

NEPAD escalates economic growth in Africa

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New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee says Africa has achieved breakthroughs in various sectors, which will in a long term benefit the economy of the continent.



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This was said by various leaders in the Opening Session of the 33rd Session of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee on Saturday at the Sandton Convention Centre, in Johannesburg.

The programme for the day forms part of the 25th Ordinary African Union (AU) Summit that will end on Monday.

Welcoming the delegation to the Opening Session, South African President Jacob Zuma commended NEPAD for keeping the dreams and potential of Africa alive. He said Africa is now reaping the benefits of macro-economic management and deepening integration into world economy.

"We continue to celebrate the fact that a number of the fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa. More people are liberated from the shackles of poverty and more children are recipients of the right to education," said the President.

President Zuma said institutions and democracy in African countries are much stronger today, but persisting challenges that cripples the process of economic growth in Africa should not be ignored.

He said poverty remains a key challenge and the widespread unemployment, especially among youth contributes to persistent inequality.

He said there is a huge difference in what Africa was decades ago to what it is now, and leaders are confident in taking the challenges head on.

"We have the commitment to address challenges on our terms. To succeed we must harness all our potential and no

country will achieve prosperity on its own. We have one future... that is why we are investing so much time and money in the infrastructure programme and regional integration because we want to achieve sustainable growth and development," said President Zuma.

He said capacity and talents of women in the continent should also be harnessed.

NEPAD recognises the promotion of gender equality as one of the most effective ways to drive inclusive growth and reduce poverty.

Zimbabwean President and AU Chairperson Robert Mugabe said NEPAD has done an excellent job so far and requested that the organisation continue to do more for Africa.

He said NEPAD, as an economic agency of the AU, has made breakthroughs in various spheres such as project conceptualisation, coordination and implementation, which is exemplified by infrastructure development in Africa.

Despite the achievements, Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe reiterated President Zuma's sentiments about persisting challenges. He said hunger and diseases are some of the challenges that continue to hit Africa hard while vast national resources are being exploited and exported in their raw form.

He said African national resources and commodities are benefiting other continents while African citizens remain impoverished.

President Mugabe called on NEPAD to fast track African economic development. He also called on regional economic communities and other institutions to join in fast tracking the process.

"I urge NEPAD and similar African institutions to include industrialisation among priorities... With unwavering courage and commitment, Africa can also industrialise in the same manor that other nations have achieved industrialisation," he said.

He implored all African leaders to ensure that they implement programmes of the first Ten Year Implementation plan of the Africa Agenda 2063.

Adding on that, the newly elected Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has committed to ensure that Nigeria contributes to the achievements of NEPAD goals.

President Buhari said Nigeria is ready to implement NEPAD Programmes.

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