

SAS TALKING NOTES TO THE COUNCIL OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, WASHINGTON D.C, 12TH MARCH 2011

Greetings

A distinguished gathering to reflect.

Africa before the past fifty years

Importance of recognizing the 300 years of African history until the 1960s.

- Deprived the continent of its most productive assets,
- Reinforced Ethnic Identities and fostered hostilities among communities
- Severe damaged inflicted on the people's psyche and confidence.

The making of post colonial Africa

Challenges at the Continental Level;

- The challenge of building new nations.
- The challenge of the last vestiges of colonialism and apartheid.
- Confronting the aftermaths of 300 years of arrested development.
- Creation the Organisation of African Union (OAU).
- Two decades of incessant civil wars with devastating consequences.

Challenges at the national levels;

- Needed changes in political, economic and social fronts.
- Indigenization of the inherited political system.
- Attempts and failures of single - party regimes, military dictatorships and distorted versions political pluralism.

Economic issues;

- Confronting the scourge of poverty, ignorance and disease.
- Most countries did well in the 60s, deteriorate the 70s to pick 2000s.
- Heavily indebtedness and Institutional fragility.
- Economic growth with no real impact to people's welfare.
- Tap diversity as a source of strength and not threat or weakness.

Challenges at the Global Level

- 1970s and the cold war influencing the process of national building.
- Debt and Conditionality's.
- New Threats and Challenges

Conflicts in Africa:

The system of economic and political alienation has led to tensions in countries;

Africa in a new trajectory of self-transformation in dealing with the conflicts.

- OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.
- AU Peace and Security Council.
- The 1999 Algiers decision by the OAU on unconstitutional changes.
- The challenge of Conversion coups and Creeping coups.

African Unity

- Continues to be agonizingly slow.
- Important steps, efforts and achievements of the sub regional organizations.
- Great hiatus between decisions and actual implementation.
- Challenge of region wide infrastructural development and maintenance.
- A duty to bring the vision of United Africa to the people – Civil Society
- Cooperation and integration is not an option but a must.

Post cold war era and Democracy:

- End of the cold war and people's demands for more political space.
- 2000 – A decade of new political dispensation of political pluralism.
- Consolidation of constitutionalism and diminished unconstitutional changes

The new wave of social and political discontent

Limited democracy and the eroding state authority;

- Negligence of the state responsibilities.
- Rampart corruption.
- The growing gap between rich and poor.

Failure in adapting to the realities of the time and the Youth Factor;

- Technological savvy, High expectations and Unemployment.
- A force to prosperity or back to the era of instabilities and conflicts.
- North Africa: the limit to Africans perseverance.
- Irreversibility of democratization process in the continent.

Pertinent Questions

Have we achieved the Aims and Objectives articulated by the pioneers of our independence movements? With few exceptions, the answer is clearly NO.

Imagining Africa of the next 50 years:

- Africa's century.
- It is possible, achievable and most of all necessary.
- The clarion of the new generation of young people.

Things to resolve;

- Nurturing, sustenance and internalization of Good governance, Democracy, Accountability and Transparency.
- The wealth and resources must be used to serve our people.
- Ensure/Enhanced women's role into the public space.
- The Need to do much more ourselves in dealing with conflicts.
- Forging strategic partnerships and utilise the resources to reassert the continent as an important player globally.

Conclusion: The hope for second generation of political leadership.