

27 March 2002

AI Index AFR 01/004/2002 - News Service Nr. 56

## **Africa: Human Rights must be at the heart of the New Partnership for Africa's Development**

*"Human rights must be central to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)," Amnesty International said today as African leaders gathered in Abuja, Nigeria to fine tune their initiative to develop the continent.*

*Amnesty International welcomes that the NEPAD texts specify that "the expansion of democratic frontiers and the deepening of the culture of human rights" are to be a foundational element of the NEPAD. The organization joins African political leaders in their hope that a "democratic Africa will become one of the pillars of world democracy, human rights and tolerance".*

*However a commitment to a "culture of human rights" must not stand alone. Governments must acknowledge the interdependence of all human rights; economic and social, civil and political, and ensure there are detailed provisions on how human rights progress will be monitored.*

*While African leaders have committed themselves to take joint responsibility in "promoting and protecting democracy and human rights in their respective countries and regions, by developing clear standards of accountability, transparency and participatory governance at the national and subnational levels", they have so far failed to specify exactly how governments will be held accountable to guarantee the enjoyment of international human rights standards for their citizens. An "appropriate peer review mechanism and a code of conduct" was only alluded to in the final communiqué of last year's Abuja meeting in October 2001.*

Recognising the commitment contained in the NEPAD to promote peace, security and conflict resolution and to combat the proliferation of small arms, light weapons and landmines, the organization also emphasizes that African leaders have special responsibility to actively contribute to the solution of African conflicts. Ensuring the protection of human rights must always be the primary concern of peace-keeping and peace-building initiatives.

"The Abuja summit on the NEPAD has to come out with tangible results on how to operationalise accountability of governments in Africa to guarantee full enjoyment of human rights for the citizens of this continent," Amnesty International stressed.

### **Background**

The NEPAD was drafted by the governments of Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa and is based on a "firm and shared conviction, that [African leaders] have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development". The NEPAD highlights peace, security and political and economic good governance as "conditions for sustainable development". The NEPAD document will be promoted to western governments at the G8 summit in Canada in June, where it is expected to become the cornerstone of western support for development in Africa.

\ENDS

public document

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW web : <http://www.amnesty.org>