

**African Economic Platform,**  
**Press Statement of the Hon. Prime Minister**

**Press Conference**  
**Westin Turtle Bay, Balaclava**  
**21 March 2017**

The Government of Mauritius has indeed been honoured to host the inaugural African Economic Platform (AEP) meeting and I must say that we are very proud that this landmark event has started here, on our small island.

The AEP is undoubtedly the flagship project of the Agenda 2063 of the African Union, as we all agree that it's high time for us Africans to walk the talk. Allow me to express my sincere appreciation for the interest shown by member states to take Africa to another level of development.

During these two days in Mauritius, African member states, prominent stakeholders from the African business community and academia have had the opportunity to brainstorm on issues that are paramount to the economic transformation of Africa.

We now have to build on the productive consultations and come up, TOGETHER, with concrete action plans to accelerate investments in infrastructure to improve the competitiveness of Africa in value addition.

From my perspective, the key message is the importance of home grown measures and African solutions to African challenges.

I appreciate, in this regard the remarks made by my fellow Heads of states and Government, on the need for economic transformation that would respond effectively to the promotion of business and ultimately the economic prosperity of the African people.

I am pleased to note that following the different fruitful discussions held among the participants, we have come up with a common strategy, focussed on four key areas:

**First**, the establishment of joint permanent commissions which will enhance business relations, particularly through the setting up of Industrial Parks and Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

**Second**, State members to come up with concrete proposals to address the problem of skills mismatch through market related training.

**Third**, to address the impediments blocking seamless movement of goods and services.

**Fourth**, to promote a collaborative effort among the African financial services sector to in view of facilitating suitable investments.

It is important to note that Africa needs over 200 billion USD annually over the next four years to meet its capacity building objectives whereas the FDI into the continent is merely around 60 billion USD.

As I mentioned yesterday, it is also essential to come up with an air connectivity master plan for Africa.

Let me strongly reiterate that Mauritius will stand shoulder to shoulder with its African brothers and sisters. We have always believes in the Africa Strategy and we are closing this historical and successful first AEP conference with a renewed resolve to work together for the development of Africa.

I thank you for your attention and I look forward in welcoming you for the next AEP.