

# Africa needs a new relationship dynamic says ECA's Lopes

**Libreville, 23 May 2014 (ECA)** – At a highly engaging start of this year's New York Forum Africa (NYFA) taking place in Libreville Gabon, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of ECA – Carlos Lopes called on Africa to change the nature of its relationships in order to benefit from what he termed quality growth. The Forum which is in its third edition and running from 23 to 25 May 2014, is being hosted by Gabon's President – Ali Bongo Ondimba and attended by several African and world leaders to discuss Africa's transformation in all its facets.



Participating in a panel of a key opening sessions dedicated to Transforming Economies through Partnerships, Mr Lopes said Africa now needs to move from mere partnerships to building strategic relationships characterized by trading on a level playing field through a better negotiating capacity for the continent and an assertive regional integration strategy.

**[\[Watch the simplified video here\]](#) [1]**

Given the opportunity to address current obstacles to private sector investment in Africa, ECA's Executive Secretary decided to reverse the narrative in three key points:

- *In terms of economic predictability, he said the continent's macroeconomic indicators are all going in the right direction*
- *On the question of political stability, he pointed out that less than 10 per cent of the continent's people are actually affected by conflict at the moment*

- *With regards to infrastructure, he indicated that Africa already possesses a quarter of the energy resources it needs, which is a sharp improvement on its offer in comparison to the past*

These are elements which the outside world sometimes fails to see, said the UN official who added that “the corporate world needs to be educated about what’s really happening in Africa.” But policy coherence, Mr Lopes went on, would be a key ingredient in Africa’s march towards quality growth, for as he put it “it’s good to have a vision but it’s more important to have the practical drive to make it happen.”

The opening sessions of the New York Forum Africa were marked by statements from African leaders including President Ali Bongo of Gabon and Paul Kagame of Rwanda. While Mr Bongo re-echoed current policy calls by ECA and other development partners for the need for African countries to build credible institutions to power the continent’s economic drive and to concentrate on the redistribution of the fruits of economic growth, Mr Kagame underlined the need for the continent’s proper integration of its resources and infrastructure for greater development.

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