

The leadership as elected representatives of the people have given leadership; it is now up to the agents of social change, like you to take up the challenge.

Why This Initiative Now

Many previous illustrious initiatives were not implemented. There are many reasons for this, such as: the Cold War paradigm; the lack of capacity to implement these initiatives; as well as the absence of political cohesion in the continent and internationally.

The time has never been more ripe to move forward to the concrete implementation of the lofty ideas we all developed to help Africa deal with the terrible legacy and burden of underdevelopment. This conference today is an ample demonstration of the fertile environment I am referring to. We all agree, as we surely must, that it is time to move from words to action to help give re-birth to Africa with hope, peace and prosperity.

Let us prove that Herodotus was right when he said: *Ex Africa semper aliquid novi!* (Something new always comes out of Africa). Out of this birth, must necessarily come a new Africa with a brighter tomorrow.

Despite the catastrophic and barbaric terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September last year, we remain positive of the success of the New Partnership. The New Partnership driven and inclusive of the peoples of the continent and those like you in the Diaspora and friends of Africa cannot and will not fail.

To the Government of Canada we want to encourage you, through the G8 to continue your strong support to ensure a plan for Africa is a substantives response to NEPAD. In particular, we want to encourage you to continue to support the initiatives like the Canada-Africa Governance Programme, in which the Province of Alberta participates.

To civil society, we recognise and appreciate the valuable efforts already underway by Cause Canada that works for peace and conflict management and also the Africa Canada Partnership Programme for Africa, which we are told has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. We also want to recognise the invaluable role played by universities and colleges across Canada working with Africa in areas of agro-forestry, teacher education and health care.

To the private sector, the continent of Africa is endowed with the human capital, mineral wealth and unlimited opportunities for trade, investment and partnership as proposed in the NEPAD programme. Other countries are taking advantage of this burgeoning market; it is imperative that you are not left behind. The opportunities abound in Africa.