

stands to benefit them. A developing African country with properly educated and a well-fed population represents a market of 600 million people - the developed countries only ignore this to their peril.

NEPAD is also building partnerships between African countries to deal with the problem of infrastructure development. Partnerships between African countries, the developed countries as well as multilateral institutions, will lead to the building of much needed rail, air and road infrastructure. To illustrate the dearth of infrastructure in the continent, a person from the West Africa can't place a direct call to the Southern African region, he is re-routed from France. This also goes for air transport. Clearly, unless infrastructure is laid to connect African countries, the huge potential for inter-African trade will be lost.

The NEPAD programme has also highlighted the importance of industrialisation and modernisation, which would help kick-start development of the continent. Equally important, is the area of Information and Communication Technology. In order for Africa to latch onto the information revolution, which is driving the process of globalisation process forward, ICT infrastructure development is critical. A need to double teledensity by 2005 has been identified – it could make affordable 2 phones per 100 people.

Another principal and perennial challenge facing our continent is the albatross of unsustainable debt repayment. It is estimated that Africa, for the next fifty years will be paying debt to developed countries and their private institutions. For the next fifty years, important resources, which could be used for education, health and infrastructure, will be diverted to pay debts. The African debt is unsustainable. None should condemn the future generation to this calamitous position. Once more, a HIPC Initiative must be broadened and deepened to address this problem. The Capital Flow Initiative of NEPAD is dealing with this problem. We look up to friendly Canada and her people to work in Kananaskis for an African Plan, that at its core addresses the indebtedness of African countries.

Equally promising though, which must be backed by concrete action, is the need to increase Official Development Assistance. The Capital Flow Initiative is working seriously to determine the criterion which will help countries to better manage and productively use this assistance.

Central to the NEPAD is gender mainstreaming in all programmes. The question of gender equality is at the heart of NEPAD. More than half of the population in Africa is made up of women. It remains critical therefore, that the women who till the land, who are responsible for nutrition of their families, women who constitute a critical mass in Africa, should be involved in the programme of economic renewal of the African continent.

It is important, that the intelligentsia is involved in popularising and engaging NEPAD.