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**Statement by H.E. Dr. Nkozasana Dlamini ZUMA
Chairperson of the African Union Commission
At the 31st NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation
Committee (HSGOC)**

Malabo, 25 June 2014

Excellency, Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and Chairperson of the African Union

Excellency, Macky SALL, President of the Republic of Senegal and Chairperson of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee

Excellencies, Members of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee

Excellency, John Koufor, former President of Ghana and Special Envoy of the UNSG on Climate Change

My brothers and Sister, Dr. Carlos Lopes, Executive Secretary of the UNECA, Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Agency and Dr. Rosetta Silva from APR

Dr. Jose da Silva, Director General of FAO

AUC Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha and other Commissioners

Distinguished Heads of Regional Economic Communities and International Organizations

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to address this 31th Session of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee (HSGOC).

A warm thank you to the Government and the people of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the kind hospitality accorded to all delegations since our arrival in the beautiful city of Malabo.

Our continued gratitude to the African Leaders in the Orientation Committee for their unwavering commitment to the implementation of NEPAD.

As we enter the next fifty years of our continental Union, the elaboration of **Agenda 2063, The Africa we Want**, marks a leap forward. It builds on our

proud Pan African movement, that gave us the OAU Charter, Monrovia Declaration, the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty and NEPAD, with each of these as building blocks towards Africa's renaissance.

The NEPAD Agency is a critical instrument of the Union, and will be a driving force for the implementation of Agenda 2063, building on the experience of its work in agriculture, science and technology, economic transformation and resource management and mobilisation, regional integration, and infrastructure and human development.

Having completed the Agenda 2063 work on aspirations and objectives for the next fifty years, we are shifting gear towards action on those immediate areas that will take our transformation to the next level, as NEPAD since its adopted in 2001. This includes Agriculture, Agro-processing and Food Security; it includes the skills, science and technology revolution and industrialisation and value addition. More specifically, we are looking at faster action on critical infrastructure issues: in energy, transport, ICT, irrigation, ports and exploring Agenda 2063 flagship projects, including the integrated high-speed rail network to connect our capitals in line with PIDA transport vision and a Pan African e-university, using technology to massify skills development.

Our annual theme is dedicated to Agriculture and Food security provides an opportunity to think and act together on the practical issues for take-off for our belated agrarian revolution, and build resilience against climate change. This must of necessity include the modernisation and mechanisation of agriculture. I was told that on average our farmers are 50 years and older. Agriculture is not attractive to the next generation, because it is still agriculture of yesteryear. We must also therefore faster on irrigation infrastructure; expanding women and young people's access to land, capital and agricultural inputs; infrastructure for storage, transport and agribusinesses and developing our human resources, including training scientists and agronomists.

Your Excellencies, amongst NEPAD's areas of expertise is in resource mobilisation, including the recent Dakar Finance Summit for Africa's

infrastructure held under the leadership of His Excellency President Macky Sall, which looked at various domestic financial instruments such as tax revenues, pension funds, remittances, earnings from minerals and fuels, sovereign funds, international reserves, stock exchanges and bond markets.

As we build the African Development Bank's Africa50 Equity Fund, we must therefore call on Member States and the African private sector to invest in African infrastructure, where the returns are so much higher than elsewhere. In the same vein, we must support the initiatives of other regional financial institutions, the private sector, RECs and the investments by Member states in infrastructure in their countries and regions. It is encouraging to see how many countries are putting national resources into infrastructure, but this is not enough.

As we engage the rest of the world to attract foreign direct investments and build trade partnerships, this must be done in a manner that aid African industrialisation, that helps infrastructure development, its fair market share of global trade, beneficiation of its natural resources and economic transformation.

Excellencies, we will achieve our aspirations by acting together and learning by doing.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish the 31st NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.