

Adama Deen
Head of Infrastructure
New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
Planning and Coordinating Agency
Midrand
South Africa

Dear Mr. Deen,

Following the successful hosting of the event "Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA): High Ambitions, High Risks" on 25-26 August 2014 in Johannesburg convened by the Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF), the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and the Centre for Governance Innovation (GovInn) at the University of Pretoria, we as civil society actors would like to express our wish to forge a collaborative relationship with the NEPAD Agency on matters of infrastructure development on the continent.

Given the central role the NEPAD Agency is playing in the PIDA governance structure, including its role in engaging civil society, it was unfortunate that the NEPAD Agency was unable to attend the event.

We would like to see that PIDA evolves in a more transparent and participatory way. At present, the Virtual PIDA Information Centre (VPic) website does not provide up-to-date and in-depth information about PIDA and PIDA projects. We believe that enhancing the content and presentation of the VPic website would lead to greater interest and perceived relevance of the programme overall.

An open and transparent engagement between civil society and PIDA decision-makers will be important to demonstrate respect for democratic decision making. In addition, as OECD's Principles for Public Governance of Public-Private-Partnerships observe, project feasibility and viability depend on a solid foundation of consultation with citizens. The same principles apply to public works.

We would like to increase our engagement with your agency and thus propose working with you to support regional information exchanges and consultation processes with civil society. For us, one goal of discussions with NEPAD and other relevant agencies is to promote the goal of

structural transformation in PIDA projects. This was a topic of discussion with UNECA and African Development Bank officials who attended our event. We would be pleased if you would agree to meeting with us to further discuss how best to take forward mutually beneficial engagement.

We hope to hear from you soon and identify ways to foster constructive and practical engagement between civil society and the PIDA initiative. One of our members of staff from HBS will in any case be in touch to follow up on this note.

Kind regards,

Layla Al-Zubaidi
Heinrich Böll Foundation

Elizabeth Sidiropoulos
South African Institute of International Affairs

Mzukisi Qobo (in personal capacity)
Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation

Michelle Pressend
Alternative Information and Development Centre

Aldo Caliarì
Centre of Concern

Farai Maguwu
Centre for Natural Resource Governance

Liezemarie Johannes
Corruption Watch

Maria Jose Romero
European Network on Debt and Development

Sanusha Naidu
Fahamu Emerging Powers Project

Ikal Angelei
Friends of Lake Turkana

Rudo Sanyanga
International Rivers

Kwasi Adu-Amankwah
Int. Trade Union Confederation – Africa

Steph Booker
Natural Justice

Marianne Buenaventura
Oxfam South Africa

Stefano Prato
Society for International Development

Claude Kabemba
Southern Africa Research Watch

Samantha Hargreaves
Women and Mining

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia

Dear Said and Robert,

As co-hosts, the Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF), the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and the Centre for Governance Innovation (GovInn) at the University of Pretoria, we were very pleased with your substantive input and collaborative approach to the event "Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA): High Ambitions, High Risks" on 25-26 August 2014 in Johannesburg.

In our view, UNECA has a critical role to play in insisting that PIDA promotes structural transformation on the continent. We are glad to know that this vision has important proponents in persons such as yourselves.

Our concern lies in the fact that PIDA's approach to infrastructure mega-projects may soak up vast amounts of financial resources, only to exacerbate the colonial patterns of extraction without realising the vision for commodity-based industrialisation. For instance, the Central Corridor Project in Tanzania (which has been selected as a pilot project for a replicable acceleration process) may focus on extracting nickel and copper - and possibly oil and gas - without many associated linkages for secondary or tertiary processing.

We hope that in examining the 51 PIDA priority projects (and the 16 flagship regional projects) UNECA will help ensure that each of these costly, high-profile projects offers transformational potential for African economies and citizens.

In addition, we hope that you will consider working with the NEPAD Agency, in particular, to ensure that PIDA evolves in a transparent and participatory way. To date, there is little information about PIDA in the public domain. Hence many civil society organisations, think tanks and unions are unaware of PIDA. The Virtual PIDA Information Centre (VPic) website does not provide the kind of up-to-date and in-depth information one would wish for. We are not aware of any regional information exchange or consultation processes with civil society.

An open and transparent engagement between civil society and PIDA decision-makers will be important to demonstrate respect for democratic decision making. In addition, as OECD's Principles for Public Governance of Public-Private-Partnerships observe, project feasibility and viability depend on a solid foundation of consultation with citizens. The same principles apply to public works.

With regard to these requests, we hope we can stay in close touch with you and UNECA. We value our relationship and the role that UNECA plays in realising a brighter continental future.

Warm regards,

Nancy Alexander
Heinrich Böll Foundation

Elizabeth Sidiropoulos
South African Institute of International Affairs

Mzukisi Qobo (in personal capacity)
Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation

Michelle Pressend
Alternative Information and Development Centre

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