

# Public, private sector leadership push for more inclusive vision in African development agenda

400 leaders from the South African government, United Nations Development Programme and other regional leaders gathered on Thursday, 31 August, for the Responsible Business Forum on Sustainable Development to discuss accelerating and scaling innovations to end poverty, reduce inequalities, address climate change and achieve a healthy and prosperous society in Africa.



“The world, just like us here in South Africa and Africa, is looking for new answers, for better transitions and for sharper, higher-impact outcomes,” said Jeffrey Radebe, minister for planning, monitoring and evaluation.

“All of us gathered at the Responsible Business Forum on Sustainable Development must serve to fashion a sharper message of hope, a more convincing response of action and signal our responsiveness; mindful and eminently aware of that better world we so desperately desire and which we promised. It’s about establishing virtuous cycles for development in our respective spheres. The UN SDGs, Agenda 2063 and our very own National Development Plan Vision 2030 demands nothing less.”

## Technology and agricultural focus

With participants from over 30 different countries, companies came to the forum with a highly optimistic view on Africa’s development agenda and the economic opportunities for business, with especially strong participation from the technology and agriculture sectors.

"The Sustainable Development Goals and South Africa's National Development Plan provide a framework for individual company responses to pressing socioeconomic issues, and for partnerships with government, labour and civil society organisations," commented Joanne Yawitch, CEO, NBI South Africa. "It is important that business identifies what the SDG opportunities are, mobilises the required capital, and invests in the innovations that are necessary for sustained and more inclusive growth."

Highlights of the forum include the launch of the UNDP Gender Equality Seal, with speakers from Uganda, Colombia and South Africa committed to empowering women, and presentations from HP's chief technology officer Shane Wall and Huawei's Jacky Zhang.

Andrew McConville from global agribusiness giant Syngenta added, "Assessing where we stand and how we progress further two years after the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals is critically important. The Responsible Business Forum offers a unique platform for companies like Syngenta, and the public sector, to come together to make these goals a reality. I am excited to see the forum come to Africa for the first time and I look forward to seeing outcomes tailored to the incredible potential of this region."

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