustainable cooperation and development among the Member States.

Opportunities available in this context are eminent in the establishment of bilateral and multilateral relations, with a view to providing teaching services, conducting research and acting in an advisory capacity in any academic discipline as the occasion demands.

Collaboration with experts in the region and in the Diaspora to produce teaching and learning materials such as text books and computer software, in order to create economies of scale and contribute to the harmonization of academic and training programmes in the region. The experts through investments could encourage and support the establishment of sub-regional associations of professionals, thereby providing a forum for the exchange of views, ideas and experiences on the different disciplines, and allowing the formulation of high quality programmes corresponding to the development needs of the Community.

ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The role of Non Governmental Organizations, Civil Society organizations, and professional bodies as indispensable catalysts in moving NEPAD forward is a sine qua non. The complementary services they offer in developing programmes and reaching out to the grassroots, and places where government presence are not felt makes development holistic. As a result of the ingenuity of Experts, the numbers of Civil Society organizations are rising by the day and are performing essential functions that are compatible with developments. International organizations and development partners, recognise them as partners in progress and tailor some of their resources in funding their projects and activities

ROLE OF ENGINEERS IN NEPAD IMPLEMENTATION

The prevailing situation on the continent is that physical infrastructure has failed to meet the needs for our socio-economic development. Given the stringent scarcity of capital resources, investment must be prioritized to ensure a balance between physical infrastructure, appropriate technology and adequate human resources.

In particular, the investment priorities must at least initially, be concentrated on those projects that are likely to eliminate critical bottlenecks and binding constraints, unlock productive capacity and ensure competitiveness of the national economy.

NEPAD recognizes the high potential contribution of Africans in the Diaspora to the development of our continent. An outreach programme is being initiated with the aim of enlisting the support of experts in the Diaspora for the effective mobilization of resources (financial, material, and human). Also, a concerted effort is being made for adequate incentives for regular and substantial resource transfer by Africans in the Diaspora, as a means of boosting the volume of private investment in Africa to anchor resident expertise and reverse the brain - drain. Furthermore, such experts can and should be encouraged to play a significant role in terms of advocacy for their countries and the continent at large.

The new Initiative for African Development also recognizes the important role of African professional and expert groups and organizations. They provide expertise and at the same time require support and encouragement to keep and sustain their activities, in order to be better placed to provide African Expertise to be utilized for the development of the Continent.

CONCLUSION

I wish to devote sometime to identifying the role of Engineers in this region and the Diaspora in NEPAD Implementation. This areas that require your expertise can be categorized as:-

- Implementation of short, medium and long term development of the region and the need for a new type of partnership with local experts. ECOWAS is pioneering a new approach to the involvement of local experts in NEPAD as in World Development.
- Capacity Building in the region can only be sustained when the experts are given the opportunity to participate in the execution of medium and large-scale projects.

I am suggesting that the partnership between FIDIC and ECOWAS should include the establishing of a volunteers-based programmed for meeting the short-term development needs of the region.

This tentative programme will assist in the design, development and implementation of projects utilizing West African Expertise of high achievers and young professionals. Other professionals such as Business Entrepreneurs, Scientists, Technicians and Environmentalists can work with ECOWAS and your team on project implementation.

I challenge the members of your association that professional challenge is more important than any financial remuneration. The prime test of your association members should lie in the ability to deliver results. Other desirable characteristics should include being creative, pleasant and innovative as well as exhibiting high calibre and practical of whom this region can be proud.

I thank you.