

YGLs identify Courage and Partnerships Required to Sustain Africa's Growth

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Cape Town - Africa's unprecedented economic growth must be sustained and must directly benefit all sectors of society, political, business and civil society leaders concluded in the closing plenary session of the World Economic Forum on Africa in Cape Town.

With an economic growth rate of 4.5% across Africa in 2005, Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa, challenged participants to ensure that such figures are more than just statistics. "Does the growth create jobs?" Mbeki asked.

Tanzanian President Jakaya M. Kikwete said agricultural development is critical in delivering growth-led employment and called on private business to engage with governments in developing and "modernizing" the sector. "We look at partnerships as the key to generate further growth," said Kikwete.

Co-Chair Maria Ramos, Group Chief Executive, Transnet, South Africa, said mindsets still need to change among all role players in order to achieve sustained growth. She called on the private sector to show "courage" when taking advantage of opportunities in Africa and to foster an understanding that "for everyone to benefit (from economic growth) you need to work together."

Ramos said positive economic and political changes are taking place in Africa and that it is imperative for all to "make sure that the things we commit to, we actually do."

Co-Chair Syamal Gupta, Chairman, Tata International, India, encouraged Africa to seek innovative solutions to its challenges and to promote small and medium enterprise development as a means of creating employment. "Big companies can not create jobs, it is the small and medium ones that do," Gupta said. He also cautioned participants against neglecting rural populations in their commercial endeavours. Referring to them as "the bottom of the pyramid," Gupta said the constituency represented a large and significant economic sector that was willing to pay for services it received.

Under the theme "Going for Growth", participants highlighted particular [achievements](#) of this year's World Economic Forum on Africa. These include:

- The signing of the Investment Climate Facility (ICF) to facilitate investment throughout the continent. The ICF was endorsed by the Africa Economic Summit and the G-8 in 2005, and was launched this week with US\$ 100 million in funding.
- The NEPAD e-Schools Initiative, whose demonstration project will fund e-access in 120 schools across 16 African countries by mid-2007. The Initiative aims to reach all 600,000 African schools within ten years.
- The Forum's Global Health Initiative, which launched guidelines for large companies to support HIV and AIDS programmes within their supply chain, as well as employer-based malaria control programmes.
- The Forum's Partnering Against Corruption Initiative, with 103 signatories representing US\$ 500 billion turnover and which is now engaging the African business community in its efforts.

Future commitments made during the meeting include:

- The World Economic Forum's public-private partnership to strengthen healthcare systems in Africa, by addressing epidemic and pandemic diseases in particular. The partnership will be implemented at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2007 in Davos

- Sponsoring a film series on African Success Stories,
- Launching a financial literacy programme in Rwanda,
- Establishing leadership development institutes throughout Africa.

Managing Director of the World Economic Forum, Peter Torreele, concluded the plenary by praising the economic and social progress in Africa over the past ten years, an achievement he described as “absolutely outstanding.”

“Throughout all of this, our belief has been that by bringing business together with governments and civil society, those partnerships could unlock Africa’s great potential, and would allow the continent to assume its proper role in the global economy,” Torreele said.

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