President Paul Kagame has taken over the chairmanship of the African Union (AU) during the Heads of State and Government Summit of the AU.

President Kagame took over from Guinea's President Alpha Conde at the 30th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government, within the framework of the 30th AU Summit, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

In his acceptance speech, President Kagame stated that Africa's defining challenge is to create a pathway to prosperity for its people, especially young people. President Kagame called on African countries to create a single continental market, integrate infrastructure, infuse economies with technology and stay together.

"African countries need to work in unity, create a single continental market, integrate their infrastructure and infuse their economies with technology. Unity must be our starting point as we work to re-define Africa's plans and ambitions. These changes need to happen. There's no country on our continent that does not want to be part of a more assertive and visible Africa. The programmes, policies and priorities of the African Union contain the right tools for the job."

President Kagame said Africa was nearly ready to adopt the Continental Free Trade Area, which he said had to be done this year, as well as freedom of movement for people in Africa.

The 30th AU summit held from January 22 to 29 is being convened under the theme "Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation."