

## **Address to the Joint Sitting of the National Assembly and the National Council on the New Partnership for Africa's Development**

31 October 2001

Madam Speaker and Deputy Speaker,  
Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the NCOP,  
Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers,  
Honourable Premiers,  
Honourable Members,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

A recent publication of the World Bank asks the question - Can Africa claim the 21st Century? It is our firm view that together, as Africans, we must answer that question with a resounding - Yes. Africa's time has come.

When, at the end of the century historians cast their eyes back over this the 21st and African century, what will they see!

They should see that Africa has at last emerged from a long period of darkness and fear into one of light and a dream fulfilled.

They should see that through our persistent efforts we have redefined ourselves into something other than a place of suffering, a place of wars, a place of oppression, a place of hunger, disease, ignorance and backwardness.

They should see the reality of a new African, who having refused to be conditioned by circumstances imposed by a past of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism and apartheid, has succeeded to create a new world of peace, democracy, development and prosperity.

These are Africans who have chosen to define themselves in action. They had grown tired of being told who they are, where they come from, where they ought to go and how they should proceed with their journey.

Because they had decided to become the masters and mistresses of their own destiny, to sing their own songs and dance to their own tune, they had succeeded to claim the 21st century as their own.

The historians should see that at last an age-old dream of the unity of Africa has been realised among the millions on our continent who are bound together by the oldest and most enduring land-mass, who breath the same air, till the same soil, dream the same dreams and awake together from a long night rocked by terrifying nightmares.

They should see walking their continent and the common globe proud Africans who, by reclaiming their place as equals with other human beings, would have banished from the earth the scourge of racism and racial discrimination.

The African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development constitute the ways and means we have chosen to take us forward decisively towards the realisation of all these goals.

Madam Speaker of the National Assembly and Chairperson of the Council of Provinces:

I would like to thank you most sincerely for providing all of us this opportunity to discuss the initiatives critical to Africa's future, of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the African Union.

It is important that our discussion is taking place in this parliament, which is the home of our elected representatives and a symbol of the fulfilment of the struggles and sacrifices of the masses of our people in our quest for the realisation of our collective demand that - The People Shall Govern!

Undoubtedly, the creation of a new Parliament in our country, reflecting the will of the people, was one of the important foundations for us to come together and declare in unison that -Africa's time has come!

It is therefore obvious that a new partnership for the development of our continent would not have been possible if part of Africa was still under the yoke of colonial or white minority rule.

Accordingly, one of the important preconditions for the renewal of Africa is necessarily the complete liberation of the peoples of the continent.

Secondly, the Africans themselves, particularly the leadership, had to arrive at a common perspective that democracy is fundamental to the regeneration of our countries and continent, and, that responding to the correct demand for democracy is being true and faithful to the people on whose behalf we aspire to govern.

Thirdly, a new partnership for development was possible when many of our people on the continent, came to the common determination that proper adherence to good economic governance, aimed at the emancipation of our people from poverty, is as important as ensuring political democracy. As with our approach to political processes, the time since Africa's independence has offered valuable lessons about what we should do and not do if we are to pull ourselves from the quagmire of poverty and underdevelopment, as we must.

Fourthly, we are able to take practical steps in the renewal of the continent because we have resolved that we should find the ways to use our natural riches to improve the living conditions of all our people, instead of these riches benefiting outsiders and a small elite.

Fifthly, the renaissance of the continent is possible because the process will involve the mass of our people, in their various formations and from different stations in life as conscious agents of change. The business people, the women, the intelligentsia, the youth, the workers, the politicians, media workers - all of us -have crucial and specific roles that we can and must play to ensure that the renewal of our continent becomes a reality.

Lastly, the African Renaissance is possible because we have entered into a new partnership with the rest of the world on the basis of what we, as Africans, have determined is the correct route to our own development.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development states that:

"The resources, including capital, technology and human skills, that are required to launch a global war on poverty and underdevelopment exist in abundance, and are within our grasp. What is required to mobilise these resources and to use them properly, is bold and imaginative leadership that is genuinely committed to a sustained effort of human upliftment and poverty eradication, as well as a new global partnership based on shared responsibility and mutual interest.

"Across the continent, Africans declare that we will no longer allow ourselves to be conditioned by circumstance.

"We will determine our own destiny and call on the rest of the world to complement our efforts. There are already signs of progress and hope.

Democratic regimes that are committed to the protection of human rights, people-centred development and market-oriented economies are on the increase. African peoples have begun to demonstrate their refusal to accept poor economic and political leadership. These developments are, however, uneven and inadequate and need to be further expedited.

"The (New Partnership) is about consolidating and accelerating these gains.

It is a call for a new relationship of partnership between Africa and the international community, especially the highly industrialised countries, to overcome the development chasm that has widened over centuries of unequal relations."

In this regard, we are not asking for favours, but for fairness and justice, a better life for Africans and a secure future for all humanity.

This programme is premised on African ownership, African control of the projects and programmes, with African leaders accepting openly and unequivocally that they will play their part in ending poverty and bringing about sustainable development.

We are agreed that we must strengthen democracy on the continent; we must entrench a human rights culture; we must end existing conflicts and prevent new conflicts. We have to deal with corruption and be accountable to one another for all our actions.

Clearly, these measures of ensuring democracy, good governance and the absence of wars and conflicts, are important both for the well-being of the people of Africa and for the creation of positive conditions for investment, economic growth and development.

We cannot make the required progress and realise the necessary achievements in the process of the regeneration of our continent if the people of Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone are engaged in endless conflicts.

To end these conflicts and find a lasting solution to their causes is something that must seize the collective mind of Africans, and, participating in a practical programme of their resolution is the joint responsibility of each and every African patriot.

In this respect, Honourable Members, I would like to extend our best wishes and thanks to the members of our National Defence Force who are being deployed in Burundi to assist that sister country to transform itself into one of peace, democracy and prosperity.

Our Deputy President has left for Burundi to represent our country as a new government is sworn in tomorrow. Again, I would like to salute the Facilitator of the Burundi Peace Process, Nelson Mandela, his team and the political leadership of Burundi for the important steps they are taking to expand the frontiers of liberty and peace.

To return to the New Partnership, there are important measures that we have to undertake to mobilise the required resources so that we achieve better economic growth. To halve the incidence of poverty by the year 2015, we need to achieve high and sustained rates of growth. Among other things, this will require increased domestic savings and better revenue collection.

We also have to strengthen the Public-Private-Partnerships and ensure that there are sufficient means and capacity to implement infrastructural and social programmes. The African Development Bank will play a central role in this regard.

Further, the programme is going to assist countries to improve their individual financial markets as well as address the challenge of better co-ordination and harmonisation of cross-border flows through the Financial Markets Integration Task Force.

In addition, the capital flows initiative seeks to focus on debt reduction and forgiveness, reforming development assistance for Africa and working on mechanisms to increase private capital inflows into Africa.

One of the most important challenges is to address the negative perception amongst investors who see Africa as a 'high risk' area. While we need to address the genuine concerns raised by potential investors, we have a responsibility to communicate better and correctly about the concrete improvements we continue to make.

In many instances the investors get a wrong message from those who do not wish Africa to succeed. The voice of the majority of the people of Africa, who have stabilised their political as well as the socio-economic situations, needs to be heard.

Africa is rich in agricultural, mineral and aquatic raw materials that must now be used to develop the continent's economies and peoples.

But Africans themselves must add the value to these natural resources, through beneficiation so that the rest of the world receives them as manufactured goods and not merely as raw materials.

Through the market access initiative we seek to advance diversified market access for African exports to developed countries of the North.

The programme also seeks to nurture the vast, complex and rich African environment for the benefit of all humanity. In this regard, there will be a coherent environmental programme, where we will have to make strategic choices and determine particular priorities.

The Environment Initiative will deal, amongst others with programmes around the combating of desertification, wetland conservation and water management, global warming, transfrontier conservation and environmental governance.

The New Partnership has also set important priorities in the area of infrastructure development so as to speed the process of the modernisation and industrialisation of the continent and ensure that Africa rises to the levels of the developed countries. Clearly, the lack of infrastructure constitutes a serious handicap to social and economic development.

Another priority area is the Information and Communication Technology. We have to improve the ICT infrastructure, ensure that there is clear policy and strong regulatory mechanisms. Africa needs adequate access to affordable telephones, computers, the Internet and broadcasting. To double teledensity by the year 2005, the continent needs in excess of US \$8 billion in core infrastructure alone.

Attracting investment needs, therefore, a comprehensive integrated strategy that will be supported by all the people of Africa.

In addition, there will be a programme of human development so that our people gain the necessary knowledge and skills and enjoy better and healthier lives.

We have to work on a multipronged strategy to overcome the widespread incidence of communicable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS.

Amongst others, we have to improve the quality of nutrition so as to contribute to the well-being of our people as well as increased productivity.

We also need the improvement of the education systems if we are to compete equally with the rest of the world. In this regard, we need to improve facilities and ensure that primary and secondary schools are available in all our villages and rural areas. Further, we have to strengthen the university system including the creation of specialised universities where needed and establish institutes of technology.

Clearly, the success of the New Partnership will only be guaranteed if all the people see themselves as part of the process not only of deepening democracy, but also as activists in projects and programmes that they engage in partnership with government.

Furthermore, the development of the African continent will happen when we have practical programmes and workable partnerships with the developed countries.

Already, there have been extensive engagements with various developed countries as well as multilateral organisations. These include the G-8, the EU, United Nations, the Nordic countries, the World Bank, the IMF.

Honourable Members;

As you know, this parliament, like others on our continent, adopted the Constitutive Act of the African Union which Union will replace the OAU as from next year, when the OAU will hold its last assembly and the AU its first, here in our country.

Again as the Honourable Members know, the African Union will be based on the following objectives and principles, among others:

- The need to achieve greater unity and solidarity amongst the countries and peoples of the continent;
- The acceleration of the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
- Promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent;
- Promotion of democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
- Promotion and protection of human and people's rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;
- The establishment of the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations; and
- The promotion of co-operation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples.

Clearly, we see the transformation of the OAU into the African Union as an important process because we need a continental structure better suited to the challenges of the 21st century and better geared to the goal of the realisation of the objective of Africa's renaissance.

Madam Speaker and the Chairperson of the NCOP;

As you will recall, our parliament made important observations when considering the request for approval of the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

Amongst the important observations you made are that the Constitutive Act appears to contain:

- various clauses that could be open to different interpretations;

- various clauses that appear to be contradictory; and
- clauses that may be interpreted as impinging upon the sovereignty of Member States, in the executive, legislature or judicial spheres, more than is usual in the case of the formation of such a Union.

The report is valuable as it assists in focusing our collective mind on the areas that may pose problems as we try to form an important body that is critical to our renewal as a continent.

In appreciating the work that parliament did, I would like to make a request for Members to elaborate on the areas they have identified, and propose possible remedies.

Furthermore, we need to spell out what form we think the various Organs mentioned in the Constitutive Act should take, the protocols, the rules and regulations that should govern these structures.

Our parliament should assist in giving more content and meaning to the African Union so that the elected representatives of South Africa also make their humble contribution to the form, content and direction of the African Union as the Union is being defined more precisely, prior to its launch.

This should be done in conjunction with other people in society who are willing and able to make a contribution, be they NGO's, Universities, research bodies, business organisations, trade unions, women and youth organisations.

Similarly, we should encourage our counterparts in other parts of the continent to engage in this process of shaping and participating in the African Union and in the New Partnership for Africa's Development in such a manner that there is a clear response to the needs and demands of all our people as well as active involvement by the people.

In this way, we will ensure that, both the Union and the Programme, are owned by all our people in all our countries.

We will ensure that the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development do not belong to the elites, but are products of our people and benefit in a practical way, the poor of our continent wherever they may be.

We have embarked on these extra-ordinary measures represented by the AU and the New Partnership because we have to eradicate the destructive effects of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, wars, conflicts, disease and poverty that have characterised the African continent for the last few centuries. None but ourselves can do it!

The establishment of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development have come at a new time of new possibilities and new hopes for the African people.

These initiatives are laying the groundwork for a prosperous Africa that will triumph over poverty, disease, underdevelopment and despair. Their success is dependent on an effective partnership between governments and people, with the co-operation of the private sector and a true partnership with the developed nations that also have Africa's interests at heart.

Africa has decided to take the high road. The tasks we have set ourselves are ambitious. But the challenges we face no longer permit timidity. Nor do they allow that we should merely entertain hopes and do nothing to turn those hopes into reality.

The African Presidential Implementation Committee has already been established. So have the other institutions we need to translate our common vision into practical implementable programmes.

Our country has been charged with the task of hosting the Secretariat of the New Partnership, chairing its Steering Committee and convening the group that must elaborate the specific steps we need to take to ensure peace, security and stability throughout our continent. We have an obligation to discharge these responsibilities successfully, driven by a sense of urgency.

The G8 have also constituted the special task force that will work together with our Steering Committee and Secretariat. The European Commission is ready immediately to engage these organs of the New Partnership. The World Bank, the IMF and the International Finance Corporation have already joined in the New Partnership.

The work has started to give meaning to a bold vision whose realisation will for us, at last, turn into reality the concept that all people are born equal and that all of us inhabit a global village.

95 years ago, in 1906, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, the great African, patriot and freedom fighter, looking far into the future cried out:

"Oh, for that historian who, with the open pen of truth, will bring to Africa's claim the strength of written proof.

"He will tell of a race whose onward tide was often swelled with tears, but in whose heart bondage has not quenched the fire of former years.

"He will write that in these later days when Earth's noble ones are named, she has a roll of honour too, of whom she is not ashamed.

"The giant is awakening!"

Together we must make this the African Century and, as the historian of whom Seme spoke, "with the open pen of truth" inscribe a joyous, triumphant Africa onto the history book of the world.

Honourable members:

I am pleased to commend to you the New Partnership for Africa's Development, our own programme made in Africa for the renewal of Africa.

I urge you to make it your own, to turn into reality the assertion that Africa's time has come.

I thank you.