STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR. SAM NUJOMA, THE FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
NAMIBIA AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN NATION,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE AFRICAN YOUTH AND
INTERGENERATIONAL FORUM DURING THE
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OAU/AU

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
AU CONFERENCE CENTER- AFRICA HALL

24-25TH MAY 2013

Director of Ceremonies;
Your Excellency Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of the Federal
Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of the African Union;
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU);
Your Excellency, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union
Commission;
Your Excellencies, Former Heads of State and Government;
Distinguished Elders of Africa:
Your Excellencies Ministers, Ambassadors and High Commissioners;
Distinguished Delegates from the Caribbean, Latin America and North America,
and the entire population of Afro-descendants from the Diaspora;
Distinguished Youth Representatives Delegates from the Continent and the African
Diaspora;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I feel distinctly delighted and honoured for the invitation extended to me to join millions
of Africans here at home and those in the Diaspora to celebrate, in this historic and
landmark venue of the Africa Hall, where the OAU was founded 50 years ago, the
watershed golden jubilee of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU),
the forerunner of the African Union (AU).
Allow me therefore to first and foremost convey my best wishes to the peoples of Africa,
as we mark this historic milestone in the annals of the African continent.

On behalf of our delegation, I would also like to express our profound appreciation and
sincere gratitude for the warm welcome afforded to us by the Government and people of
the Republic of Ethiopia, since our arrival in the beautiful and historic city of Addis Ababa.

I have fond memories of the momentous event of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), when on the 25th May, fifty (50) years ago, in 1963, the Founding Fathers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to sign a historic Charter, establishing the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the forerunner of the African Union (AU).

I was honoured to attend this historic occasion, representing SWAPO and the struggling people of Namibia, together with other representatives of African National Liberation Movements with whom we engaged in a common struggle to defeat colonialism and the apartheid crime against humanity, which also manifested itself in our country Namibia, as a colonial oppressor.

As we carried out that difficult struggle, our peoples drew strength from the victories of each of our fighting forces, while the setbacks experienced by any echelon of our struggling masses was correctly viewed, as a setback for all of us.

Thus, our presence in Addis Ababa on the 25th May 1963 emboldened our aspirations to fight for self-determination and national independence, when for the first time; we witnessed the meaning of freedom of 32 independent African sovereign states.

Through conversing with the leaders of these newly independent African states, we, the oppressed peoples, were inspired to tirelessly wage the struggle until the last vestiges of colonialism and minority white regimes were removed from the face of the African continent.

While those of my generation and I remember those early days, it is of utmost importance that our young people are also made aware of the glorious history of both their countries and the continent, as we resolutely define the vision for Africa, come the year 2063.

As we celebrate Africa Day, I was tasked to present a statement, reflecting on the birth of OAU, the forerunner of the AU as well as the National Liberation Struggle that led to the total Liberation of the African continent from colonialism and the white minority regimes in Southern Africa, in line with the theme of this Assembly, namely: “PAN-AFRICANISM AND AFRICAN RENAISSANCE”.

Your Excellencies,
In my view, the theme is most appropriate for us to reflect on the struggle for the decolonisation of the African Continent and our resounding victories in the fight against the minority white regimes in Southern Africa, while at the same time, taking stock of the progress that we have made and the challenges that still lay ahead.

For centuries, the African people on the continent and those in the Diaspora, especially in the Americas and the Caribbean, were subjected to the agonies of slavery, and subsequently colonial exploitation and subjugation.

However, I can proudly state that the African people did not submit to colonial subjugation and exploitation but rose up in arms to resist colonial occupation through Pan-Africanism.

As a consequence, during the early 1920s, Africans in the Diaspora, through collective efforts, started to intensify the promotion of the ideals of Pan-Africanism which became the philosophy of Africa’s political emancipation, economic recovery and cultural revival and the empowerment of Africans to chart their own future destiny.

I do not want to go into an extensive discussion on the history of Pan-Africanism. For our purposes today, suffice to note that the birth of Pan-Africanism can be traced to the founding of the African Association in London in 1897 and the convening, in the same city, of the Pan-African Conference three years later the year 1900, by Lawyer Henry Sylvester Williams of Trinidad and Tobago uncle of George Padmore, who coined the term Pan-Africanism.

Other visionary Pan-Africanists in the Diaspora such as Paul Robeson, C.L.R. James and Marcus Garvey advocated for African self-determination with the motto “Africa for Africans” which paved the way towards the intensification of political resistance against the colonial occupation of the African continent.
After the death of Williams in 1911, the Pan-Africanist movement was continued by W.E.B Du Bois who ensured that a series of Pan-African Conferences were held, with the most important being the $5^{th}$ Pan-African Conference held in Manchester, England in 1945.

This Conference was both the culmination of a historical process of the struggle of the African people on the continent and in the Diaspora and was indeed the pinnacle of Pan-Africanism, as it was attended by a large number of activists including Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana who took an active and prominent part in the Conference, serving as Secretary, while W.E.B. Du Bois was the Chairman.

The fifth Pan-African Conference underscored, as Nkrumah put it “for the first time the necessity for a well-organized...movement, as a primary condition for the success of the national liberation struggle in Africa, was stressed”.

In this regard, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who was a passionate believer in African unity, became a living link with the historic Pan-African Movement on the Continent.

Furthermore, the Pan-African Movement was strengthened on the African Continent when Ghana became the first African sub-Saharan country to gain its independence from Britain and organised the All-Africa People’s Conference in Accra in 1958 at a time when most African countries were still struggling against colonial rule.

The Accra Meeting, for the first time, brought together on African soil, nationalists from all over Africa where the issue of solidarity and unity in the struggle against colonialism was the central theme of the meeting and provided an important psychological, political and practical boost to the nationalist movements within the framework of Pan African unity.

On the African Continent, apart from Dr Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Pan-Africanism was kept alive by African nationalists such as Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria, Ahmed Sekou Touré of Guinea Conakry, Modibo Keita of Mali, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Patrice Lumumba of Congo, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Amilcal Cabral of Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and São Tomé et Príncipe, among many other liberation icons and visionary leaders in the continent and the Diaspora who played a critical role in the process leading to the formation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the forerunner of the African Union (AU) on the 25$^{th}$ of May, 1963 here in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and inspired us to embark upon getting rid of all the vestiges of colonialism from the African continent.
In this regard, it is with fond memories that I recall when I left the then South West Africa-(Namibia) on February 29, 1960, crossing into Botswana (then Bechuanaland) and from there travelling to Zimbabwe (the then Southern Rhodesia), and on to the then Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia. Finally I arrived in Mbeya in Eastern Tanzania which was still a British colony of Tanganyika, on March 21 1960.

Coincidentally, little did I know that this will be the same day that our country will achieve its Independence, 30 years later. On my way to petition the UN Committee on South West Africa in New York, I arrived in independent Ghana in April 1960 where I met for the first time President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, among other African leaders, who left a lasting impression on me and informed my Pan-African outlook.

I also met Frantz Fanon, representing the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) led by Ahmed Ben Bella, first Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of Algeria who provided us with two sub-machine guns and two TT pistols with which we launched our armed liberation struggle on the 26th of August 1966, at Omugulu-gwoMbashe in northern Namibia, when the torch of freedom was lit in our country until we attained our genuine freedom and independence on the 21st of March, 1990.

In 1961, I attended the third All-Africa People’s Conference in Cairo where I met with President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and requested him to offer the opportunity of military training to our SWAPO cadres. In September 1961, I travelled to Belgrade, Yugoslavia to attend as an Observer, the launching of the Non-Aligned Movement, under President Josip Broz Tito whom I met for the second time, after our first meeting in 1960.

It was therefore of great historical importance, when thirty two (32) independent African States came together in Addis Abba, Ethiopia, and signed the Charter which resulted in the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 25 May 1963. Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in his address on that day, stated: “Our Objective is African Union now. There is no time to waste. We must unite now or perish”.

Thus, the OAU was established with the objectives of freeing our continent from the remaining vestiges of colonialism and minority white apartheid regime, to promote unity and solidarity among African States and peoples; to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States, and to promote international co-operation within the framework of the United Nations, among other objectives.

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah on that day also stated: “We must unite in order to achieve the full liberation of our continent.”
Through the OAU Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa, the Continent worked and spoke, as one voice with undivided determination in support of the liberation struggle and the fight against colonialism and the minority white regime of apartheid.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) provided all-round political and material support to the national liberation movements through the Co-ordination Committee for the Liberation of Africa.

When I, on behalf of the struggling people of Namibia, and representatives of other African National Liberation Movements participated as observers at the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), our joint statement was read by Oginga Odinga, the then Vice-President of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) of Jomo Kenyata who was still in detention.

At a later stage, President Nyerere insisted that the authentic liberation movements be given observer status. President Nyerere then offered the Co-ordination Committee operational headquarters in Dar-es-Salaam.

In addition, President Nyerere, who was a visionary and fore-sighted revolutionary leader, offered training bases at Kongwa, Morogoro and Nashingweya in Tanzania, to our freedom fighters who were fighting against Portuguese colonialism in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and São Tomé et Príncipe and the minority white apartheid colonial settlers in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

Furthermore, President Nyerere requested the People’s Republic of China to provide experts to train our freedom fighters in the usage of fire arms, reconnaissance, as well as in scientific guerrilla warfare tactics, in order to speed up the total liberation of the African continent.

When Zambia attained its independence in 1964, the Zambian Government under the leadership of President Dr. David Kenneth Kaunda offered all-round support to the national liberation movements by providing us with rear bases. In retaliation, the Portuguese colonial regimes in Mozambique and Angola, the Ian Smith white colonial-settler regime in the former Southern Rhodesia, now the Republic of Zimbabwe, as well as the minority white apartheid regime in South Africa, which also colonized the former South West Africa, now Namibia, militarily attacked and imposed economic sanctions against Zambia.
However, in the true spirit of solidarity and African brotherhood, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, President Sir Seretse Khama of Botswana, President Dr. Antonio Agostinho Neto of Angola, and President Samora Machel of Mozambique in 1975, later joined by President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe in 1980, formed the Frontline States against what seemed heavy odds and went beyond encouraging words in supporting our liberation struggle by resisting the machinations of the colonial forces to prevent us from liberating the remaining colonies in Southern Africa.

Equally worth mentioning here, the Federal Republic of Nigeria under the revolutionary Pan-Africanist General Murtala Mohamed, became fully involved in the liberation struggle in Southern Africa and as a result, the Frontline States, became known as the Frontline States and Nigeria.

We thus also pay homage to the important role played by the fore-sighted and revolutionary leader Dr. Antonio Agostinho Neto of Angola, who provided us the opportunity to establish rear bases and educational centers in Angola and helped us to relocate SWAPO Provisional Headquarters from Lusaka to Luanda.

It is therefore with a sense of pride in our rich African and glorious history that I have decided to join you here today to commemorate and celebrate Africa Day.

Indeed, in Namibia, our struggle for freedom and independence was part of the wider and total liberation of the African continent from colonialism and foreign occupation.

Sadly, Africa still faces the unresolved case of colonialism in Western Sahara. Africa has achieved many milestones but the question of Western Sahara is a question that every self-respecting Pan Africanist should champion. For this reason, I call upon the Kingdom of Morocco, which I understand will rejoin the African Union on this 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU, to support the holding of a free referendum for the people of Western Sahara for self-determination and national independence.

Today, the African continent stands tall and its citizens occupy a special place among the people of the world as free and independent peoples charting their own future and common destiny of an African continent defined by peace, security, development and prosperity; an African continent whose countries, individually and collectively are free from poverty, disease, underdevelopment and ignorance; and a continent that would ensure that the 21st does indeed become an African century.
These, as the honourable members are all aware, are the logical outcomes of the dream of Pan-Africanism and an African Renaissance and constitute the objectives of an African agenda, as enunciated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

Your Excellencies;

Indeed, after thirty nine (39) years of its existence, African leaders decided to dissolve the OAU and reconstitute it, as a new organization that will address the numerous challenges facing the continent. This led to the next stage, which saw the establishment of the African Economic Community (AEC) at the 27th Summit of the OAU in Abuja, Nigeria 2-6 June in 1991.

The signed Abuja Treaty laid down detailed stages for economic integration at both regional and continental levels to eventually lead not only to free trade but also a common currency. The African Economic Community (AEC) established in 1991 by 51 African states in Abuja, Nigeria, was prompted by the necessity for collective planning and action to build intra-continental economic relations for the benefit of the African people.

Through the African Economic Community (AEC) we agreed, as Africans, that we needed to do more to strengthen existing regional economic communities, create new ones where necessary, and ensure that we achieve intra and inter-regional co-operation in all areas of human endeavor.

We also agreed on such important economic matters, as trade liberalisation in each regional economic community; the adoption of a common trade policy and working towards a common external tariff to establish a common African market.

Again, we committed ourselves to a gradual elimination of obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital and the right of residence among member states.

In this regard, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), such as Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Economic Community for West African States (Ecowas), constitute critical building blocks of the envisaged African integration.

Thus, the treaty is expected to lead ultimately to the formation of an Africa-wide monetary union and economic community by the year 2025.
Accordingly, the vision and programmes of the AU and Nepad are rooted in the long-standing desire, commitment and efforts of the African people to work together for the integration of our economies as well as the creation of a continental socio-political unity that would facilitate the faster development of our countries.

Now, the African Union (AU), formally launched in Durban, South Africa, on July 9, 2002 in order to provide new direction to our collective efforts and to face the developmental challenges more effectively, has to pursue and hasten the programme laid down in the Abuja Treaty.

Your Excellencies;

As we look forward over the next fifty years to the year 2063, we need to ask ourselves what we would wish to see for our continent. What are the primary issues we need to focus on during this time?

In my view, we should vigorously embark upon the second phase of the struggle, namely to bring about total and genuine economic independence.

Ghana’s First President, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, in perhaps his greatest speech ever on 24 May 1963, on the eve of the Founding of the OAU, put it eloquently when he stated:

“Independence is only the prelude to a new and more involved struggle for the right to conduct our own economic and social affairs; to construct our society according to our aspirations, unhampered by crushing and humiliating neo-colonialist control and interference.”

Therefore, the struggle for economic independence will be long and difficult. It requires embarking upon scientific research, proper planning, and hard work.

As we are all aware, the African continent is endowed with abundant natural resources. Therefore, investing in infrastructure is the key to Africa’s growth. In this regard, the grand Inga hydroelectric plant in the People’s Democratic of Congo (DRC) should be developed beyond mere rhetoric in order to provide African Union Members with cheap and adequate electricity supply.

Our economic strength depends substantially on our mastery of science and technology. It is this very same mastery that enables any country’s citizens to fully exploit its natural resources and wealth. For Africa to succeed, we must join hands and work, as a team.
It is important that we tap on the expertise of our brothers in the Diaspora and embark upon strategies which promote manufacturing and adding value to our natural resources. It is only in that manner that we will be able to create wealth, enhance economic growth and improve the competitiveness of our economies in the international markets.

Furthermore, I believe that one of the effective strategies to reach our goals is through educating and training our youth, especially in the scientific fields so that we can produce our own agriculturalists, medical doctors, engineers, scientists and other technical personnel who will play an active role in the industrialization and modernization of our economies.

Thus, our efforts to promote continental integration must place education of our people at the top of our priorities, as key elements in addressing development challenges. It is clear that the renewed geo-political interest in Africa, especially its natural resources and potential markets, is leading to attempts by former colonial powers to reclaim the ground we have gained in terms of African self-determination.

Therefore, the profoundly retrogressive developments on the continent are a direct consequence of the unstable security and political situation such as the one that was created by the forces of imperialists under the membership of NATO who overthrew Colonel Muammar Gaddafi without due consideration of severe repercussions of their actions.

As Africans, we have a responsibility to promote peace and security on the continent because when peace is restored, Africa as a whole stands to benefit. We must therefore consolidate, guard and defend our hard won freedom, democracy, peace, security and political stability.

Thus, it is imperative for our Governments to support the efforts of the African Union Peace and Security Council in order to maintain peace and stability and enhance economic development on the continent.

As Africans, we must unite, because it is only when we are united that we can successfully enhance the total integration of the continent with a single African currency and a single passport. In this regard, President Mwalimu Nyerere of Tanzania said: “My generation led Africa to political freedom. The current generation of leaders and peoples of Africa must pick up the flickering torch of African freedom, refuel it with their enthusiasm and determination, and carry it forward.”
I am also happy to learn that some among us will be honoured with an award in recognition of our efforts in removing the last vestiges of colonialism from Africa, as a whole.

In conclusion, I call upon the current generation to dare not fail in their historic mission of building “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by Africans”.

For that to happen, our youth should not allow themselves to be divided through the old tactic of divide and rule but must unite. Indeed, as President Nyerere further emphasized: “Without unity, there is no future for Africa”.

I therefore call on the African youth to prepare themselves to defend the territorial integrity, the territorial waters and the airspace of the African continent against imperialists and foreign aggressors.

I believe a united people striving to achieve a common good for all members of the society, will always emerge victorious.”

Long Live the Spirit of Pan-Africanism!
Long Live the African Union!

I thank you.