

- The economic program – Concerns include reliance on foreign direct investment, no apparent support for the rural and informal sector and lack of attention to the productive capacity of investment.
- The lack of anything “new” in the partnership. There must be changes in global governance and the existing relations of power.

Debate on these issues is needed and must continue.

Madonna Larbi of MATCH International spoke of the consultations MATCH has facilitated among African women on the gender implications of NEPAD. Concerns about NEPAD included the lack of broad participation in developing the plan and that some of the positive aspects of Le Plan Omega were lost – for instance, sub-regional integration, and most importantly that critical issues of gender were addressed only sporadically. Two important recommendations emerged:

- The need to pay due recognition to “gender characteristics” that are relevant to Africa’s economic, social and political development, as well as the marginalization of women in these areas.
- Women’s issues and perspectives are not an after thought – NEPAD should seek to promote the empowerment of women consistent with the global development consensus for women’s inclusion.

Other concerns related to the need for:

- Access to AIDS treatment.
- National transportation infrastructure.
- Focus on the role of women in agriculture and their role in sustaining the environment.
- Ensuring women’s access to land and other resources.

Wisdom Tettey of the University of Calgary spoke of the relationship between the stated intentions of NEPAD for greater accountability and civil engagement and media freedom. Media is the key to promoting accountability in society. Yet two of the leaders of NEPAD demonstrate a reticence to free media. Before NEPAD transforms into a full-blown process it needs to address contradictions at home. Tettey also spoke of the need for a new telecommunications infrastructure – in doing so one must consider that many women are without access and that there is a rural/urban divide. There must also be considerable attention to ensuring that people are provided with the necessary literacy skills to enable them to use the Internet.

Plenary III focussed on “Global Partnership for an African Century.”

Dr. Marina Ottaway of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace argued in her presentation that in theory NEPAD sounds good, but in practice there is a problem of moving from the donor-recipient relationship to a partnership among equals. Donors want to micro-manage the countries to which they donate. We should not believe that the G8 Action Plan will change the current relationship. Ottaway also noted that NEPAD should be regarded as a vision rather than a policy – too much time can be spent on refining the vision rather than implementing concrete change. Ottaway