

Infrastructure key to Africa's sustainable development

Infrastructure investment spending has quadrupled, exports have increased and Africa is receiving a growing share of foreign direct investment, says president Jacob Zuma.

"It is not surprising therefore that infrastructure development took centre stage at the World Economic Forum on Africa meeting in Cape Town on 3-5 June 2015.

Sustaining positive trends



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"These positive trends come on the back of improved governance and a much sounder approach to macroeconomic management in our continent. We need to sustain these trends and deepen them," Zuma said on Thursday during the president's Coordinating Council (PCC) meeting at Tuynhuys in Cape Town.

The meeting brought together premiers and local government representatives to discuss governance and how to improve the performance of government at all three levels.

Infrastructure development is taken seriously in South Africa and work in all provinces and municipal metros are coordinated through the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC) led by the president.

Zuma chairs the Presidential Infrastructure Championing Initiative (PICI) which reports to the heads of state and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC).

Continuous dialogue to boost infrastructure development

The PICI aims to facilitate continuous dialogue and work to boost infrastructure development. South Africa was given the task of coordinating the North-South corridor, focusing on road and rail.

The initiative has served to link heads of state and government to specific infrastructure corridors to ensure strategic political leadership in the championing of cross-border infrastructure projects.

The PICI is primarily tasked with bringing visibility to the infrastructure projects, facilitate the unblocking of bottlenecks and any political impasse, provide leadership in resource mobilisation and subsequently ensure speedy implementation.

"Infrastructure development is one of our key job drivers together with tourism, manufacturing, mining and beneficiation, the green and blue economies and agriculture.

"We are refurbishing and building new schools, clinics and hospitals, we are building three universities and 12 training and vocational education colleges, and we are constructing and improving rail, roads, ports, broadband, roads, dams and power stations.

Infrastructure development as catalyst for economic development

"What we are doing in the country dovetails with the continental infrastructure programme," he said.

Regional integration is the key and infrastructure development is a catalyst for economic development on the continent.

Many of the regional economic communities (RECs) have developed regional infrastructure plans to facilitate regional trade

and investments. However, it is important to also invest in national infrastructure, in addition to regional infrastructure.

These are projects that should ultimately unlock the economic potential of the continent and provide development opportunities for communities, cities and regions.

Championing countries to bring projects to a reality

The North-South Corridor championed by South Africa is a multimodal and multidimensional infrastructure corridor that includes road, rail, border posts, bridges, ports, energy and other related infrastructure.

The corridor passes through 12 countries - Tanzania, Congo, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt.

These projects form the nucleus of the implementation of the broader Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).

Progress has been made by the championing countries to bring these projects to a reality.

According to the presidency, Zuma is looking forward to a fruitful discussion of the good progress made in implementing the African infrastructure development programme at the 33rd NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC) meeting on Saturday.

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