



african monitor
African voices for Africa's development

2 May – 3 May 2006

Opening Address of the African Monitor Workshop by

The Most Reverend Njongonkulu Ndungane,

The Archbishop of Cape Town.

‘Let African Voices speak out for effective action on Africa’s development.’

Introduction

Madam Deputy President of the Republic, Honourable Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka
Leaders of Civil Society from all corners of the globe
Members of the Media and diplomatic corps
Religious leaders present here today
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Welcome to the consolidation of African voices for Africa’s development. This workshop is historic in many ways as it precedes the launch tomorrow of the African Monitor – An initiative that will keep track of development initiatives throughout our continent. This launch is a culmination of at least ten months of consultation with all possible interest groups both within and without our continent of Africa. We have taken this time to ensure that we bring on board the broad spectrum of civil society that will be critical for the success of this intervention – equally important was to ensure that government bodies all over the world are in support of what could potentially be a platform for self-criticism, capacity building and a spring board for the review of how we approach our work on development in the continent.

The following categories of people were consulted to gather views and support for this important initiative:

Civil Society organizations
Religious bodies from around the world
The African Union, NEPAD
The United Nation
Various individual governments in the continent

The diplomatic community
The academia

Also briefed in detail are some government departments and various foreign affairs ministries including the ministry of foreign affairs in South Africa the head quarters of the Monitor.

I am happy to report without any fear of contradiction that all of these stakeholders expressed unwavering support for the establishment of this body and the important work that it must carry out. In order to consolidate this broad based support we will be launching the African Monitor in several phases. Tomorrow at Bishopscourt in Cape Town will be the first of several launches to take place in Kigali in June , In Accra later this year and then in London where will be meeting with the Diaspora. All this is to culminate in a major launch in Addis Ababa the headquarters of the African Union at the beginning of next year. This will ensure that from all parts of the continent and the Diaspora there is a sense of ownership of this initiative.

Let me upfront express our deepest gratitude to the South African government represented here today at the highest level by the Deputy President of the Republic for your support of this initiative. Madam deputy president we have noted your passion for the poor and oppressed expressed in more than just political talk but in the actual work that your office has sought to pursue since you assumed the reigns of the deputy presidency less than a year ago. The Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA) is a critical intervention in our economy and will go a long way in ensuring that government's attention and the attention of all sectors focus on the eradication of poverty and the redistribution of opportunities. The African Monitor could not have been launched at a better time than now when initiatives such as the ones you are leading are beginning to take root in our country and continent. Your presence here today is further testimony of your willingness to engage with Civil Society in order to achieve a common goal of uplifting our people.

The Challenges facing the African Monitor

If we were to isolate it to a few key challenges what is the work of ahead of the African Monitor?

- African Monitor will raise its voice to ask the powerful and influential if their promises of development are being kept , if such promises are making any difference at grassroots level and if the African marginalised masses are experiencing any real development. Answers to these questions will form our programme and agenda. If these promises made by the donor community are not kept, every day that a dollar, a rand, a pound is spent in a manner that does not advance development – more people suffer in squalor and many more will suffer in generations to come.
- We will galvanise African Voices to speak for Africa's development . Hopefully the chorus from these voices will strengthen the culture of accountability

endorsed by initiatives such as the peer review mechanism amongst others. These voices should complement the winds of change blowing across our continent – expressing a desire for the kind of governance culture that can support a selfless approach to the utilisation of resources meant for the poor. These voices should also be able to examine what conditions are placed on what often comes as gifts from the North. If these conditions will militate against development – The African Monitor will speak out and present alternatives.

- The African Monitor cannot afford to be just another lobby group on the side lines – risking to be ignored by key players in development . Through its House of Wisdom, the Togona, prominent independent eminent persons from Africa and elsewhere will use their stature in society to speak on behalf of many hushed voices. Figures that will harness both local and Diaspora communities to enable change through advocacy locally and internationally. The advocacy will be supported by monitoring – quantitative and qualitative – that would be working as a catalyst with existing research and networks, where possible.
- African Monitor will further underline the link between macro input and micro output, raise expectations and awareness, improving accountability, motivate and empower grassroots communities to engage in policies and programmes that affect them directly . It will focus on particular areas at a local level in order to bring tangible improvements in programme delivery, with the intervention of the Togona being an effective tool for improving provision on the ground, and developing the ability of local communities to engage with their governments and with donors to achieve more effective programme delivery.
- It aims to strengthen the bridge between Africa and donor communities . What will set this apart is not only deliberate and focused advocacy but action on the ground that will ensure that communities are alive to development programmes that are funded in their names while often times, not producing the desired effects.

Maintaining the momentum.

This was underpinned by Africa's own efforts through the commitments of the Organisation of African Union (subsequently the African Union) to sustainable development through the Nepad initiative and Peer Review Mechanism, as well as the Millennium Development Goals, as determined by the Johannesburg World Summit.

It was realised it would be vital to maintain that momentum to ensure promises on all sides would be implemented swiftly and effectively, in ways that make a real difference to real people.

We saw that Africa's grassroots voices, currently marginalised and fragmented, could be harnessed to pursue these ends, and that faith communities, the most extensive civil society bodies on the continent, could provide the backbone of networks to bring these voices into the public arena

End-user accounts of experiences of programme delivery would help hold both donors and recipient governments to their word, and enable them to achieve their objectives on

the ground. We are aware that this would be a means of better engaging the priorities and perspectives that are the targets of these policies in their formulation and delivery, which would also enhance their effectiveness and sustainability,

The extensive consultations within Africa and beyond, among faith communities and wider civil society, NGOs, governments and international agencies, think tanks, academia, and the private sector showed overwhelming support in principle, with the recognition that there was no existing pan-African network that can provide such a catalyst across the sub-Saharan region, and taking a perspective across aid, trade, development and financial flows.

African Monitor aims to be a ‘constructive friend’ to all stakeholders, and in particular to help those who have made promises, to be able to deliver them well.

Later on in this workshop we will receive a presentation from McKenzie’s who have generously offered pro bono – to assist us in developing these ideas into tangible machinery that can execute effective monitoring for development.

This workshop is meant to take us a step further in beginning to shape actual programmes of intervention as well as consolidate the network necessary for the success of this initiative. The motto of the African Monitor can not be more incisive a call to action. No one else can speak out for our own development than Africa’s own.

At this point I would like to invite the Deputy President of the Republic to officially open this workshop for our work to begin.

Thank you.