

STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF

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**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, REGIONAL
INTEGRATION AND NEPAD OF THE REPUBLIC
OF GHANA**

AT

THE 9TH AFRICA PARTNERSHIP FORUM

ALGIERS, ALGERIA

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Your Excellencies,
Development Partners of the APF Fraternity,
Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union,
Chairperson of African Peer Review Mechanism,
Deputy Chief Executive of the NEPAD Secretariat,
Honourable Ministers,
Friends from the Civil Society Organisations,
Distinguished Participants,
Distinguished Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to make a statement on the occasion of the 9th session of the Africa Partnership Forum (APF). At the outset, I wish to express my deepest appreciation and also convey the profound gratitude of all the delegates of the APF fraternity to the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria for generously hosting this meeting.

We are indeed grateful to the Government for putting at our disposal all the pleasant facilities that have made us feel "home away from home".

Also with respect to this venue, it is edifying to remind ourselves of the unflinching support of the Government and the people of Algeria to our collective course for the renewal of the African continent.

Indeed, a landmark break-through was made on the way forward in integrating NEPAD into AU structure and processes here in Algiers in March 2007. The Algiers' decision of March 2007 further sought to position and strengthen NEPAD within the structure and processes of the AU as an empowered authority to speed up the implementation of the economic programmes conceived for the renewal of Africa.

As we are all aware, just this week, the historic city of Algiers has also hosted a key Brainstorming Conference on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

that sought to find ways and means of addressing some of the challenges confronting the programme.

In the spirit of the historical relevance of this venue and the collective goodwill of the current Presidency of the G-8 towards Africa, I hope the outcome of this meeting will sustain the momentum and sense of vision to actualize the goals of the APF series in the lives of ordinary Africans.

Mr. Chairman,

Reflecting on the theme of the 9th APF, the question of governance and development strikes a deep chord at the political and socio-economic aspirations of Africans for a better tomorrow.

As we are all aware, since the new millennium, there has been an enormous sense of urgency to cultivate durable conditions of peace, security and stability on the continent of Africa.

In recognition of the benefits and the demands of democracy and good governance, African leaders have collectively made good governance an urgent priority for the continent's development agenda. The Constitutive Act of AU and the framework of NEPAD both underscore the centrality of good governance to economic development in Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

Without doubt, bad governance, perennial conflicts, lack of security and stability have constituted a fair share of the challenges that have confronted Africa in its quest for sustainable development. These obstacles have, over the years, conspired to deny Africa the prosperous fruits of its enormous resource endowments.

Fortunately, this reality has informed the renewed sense of vision and the galvanized political will on the part of African leaders to work assiduously to find

solutions to conflicts on the continent of Africa as well as entrench democracy and good governance.

Mr. Chairman,

It is worth recollecting that attempts at resolving Africa's political problem on a continental basis go back to the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. In a similar vein, the attempt at forging a continental initiative to solving Africa's economic problems go back to the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980.

Therefore, viewed against that background, one would appreciate the efforts African leaders are currently making to bring peace and stability to the continent as the necessary pre-requisites for socio-economic development of the African continent.

Indeed, to say that African leaders have with renewed vigour accepted the mantle to find lasting solutions to conflicts and instability on the continent can not be over-emphasized. Those at the helm of affairs to ensure peace, security and stability have continued to show their commitments to this course.

Mr. Chairman,

It is in this light that we the partners from Africa consider this particular meeting a very crucial milestone in our collective desire and effort to re-focus the APF to its fundamental principles of using consensus building and shared values to assess the delivery of pledges, mutual responsibilities and commitments designed to overcome the challenges confronting Africa.

Whilst the central focus of the APF has remained the exchange between partners of the economic and political developments in Africa, it is very imperative to recognize that, the overwhelming desire to create durable and enviable conditions of peace, security and stability are based on genuine assessment of the political and socio-economic realities as well as priorities of Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

To buttress this point further, it is worth highlighting that, a big part of the NEPAD blueprint is its Democracy and Governance Initiative, which emphasizes that “development is impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance”.

This blueprint therefore commits Africa countries to respect global standards of democracy, with its core elements of political pluralism, with several political parties and open, free and democratic elections.

Africa is making good and significant progress in promoting good governance in all its ramifications. More than ever before, the principle of not tolerating unconstitutional changes of governments is gaining wide currency in Africa. To buttress this point, well over 45 successful elections have been conducted in Africa, since the inception of NEPAD in July 2001

It is also instructive to observe that over the last five years, Africa has consistently registered very encouraging economic indicators that show that, gradually, proper conditions are being created for macroeconomic growth and sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

In terms of entrenching democracy and good governance, the APRM has, since March 2003, presented Africans with the opportunity to discuss and chart the way forward on the necessary reforms needed in a country to deepen good governance. The APRM has become a bold and novel initiative that holds the prospects laying the foundation of good governance in Africa.

One other important endeavour to brighten the fortunes of Africa has been the commitment towards fostering regional cooperation and integration in Africa.

There have been very encouraging and sustained efforts to rationalize the programmes and mandates of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa so as to avoid duplication of efforts, energy and resources geared toward achieving common goals.

Mr. Chairman,

In spite of afore-mentioned progress made, a lot of challenges still remain in Africa's quest for a continental renewal.

Just at the dawn of the new millennium, hundreds of millions of Africans still lived under a dollar a day. Also, Africa continues to have a severe deficit when it comes to its ability to immediately overcome the scourge of HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis and other infectious diseases.

Mr. Chairman,

While we do recognize that we need to first create the durable and enviable conditions that engender prosperity and sustained growth, it is equally true that the scourge of poverty and extreme deprivation tend to undermine the sustenance of peace, security and stability.

In the right sense of word, in our globalised world, poverty anywhere is potentially a threat to prosperity everywhere. That is why our overwhelming efforts to create the necessary conditions of peace, security and stability must go in tandem with our conscious efforts to better the economic and social lives of our people.

It is against this background that we need to collectively re-assess the goals of the APF in complementing the noble efforts of Africans to deliver the continent from extreme poverty and under-development.

The APF must not be judged by our readiness to participate in the meetings, but by the genuine effort to create trust, mutual respect and shared value system in addressing the challenges confronting the majority of our people.

It is important for us to endeavour to review each others policies, pledges and responsibilities and commitments in an open and transparent manner.

To enable us relate to the same background of priorities, set goals and targets, we need to urgently discover the utmost sense of purposefulness in working within the confines of the Africa Action Plan. We need to rediscover the critical element of creating the opportunities to chronicle and report on delivery of finances, policy commitments and agreeing on the way forward.

Let me conclude by saying that NEPAD recognizes the importance of fostering a new relationship with developed countries that is based on mutual respect, trust, responsibility and accountability. African leaders have shown their common resolve to work together even more closely in order to end the poverty on the continent and to restore African countries among the family of dignified nations.

It is our expectations that, the outcome of this meeting will inform proceedings to ensure that the priorities for consolidating the gains by the NEPAD are noted and addressed.

I thank you for your kind attention.