



## CALL FOR RAPID AFRICAN INTEGRATION

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Mantshele Wa Ga Tau, BuaneWS, Saturday 9 march 2002  
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(Pretoria) : Africa must take rapid, sequenced, realistic and irreversible steps towards the acceleration of its integration if it is to realise the dream of African unity.

This is stated in the Consensus Statement, the product of a weeklong meeting of African leaders at the third African Development Forum (ADF) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which lays out a tough agenda for the continent's policymakers.

South Africa's Deputy President Jacob Zuma, transport minister Dullar Omar, finance deputy minister Mandisi Mpahlwa and economic advisor in the Presidency, Professor Wiseman Nkulu were among the more than one thousand delegates.

The document stressed that 'civil society's participation in the African Union (AU), predecessor of Organisation for African Unity (OAU), should be a priority and that annual meetings of civil society should be convened prior to the AU summit in South Africa in July this year.

'Regional negotiation capacity needs to be strengthened to enable Africa to effectively participate in the global trading system and the AU should seek to accelerate resolutions of conflicts and to facilitate the establishment of capable governments that can ensure peace and security in conflict-stricken countries,'

It details the challenges Africa faces in its bid to integrate, and proposes a number of concrete steps that need to be taken to accelerate integration and make it more effective as an engine for Africa's development.

The Consensus Agreement will be discussed at the African Foreign Ministers meeting in Addis Ababa tomorrow and again at the Summit of Heads of State in Pretoria in July.

The agreement also requires the AU to investigate new mechanisms of financing to avoid complete dependence on the dues of member states.

'If the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is to succeed, it is urged to establish a forum for engagement with Africa's elected representatives through the mechanism of the African Parliamentary Union,' the article advises.

The success of the ADF III would be evaluated based on the extent to which the views of the wide range of stakeholders present in Addis Ababa would be taken into account in the building of the AU, officials said.

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