

Rwanda used a major African Union development summit on Tuesday to argue that the continent's long-term transformation will remain elusive unless African nations rely more on their own financial resources and strengthen governance systems.

Prime Minister Justin Nsengiyumva represented President Paul Kagame at the 43rd session of the Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee of the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the top body responsible for overseeing the agency's policy direction.

The meeting was held virtually and focused on progress in implementing Africa's development programs, including priority projects under the African Union's Agenda 2063.

In his address, Nsengiyumva said Africa must accelerate efforts to mobilize domestic resources and reduce dependence on external aid. He argued that while international partnerships are still necessary, they cannot substitute for strong national leadership, accountability and domestic investment.

"Africa's development model must increasingly be grounded in its own financial and intellectual capacity," Nsengiyumva said. "Durable and transformative solutions for Africa must come from within."

The summit comes amid growing financial pressures on African states, including declining international development funding, rising geopolitical tensions and increased demands from global financial institutions. AUDA-NEPAD, established in 2018, is tasked with coordinating and supporting the implementation of continental development initiatives in sectors such as infrastructure, agriculture, health, industrialization and institutional capacity building.

Nsengiyumva said Rwanda supports emerging pan-African financial reforms aimed at strengthening the continent's development architecture. He highlighted efforts to improve the use of pension funds, deepen cooperation among African financial institutions and expand private sector participation in development projects.

The prime minister also emphasized progress in domestic health financing, noting Rwanda's ambition to become a leader in financing and delivering health services across Africa. He pointed to the growing role of technology and artificial intelligence in improving public service delivery, particularly in strengthening primary health care and expanding access to medical services.

Nsengiyumva also welcomed progress toward operationalizing the African Medicines Agency, describing it as a key milestone in strengthening drug regulation, protecting public health and supporting pharmaceutical manufacturing on the continent.

The summit also saw a leadership change in the AUDA-NEPAD orientation committee, with Angolan President João Lourenço elected as chair, succeeding Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi.

In closing, Nsengiyumva said Africa's credibility on the global stage will increasingly depend on its ability to finance, implement and protect its own development agenda, a message he said was essential for the continent's future.