We live in a society that demands a lot of things. It seeks recognition when recognition is not due and respect when respect is something to be earned and not demanded. Many forget that respect for an individual, an institution or a group of people is built over a period of time and is forged on mutual understanding and social cohesion.

Every one of us should work hard to understand and fathom that social cohesion is the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges, and equal opportunity in our country based on a sense of hope, trust and reciprocity among all of us.

So what is a social cohesion and what is its contribution to economic growth? To maintain equity to ensure economic and social development? We can define social cohesion as those attributes that contribute to a breakdown of economic, social and political barriers to reform within a society, the willingness of people in a society to co-operate with each other in the diversity of collective enterprises that members of a society must do in order to survive and prosper.

Willingness to co-operate means we can freely choose to form partnerships and have a reasonable chance of realising them because others are willing to co-operate as well. This co-operation should take place at all levels of social activity, at national, provincial and community level. At community level, it can mean loaning your neighbour your lawn mower, or being a soccer coach or joining a choral society. It can mean respecting the terms of your employment or the terms of a contract.

Social cohesion then is the sum over a population of individuals’ willingness to co-operate with each other without coercion in the complex set of social relations needed by individuals to complete their life courses. While social cohesion is gaining momentum in our country, we too are affected by the erosive trends felt across the world. There are fault lines in our societies, and in some cases, the cleavages are growing**.**

The role of the youth in the country’s social and economic development is important, hence the need to address their concerns. If this category is affected by inequity, it will impact negatively on social cohesion. Education must be a key driving force of any economic miracle we aspire to. The education system should do more to promote inclusive growth in a number of ways.

Sustaining economic growth is certainly important to promote social cohesion. It helps to generate the jobs and the public revenues needed to fund social welfare. Growth alone cannot solve all problems. Instead, well-targeted social policies are essential to promote social cohesion and reverse the upward trend in income inequality.

We need to adopt more appropriate models that would help maintain equity to ensure the economic development.