President Paul Kagame said Tuesday that Africa must take primary responsibility for solving its own problems, arguing that decades of promises from foreign powers have often failed to deliver meaningful results for the continent.

Speaking at the France-Africa Summit in Nairobi, Kagame told African leaders, business executives and international partners that while Africa has repeatedly received pledges of support and investment, many commitments have not translated into tangible improvements for ordinary citizens.

“Africa has received endless promises that have never produced anything tangible,” Kagame said during a discussion on green industrialization and clean energy transition. “Is that injustice? Yes. But above all, as Africans, we must take responsibility before anyone else.”

Kagame said no foreign leader, regardless of how powerful their country may be, can solve Africa’s challenges better than Africans themselves.

“No leader in the world, no matter how powerful their country is, will come to save our continent from its problems,” he said.

The summit, held May 11–12 in Kenya’s capital, brought together African heads of state, French officials and business leaders to discuss economic cooperation, climate action, technology and reforms to the international financial system.

African countries continue to face mounting challenges, including climate-related droughts and floods, heavy debt burdens, economic instability, disease outbreaks and inadequate infrastructure. Many leaders at the summit said those problems have been worsened by conflict, weak governance and limited investment in sustainable development.

Kagame called for stronger cooperation among African nations and deeper partnerships between governments and the private sector, saying the continent’s long-term development depends on Africans taking ownership of their future.

Kenyan President William Ruto, who co-hosted the summit alongside French President Emmanuel Macron, said Africa’s relationship with Europe must move beyond dependency and toward equal partnership.

“The new partnership between Africa and France should not be built on dependency,” Ruto said. “It must be based on equality, mutual respect and investments that benefit both sides.”

Macron sought to distance France from accusations of maintaining outsized political influence in Africa, particularly in French-speaking countries.

“This is no longer a continent that France wants to treat as its backyard,” Macron said, adding that France’s approach to Africa had changed since he took office in 2017.

The French president announced a new $27 billion investment package for Africa focused on sectors including energy, artificial intelligence and agriculture. French companies are expected to contribute $16.4 billion, while African businesses are projected to invest an additional $10.5 billion.

Other leaders participating in the summit included Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama, Guinean leader Mamady Doumbouya and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Despite the new investment pledges, Kagame cautioned that Africa’s progress cannot depend solely on foreign assistance.

“Discussions like these should remind us that through cooperation we can overcome all the obstacles ahead,” he said.