



OPENING REMARKS BY THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION,

KWESI QUARTEY

“Sixth Session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development”

25th February 2020

I am truly delighted and humbled in equal measure to be able to address this session of the Regional Sustainable Forum here at the Victoria Falls Zimbabwe

Allow me therefore on behalf of the Chairperson of the AUC, Moussa Faki Mahamat to welcome you all to this joint meeting

Thank you for spending time to participate in this session, your presence here is a clear manifestation of your commitment to the development of our dear continent and to the realization and building up of the Africa we want and so fervently needed.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership.

Your very presence is evidence of your commitment despite the many challenging demands of your time. We do not take it for granted. We would like to put on record the very truly African welcome we have received here in the very beautiful historical city of Victoria Falls. We truly feel at home here!

Now your Excellencies, the theme of the 2020 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development speaks for itself “a decade to deliver a transformed and prosperous Africa through the UN SDGS 2030 Agenda and the AU Agenda 2063”. This theme could not have been more timely.

It is time your Excellencies for us to focus like a razor to borrow a phrase from President Bill Clinton on the critical question of Domestication and implementation of Agenda 2030 and its twin sister Agenda 2063.

To be able to do this effectively, we need to take a step back to enable us to properly interrogate the past the better to be able to fashion out and to shape the future that we want both for ourselves and our continent.

It was the great Winston Spencer Churchill who famously wrote “ the further back you look, the further forward you are likely to see”. The year 2020 is an important milestone for our agenda 2030 and its twin sister agenda 2063. It is so for a number of reason:

- 1- It marks 5 years since the adoption of the Continental of the global agendas
- 2- Only 3 years remain to the completion of the first ten years of the completion of the Agenda 2063
- 3- The world as whole, has in reality less than ten years to the 2030 target date to achieve the SDGS
- 4- The year 2020 coincides with the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United nations organization.

Your Excellencies,

As we gather here under the auspices of the ARFSD to discuss “a decade to deliver a transformed and prosperous AFRICA THROUGH AGENDA 2063,” it’s important to take note of the AU theme year 2020 “Silencing the Guns: creating conducive environment for Africa’s development”.

It's by now sufficiently clear I believe, that without peace security and stability, prosperity in Africa will continue to remain elusive. Without peace and security, the commitment to leave no one behind will remain not only and commitment, in other words, "mere talk again"

The potential consequences for us Africans, and for our teeming youth will if it continues that way will be too dire to contemplate. This really is our challenge.

Africa has in deed made some progress. But all the available data, shows that all the Africa progress is mixed and uneven. Our continent has recorded substantial economic growth ranging between 3 to 4 percent over the last two decades.

Poverty rates are declining, and access to primary education, health and electricity are improving. Gender parity at the lower level of education continues to improve, while representation of women in national parliament has shown some significant positive change.

But your Excellencies,

This progress is insufficient. On many of these goals, variations across and within countries are large. Our financial requirements are even larger. Poverty rates are declining, but the absolute number of people living in poverty continues to increase. Population growth rates remain dangerously high. Opportunities for decent are not keeping pace with population growth. Lack of quality education and access health service is a stark reality that we face today ads a continent.

Many of our people, particularly our youth, our women and our girls continue to be left behind. Persistent inequalities in the continent remain with us. Data gaps on many of the indicators are also a challenge.

What then is to be done?

Your Excellencies, this ARFSD is more than welcome.

This forum could be instrumental in the process of reinforcing the joint implementation, monitoring, reviewing, reporting and resource mobilization necessary for the achievement of both the Agendas, as clearly indicated in the AU/UN frameworks for the implementation of agenda 2063 and agenda 2030.

This is why we are particularly grateful for the opportunity to be here at this historic Victoria Falls, in this sister republic of Zimbabwe to intensify our planning process. This is an idea whose time has really come.

Remarkable progress has been registered since the signing of the joint framework in January 2018, especially in the three of the thematic areas namely: capacity for coherent integration of the two agendas into national development plans, integrated monitoring, evaluation and reporting and trade and regional integration;

The au has been advocating for the Joint implementation of the two agendas in an integrated manner in Africa using all the existing forums and agenda 2026 domestication missions

The Africa union commission and the African union development agency (AUDA-NEPAD) compiled the first continental Report on the implementation of the agenda 2063 which has been presented to the recently concluded African Union Assembly in February 2020. The report is a consolidation and evidence-based assessment of the country and regional level progress reports on agenda 2063.

The AU collaboration with ECA, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa has bene promoting peer learning and peer review and experienter sharing on implementation of both the continental and global agenda in an integrated manner. We do this by jointly organizing different platforms and reinforcing dialogues

The APRM in collaboration with AfDB in developing knowledge hubs to raise awareness and youth engagement as well as sharing best practices on inclusiveness on both the Agendas 2063 and SDGs 2030.

As part of the implementation of the joint AU/UN framework, AUC in collaboration with UNECA, AfDB, UNDP regional bureau for Africa has prepared and disseminated three annual Reports, dubbed: **Africa sustainable report in 2017' 2018' and 2019 respectively**. The report provides an integrated assessment of the continent's progress towards the implementation of the FTYIP au agenda 2063., The Africa we want and the SDG Agenda 2030.

The 4 collaborating institutions have also agreed to frame the 2020 report as a **“call to action’ galvanizing Africa government to accelerate efforts to attain agenda 2063 and SDGS “**

The AUC and UN systems are working together in statistical activities on the continent to respond to the huge data demand required for the monitoring and evaluation of the two agendas. Data, we are informed is the new fuel in the 4th industrial revolution which is already upon us.

Civil registration and vital statistics play a key role in tracking progress towards attainment of agenda 2063 and SDG, as data from civil registration is essential for a functional and people-centered integration process that aims to improve well-being, promote job creation and market expansion through trade and labor mobility .

The AU through the conference of Africa minister responsible for CRVS is fostering political commitment to improve civil registration and vital statistics system in its member states

The AUC through the Pan African Statistics (PAS) program has launched a baseline assessment with the objective to assess data availability in order to set up a statistical database for Monitoring & Evaluation of Agenda 2063 and 2030 Agenda, and to identify gaps at country level in order to

raise awareness on data issues and prepare Member States to progressively fill gaps in future surveys and data collection programs

The operationalization of the AU Institute for Statistics (STRATAFRIC) will also play a key role in terms of coordination. Of the Africa, Statistical System and filling the data gaps to monitor the implementation of the two agendas.

The AFCFTA is an important tool for driving Africa development agenda encapsulated on both continental agenda 2063 and global agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development;

With the launch of the AFCFTA, African countries can begin to reap the benefits of intra Africa trade, with partnerships that can support universal ratification of the trade agreement by African countries and assist countries to development and implement effective complementary policies and plans.

But this will not happen on its own and by itself. It would have to be tenaciously and systematically worked for - for nothing worthwhile happens without struggle and passion, especially the most important that is the struggle against our own bad habits and our own ingrained weaknesses.

Therefore, stronger partnerships are needed to promote intra Africa trade to drive up industrialization through Value addition high productivity and job creation to generate inclusive and sustainable growth.

The key as always remains, **EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION**, science, technology, employment and planning.

I THANK YOU!