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NEPAD and Transnational Governance Strategies in Africa: an analysis of the implications of responses to the Zimbabwean crisis for continental governance

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Abstract

This research explores the various strategies being proposed to address the perceived governance crisis on the African continent. It identifies the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the most recent African transnational initiative with a stated continental governance strategy. It is argued that in many respects NEPAD represents the best possible alternative for African rejuvenation, providing a valuable blueprint for continental reform and development conceived and developed within the continent itself. The potential of NEPAD to meet this objective is evaluated through an analysis of its response to the Zimbabwean crisis of governance. The research suggests that firstly, NEPAD has failed to meet the expectations of those African who were hoping that NEPAD would represent something radically different to earlier transnational initiatives. Secondly, NEPAD has failed to respond to the demands of democratic activists in Zimbabwe. The dissertation argues that these findings stem from the lack of political will among African leaders to fully implement NEPAD; their reluctance to fundamentally alter their understanding of sovereignty away from individual towards increased collective responsibility and finally the failure of NEPAD itself to make provision for the active involvement of civil society in all areas of the governance process.