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Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I hope you will allow me first to express my gratitude to the Policy Research Initiative. It is an honour and a pleasure to join you here today—not least because I am convinced that Africa's future, and Canada's, have never been more closely bound together.

Nor could the subject of Africa be more timely for Canadians. As everyone in this room knows well, Prime Minister Chrétien has this year committed Canada to a far-reaching collaboration in African development. In the Chair at Kananaskis, the Prime Minister successfully negotiated the G8 “Africa Action Plan,” an extraordinary pledge of development support from the world's richest aid-donor governments. And as head of the Canadian government, he announced an imposing set of Canadian policy initiatives that will engage many and diverse Canadian government entities—from CIDA, IDRC and DFAIT to Health, Agriculture, Industry, National Defence, and Finance.

This is an immense undertaking that the Prime Minister advanced in response to the African NEPAD proposal. It touches not only aid and trade, but even more fundamentally it relates to the ways in which Africans plan to govern themselves—and decide their futures.

So, to address the thematic question before this conference: What are the risks in this great endeavour? And what are the opportunities for success?

Let me talk first about what I believe are key elements of NEPAD—the New Partnership for Africa's Development adopted by African leaders last year, and endorsed by the G8 in June. Then I will volunteer a couple of observations on two of your conference sub-themes: governance, and the transformative potential of science and technology.

The first thing to be noticed in NEPAD is that it constitutes a bold and unprecedented declaration of African responsibility for Africa's future. This affirmation of African leadership marks a dramatic and important departure from the old rhetoric of justifications, and the old platitudes of blame. Africans are increasingly assuming responsibility for their own destiny, acknowledging at last that no one else will construct their future for them.

I want to be clear: Africans have suffered a real history of imperialism, slavery, colonialism, and corrupting Cold War exploitation. They have even suffered the effects of liberal condescension-

that assumption among rich foreigners of superior knowledge and self-righteous intention. In earlier years this was referred to as the “White Man’s Burden.” But Africans have also suffered the harms of irresponsibility in their own governance, among their own leaders. To some significant degree, misgovernment in Africa has rested on the politics of blaming others.

NEPAD alters that dynamic. It asserts the obligation of Africans to determine the course of their own development. It explicitly acknowledges the record of “poor leadership, corruption and bad governance in many countries.” And it specifies practical and necessary measures of reform. This declaration of African leadership and responsibility represents radical progress.

Two other elements of NEPAD deserve attention, especially in partner countries like Canada. One is the provision in NEPAD for peer review of African governments and leaders by other leaders—in effect, an acceptance that the domestic governance performance of one African government can properly be evaluated, and criticized, by other African governments. Peer review signals a major normative change on a continent where non-intervention and the rights of sovereignty have been zealously defended values. And it means that African governments will now hold themselves responsible to observe and enforce rigorous standards of democratic governance.

The third element of NEPAD that I would stress here is the emphasis it places not on aid but on mobilizing Africa's own resources. This emphasis reinforces NEPAD’s rhetoric of autonomy. It is true that NEPAD advocates bigger flows of aid; indeed the document itself is a testimony to the need for genuine partnership with donor countries, starting with the G8. But NEPAD also emphasizes debt reduction, the promotion of private investment (both African and foreign), and the promise of liberalized trade in African exports. Most important, it looks to African resources as a major source of development capital.

This element of NEPAD is critical because it goes to a fact of African economic life too often neglected—the reality that Africa is a huge and diverse continent of immense wealth as well as serious poverty. To put it squarely, more than half of the African economy is unrecorded and therefore, literally, immeasurable. That is to say, practically all the economic statistics we have about sub-Saharan Africa are partial at best and generally unreliable. The truth is that the largest and most vibrant components of African economic activity operate in the informal economy of barter and unrecorded transactions. As for capital, the World Bank estimates that nearly 40 per cent of African capital is held by Africans offshore—contributing to the development of the North, not the South. Repatriating just a fraction of that African-owned capital would far surpass all the current aid flows into Africa.

I hardly need to spell out the risks implicit in what I have said. There is first of all the risk of a failure in political will. A small group of prominent African leaders presumed to speak for a continent of 53 countries. Can they now bring their colleagues along? Then too, it may come to

pass that African leaders are not able to deliver on their promises—that they find themselves incapable of carrying out their own NEPAD commitments.

By and large I am an optimist on this point. For African autocrats, the comfortable days are over. African populations are demanding real elections, freer public debate, and government that is more accountable and more lawful. But the durability of political will is still an open question—partly because NEPAD itself was adopted with almost no prior popular or parliamentary participation in African countries.

My own sense is that one of the principal risks threatening NEPAD relates to inadequate capacity to quickly and efficiently implement an effective development program. Here is an opportunity for lasting contributions from Canadians and others: helping to expand indigenous capacity within African governments and supporting private-sector operations. The weaknesses of many governments and their regional institutions are manifold: weaknesses in public administration; in legal and regulatory regimes; in the delivery of basic health care and education; and in the procedural rudiments of accessible governance. Yet no matter how elegant the plan, unless programs are firmly rooted in African reality, they are likely to be subverted and will produce little in the way of lasting results. The challenge is to empower Africans to adapt the expertise of the North to fit their own reality.

The Policy Research Initiative has rightly identified governance as a sub-theme for this conference—alongside geopolitical security and the transformation available in science and technology. In my own organization, IDRC, we treat these three sets of issues as deeply interconnected.

The statutory mission of IDRC is to help generate and disseminate new knowledge for development. Good governance, to succeed, needs to be informed: hence the importance of timely, relevant research. But good governance—and useful development research—can only occur as a process of participatory collaboration.

One powerful example: Allocating health-care resources is a challenge for any country, rich or poor. In Tanzania, IDRC supports a project that is actually improving health care with applied research. The project searches out the real needs of poor, rural communities by surveying people in their homes to determine the most common causes of death and disease, and then modifying health delivery systems to target those priorities. It's a methodology that brings planners, practitioners and householders together as collaborators. And it is already informing health policy and delivery systems that are more effective, and more efficient. In one rural district, the introduction of anti-malarial bednets cut infant mortality rates by 28 per cent between 1999 and 2000—from 100 deaths per 1,000 live births to 72. Results have been impressive enough that The Economist devoted an approving editorial to the project, along with a special report, in its

August 17 issue. It's an instructive demonstration of closing the loop between knowledge and policy.

This same project in East Africa demonstrates another particular of modern governance: designing and executing policy occurs in the dynamics of networks and partnerships. In the Tanzanian health project IDRC works first with the Tanzanian government but also with CIDA, WHO, the UN Foundation, and an array of other Tanzanian partners. Networking with partners is the defining feature of governance in the present age of globalization. And it is the only way to conduct governance with the shared information that makes participation meaningful and fair. This is another opportunity for Canadians and others working with Africans: Focus on strengthening the culture and capacity of networking to make it more equitable, comprehensive and effective.

I will conclude where I began—by thanking the Policy Research Initiative. As a long-time student of Africa (and as a current resident in Nairobi), the prominence given to Africa in these proceedings is especially gratifying to me. This is a uniquely promising moment for Canadians to contribute to Africa's future—and so to promote Canada's own security, its prosperity, and its democratic values.

Thank you.