

#### IV. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The G8 and African Renewal Symposium was organized with the following aims in mind:

- Educate Albertans and Western Canadians on the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the African renewal initiatives emanating from the African continent.
- Provide an opportunity to discuss the implications of NEPAD for Canada.
- Enable Albertans and Western Canadians to contribute to a Canada-Africa policy community and the revitalization of Canadian foreign policy on Africa.

Her Excellency, Dr. N. Dlamini Zuma, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, provided the keynote address on the evening of March 22. She presented NEPAD as Africans taking initiative to change the lot of the continent and taking their destiny into their own hands. NEPAD addresses issues such as governance, education, health, agriculture, energy, water, market access, infrastructure development, information and communication technology, debt, overseas development assistance, and gender equality. Dr. Zuma called Canadians to take leadership in the battle to pull Africa out of the morass of "underdevelopment and backwardness."

A series of plenary discussions took place throughout Saturday, March 23. The first of these was entitled, "NEPAD: Overview, Prospects and Challenges."

Dr. Malinda Smith of Athabasca University provided background to the formation of NEPAD. NEPAD began as two separate plans: the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Program and Le Plan Omega. They were merged into the New Africa Initiative, which subsequently became NEPAD, launched on October 23, 2001 by African heads of state at the OAU/African Union meeting. Five African countries – South Africa, Senegal, Nigeria, Algeria and Egypt, lead NEPAD. NEPAD has gained international support from the international financial institutions and leaders of the G8, which adopted the "Genoa Plan for Africa."

NEPAD has its critics. They say the plan was developed by an African political elite and is supported by the Western political elite. The plan is capitalism-friendly and does not oppose structural adjustment. Some call NEPAD a "neoliberal recolonization" of the African political economy and a betrayal of the hopes and dreams of the African people by their leaders. Some say it inadequately addresses the needs of women and girls.

Smith indicated that despite criticism, NEPAD is a dynamic instrument facing the challenges of poverty reduction, environmental issues, peace and security and democratization.

His Excellency Philémon Yang, High Commissioner to Canada from Cameroon, discussed a number of challenges and opportunities presented by NEPAD. He argued that these opportunities and challenges needed to be tackled if the continent