

GLOBAL NETWORK FOR JUSTICE

A Project of New Orleans Bread for the World at the Twomey Center for Peace Through Justice
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PROGRESSIVE ECONOMIC AGENDA

ADVOCACY NETWORK FOR AFRICA (ADNA), a network of more than 200 U.S.- based organizations, issued a call for the U.S. government to respond to the NEW PARTNERSHIP for AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD) agenda in a progressive manner. If, ADNA argues, the U.S. government is to take Africa's latest development initiative seriously, it must move beyond a neo-liberal agenda featured in the NEPAD document. The NEPAD is an economic plan for Africa initiated in late 2001 by the presidents of South Africa, Senegal and Nigeria. Modeled on the U.S. Marshall Plan for Europe after World War II, the plan recognizes that Africa remains heavily crippled by an unsustainable debt burden, that the "playing field" between Africa and the developed world is uneven and that economic integration and globalization have marginalized many African countries. NEPAD is premised on African states making commitments to good governance, democracy, human rights, and conflict prevention and resolution as a means of bringing an end to Africa's isolation. The United Nations, the U.S. government and other G-7 countries look to NEPAD with interest since it envisions partnerships rather than subservient relations with industrial nations. It also seeks to create a strategic common vision among African countries, with a commitment toward eradicating poverty and supporting sustainable development based on improved access to capital, technology and human skills and resources. At the G-8 Summit in June 2002, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien remarked" (NEPAD)... acknowledges that peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sound economic management are preconditions for ending the economic marginalization of the continent." Some of NEPAD's strongest criticisms came from African civil society which was completely left out of the debate when NEPAD was formulated. Critics say that it resembles

the IMF and World Bank structural adjustment strategies which they argue have yielded little growth, few jobs and wider gap between the rich and poor. NEPAD's economic schema promotes trade liberalization and invites foreign capital investment through greater privatization while it promises that African leaders will provide relatively peaceful environment . ADNA finds these economic assumptions disturbing. ADNA's critique, however, focuses on



how the U. S. government should respond to the plan. In "Taking the New Partnership of Africa's Development Seriously", released in late November 2002, ADNA members maintain that successful U. S. development efforts in Africa would:

Focus primarily on a people-centered common security interest in its security relationship to African countries based on sovereignty;

Show support for greater freedom and democracy in African countries and strengthen African civil society;

Condemn human rights abuses wherever they occur and aid victims of such abuse;

Respect the rights of African governments to define their economic policies and priorities, without insistence upon rigid free market provisions;

Increase assistance for basic and vocational education;

Increase annual U.S. contributions for global AIDS efforts; including the Global Fund, to a minimum of \$2.5 billion;

Give high priority to development assistance programs that empower women, including women-led initiatives.

Article taken from Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, NewsNotes, Jan/Feb 2003.

For more information visit: www.africaaction.org/adna;

access to NEPAD critiques visit the website of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, a coalition including the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa, www.web.net/~iccaf/debtsap/nepad.htm

Food for thought: Fighting Hunger on a Global Scale

Opinion by Bronwyn Lance Chester, editorial writer for The Virginian-Pilot

When you think of Bob Dole and George McGovern, you think of good men and failed presidential hopefuls. But in one of politics' little ironies, these two presidential candidates have probably helped more America children than any president ever did. And now their ideas are being exported abroad in our fight against terrorism.

The two prairie state politicians have worked together for more than 40 years to continue anti-hunger and agricultural programs, including the establishment of the free and reduced-cost school lunch program in the early 1970s. According to the Department of Agriculture, 27 million American children now benefit from that program daily. So do hundreds of farmers, whose surplus crops are used.

Now Dole's and McGovern's ideas are at the forefront again, this time in a global effort named in their honor. Tucked away amid the odious Farm Bill's hundreds of pages of pork-barrel spending is the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, which provides \$100 million to take American farmers' surplus commodities and feed school children in the poorest countries.

The idea is a simple one. Parents who know that their children will be fed at school are more likely to send them. Hungry children receiving lunch are more likely to stay in school. And the more education a child receives, the greater the chances he/she will eventually pull himself/herself out of poverty and despair - the breeding grounds for terrorism - and into self-reliance.

During the last years' pilot program, nearly 10 million children were fed at least one nutritious meal a day in the schools of 38 developing nations. These included Pakistan, Yemen, and other hotbeds of anti-American sentiment.

While 10 million children are only a small portion of the estimated 300 million kids who go to bed hungry nightly, it's a start. And American truck drivers, dock workers, rail workers, and merchant seamen benefit as well.

For the cost of a Big Mac, fries and a Coke, we can feed 2 classrooms of children in Tajkistan, Yemen, Lebanon or Pakistan, and teach them from a young age that America is not the Great Satan.

America should have a values-based, ideology-driven foreign policy. And the McGovern-Dole international school lunch program fits nicely into that niche. Education, economic development, and, ultimately, self-sufficiency are quintessential American values. So is benevolence.

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