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**Statement of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, HE
Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the
at the Opening Session of the Dakar Financing Summit
(DFS) for Africa's Infrastructure,
June 15, 2014**

Your Excellency, President Macky Sall our Host and Chairperson of the NEPAD
Heads of State Orientation Committee
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government
Your Excellencies Ministers, and Leaders of delegations
Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of the NEPAD Agency
Executive Secretary of the UNECA, Dr. Carlos Lopes
President of the African Development Bank, Dr. Donald Kaberuka
The President of Ecowas Commission, His Excellency Mr. Kadre Desire Ouedraogo
Your Excellency Makthar Diop, Vice President of the World Bank for the Africa
region
Representatives of the Nepad Business Council, the African Business Roundtable
and from the Private sector
Representatives of international and regional finance institutions
Esteemed Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me thank the Government and the people of the Republic of Senegal for the warm hospitality in this beautiful and historic city of Dakar. My gratitude to the Heads of States and Governments Orientation Committee for their continued efforts to champion the implementation of NEPAD.

I am honoured to address this *Dakar Financing Summit for Africa's Infrastructure*, a Summit whose time has come. This gathering reflects the new momentum to take charge of our dream of an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa, sooner rather than later.

As the deliberations at the Summit show: infrastructure is a such necessary and critical step to realise the African agenda.

PIDA, the regional and sectoral infrastructure masterplans and our national and bilateral projects are all aimed towards this common goal: to build and develop a backbone of African infrastructure that will drive growth and industrialisation, connect our people and economies, and create jobs and opportunities.

Our infrastructure programmes, as said by speakers before me, focus on transport, ICT and energy, but also include other economic and social infrastructure such as irrigation and storage, water and sanitation, ports and harbours.

It must take account of our growing populations and increased urbanisation; and the need to build African towns and cities with modern, affordable, reliable public services and as hubs of innovation, creativity and economic activities.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

As we deliberate on how to expedite infrastructure financing, let me raise some issues that must continue to inform our approach.

Firstly, it is now recognised that our infrastructure backlog presents an opportunity to leapfrog development by using the most recent technologies, as was the case in telecommunications. It is for this reason that we are investigating the idea of a Pan African high speed rail network, taking forward the PIDA transport vision to connect all capitals and commercial centres over the next two decades, and doing so with the latest available technology.

Secondly, in talking about infrastructure financing, we have to move beyond conventional approaches. We must mobilise and raise private and public investment in infrastructure, through initiatives such as the AfDB's Africa50 private equity fund. At the same time, governments and public institutions must lead in investing in productive capacity and infrastructure, laying the foundation for a thriving African private sector.

The deployment and allocation of African capital and reserves, improvements of our revenue collection capabilities and stopping illicit outflows from the continent are therefore all matters requiring our urgent and sustained attention.

A third issue, is how we use infrastructure to contribute to accelerated industrialisation. All projects must therefore look at local content, research and development, technology, and skills development, so that our infrastructure boom contributes towards shared and sustainable prosperity for all.

Africa's growing and youthful population, including its expanding working and middle classes should not only be seen as a market with Africans consuming imported manufactured goods, while it exports raw materials and jobs are created elsewhere. If we want to build shared prosperity, we must break this cycle.

Fourthly, our approach to infrastructure development must have at its core the African integration agenda, and the fact that it makes economic and business sense for us to unite. This includes the creation of regional and continental energy pools and grids, to make energy projects and markets more financially viable and affordable.

It must also inform our approach to transport, to double intra-African trade by connecting our capitals and commercial centres, in addition to developing freight, port and airport facilities for exports to the rest of the world.

Africa must accelerate its development by using its full potential. The participation and the needs of women in infrastructure is therefore critical matter. This ranges from liberating women from spending long hours collecting water and energy, investing in women for increased productivity in agriculture, agrobusinesses, industry and trade, and ensuring their participation as entrepreneurs and business owners.

The private sector is critical to all of the above, and we want to use our accelerated infrastructure development to build a vibrant African private sector, to build companies that are Pan African and to build global African champions. Forums such as this Dakar Financing Summit is therefore not only about presenting our infrastructure projects to the private sector, but also about connecting companies, financiers and entrepreneurs with each other.

Finally, African infrastructure development must ensure balance between sustainable development and protecting our environment, with Africa's need for industrialisation and development. Through our Africa power and energy vision for example, we must ensure a mix of renewable energy, as well as using what we have including fossil fuels.

Ladies and Gentlemen

During the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the founding of the OAU/AU, we undertook to develop a vision for the continent for the next fifty years. At the upcoming AU Summit in Malabo, we will be presenting *Agenda 2063. The Africa we want*.

A key message from this is that we need to think big and out-of-the-box. Most important, we must now focus on the practical matters of implementation and getting the job done. This is the spirit that must inform our discussions on infrastructure financing and projects.

On that note, I wish the Dakar Financing Summit fruitful deliberations.

Je vous merci