

US\$6.9bn needed to upgrade North-South Corridor

Billions of dollars will be needed to upgrade and maintain the North-South Corridor road network said President Jacob Zuma.

"In order to upgrade and maintain the North-South Corridor road network, we will need US\$6.9bn, of which 4.5bn is for capital investment and the remainder is for recurrent costs," he said.

The North-South corridor is the main trade route between Durban and Dar-es-Salaam, in Tanzania.

SA to take the lead

South Africa was appointed to lead the Presidential Infrastructure Championing Initiative.

Addressing the 26th Nepad Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee, Zuma said serious work needs to be done to improve rail infrastructure.

"The entire North-South road network was physically assessed and inspected. With the exclusion of the road network in South Africa, the North-South Corridor network that was assessed amounted to 8600 kilometres.

"We categorised roads in the Corridor into those that need immediate attention; those that need attention in the next two to five years and those in good condition which need regular maintenance."

There is already work underway to upgrade and maintain the road network in some parts of the North-South Corridor.

Trade is not optional...

With regard to trade, Zuma said intra and inter-regional trade is not an option, it is an imperative.

"Without trade, individuals, communities, countries and regions cannot reduce poverty or achieve economic growth.

"We have to challenge these issues, failing which our key differentiator to boost intra-regional trade will remain inadequate and perhaps a distant dream.

"We all know that efforts to accelerate the development and structural transformation of African economies are hindered by very substantial obstacles, particularly those related to finance and infrastructure as well as governance, and human capital," Zuma said.

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