

**Keynote Address**

**by**

**H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

**at**

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**CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING AFRICA SO THAT IT CAN BECOME THE BACKBONE FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH, CERTAIN TRANSFORMATION AND ENSURING AFRICA AND AFRICANS CONTRIBUTE TO AND BENEFIT FROM THE “GLOBAL PIE”.**

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**Your Excellency Benjamin Mkapa, Former President of Tanzania;**

**Your Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, Former President of Nigeria;**

**Your Excellency Festus Mogae, Former President of Botswana;**

**Your Excellency Jerry Rawlings, Former President of Ghana;**

**Your Excellency Bakili Muluzi, Former President of Malawi;**

**Your Excellency Hifikepunye Pohamba, Former President of Namibia;**

**Your Excellency Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Former Secretary General of OAU**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I thank Your Excellencies for organizing this forum and, in particular, for singling out the theme for African integration. Before I go into the flesh of the subject, let me, first, draw the attention of this distinguished audience to one Ugandan proverb. It says: “*Owarumwa enjoka, atiina omwiina.*” – meaning that if the snake bites you once, you are, forever, wary of all holes into the ground. The English equivalent would be: “Once bitten, twice shy.”

Africa is a land area of 1.2 million sq. miles, inhabited, since time immemorial, by four linguistic groups. The four are: the Niger-Congo (including the Bantu and Kwa dialects); the Nilo-Saharan; the Afro-Asiatic (including Arabic, Tigrinya and Amharic); and the Khoisan dialects of southern Africa (the so-called bushmen). Hence, the myth that Africa is peopled by so many disparate people that they have no linkages or similarities is only believed and propagated by reactionaries. The people of Africa are either similar or linked linguistically, culturally and, in some cases, historically. Once, a man by the

names Namaan Ngongi, working for the UN and from Cameroon, came to see me. I asked him what his name meant in Cameroon. He told me that it meant a slimy floating weed that is found in water. That is exactly what it means in Runyankore and Rukiga and, I believe, Runyambo. Recently, the President of Zambia was in Uganda. I asked him what the word Lusaka meant. Initially, some of his delegation said that it was a mere name of a place. However, some of the people in His Excellency's delegation pointed out that in one of the Local dialects, the word kisaka meant bush or thick shrub. That is exactly what I have always thought it meant – a place of thickets (*enshaka* in Runyakitara). In fact, there is Omurushaka, near Kayaanga here in Tanzania, there is the Gisaka Province of Eastern Rwanda and even a sub-group of Banyarwanda known as Banyagisaka and, of course, plenty of Nshakas and Kishakas in Uganda. In the Government of Goodluck Jonathan there was a woman Minister, Ngozi. I asked her what her name meant in Igbo. She told me that it meant “Love.” It slightly deviated from what I thought it meant

in Runyakitara. *Engozi* is the cloth or skin that is used to wrap babies on the back of the mother. However, in Runyoro-Rutooro, *engoonzi* means, indeed, love. I do not have to talk about the Zulu dialect of South Africa. That is lifted straight from the inter-lacustrine dialects of the Great Lakes. Words like *Omufaazi* (*Omukazi* – woman), *Inkatha* (Buthelezi’s Party – *engata* in my dialect and *enkata* in Luganda), *Ubuntu* (humanness – *obuuntu* in my dialect) etc. The Nyakusa of South-West Tanzania greet: “*Ogonire?*” – “Have you slept well?” That is exactly what the Bagisu of Uganda call sleeping. In my dialect, *kugona* means to snore etc. All these examples are from within the Niger-Congo group of languages. There are, however, linkages even between this group with the Nilo-Saharan group of languages. The Somalis call a cow: “*Sa.*” That same word, in many of the inter-lacustrine Bantu dialects, means cow-dung “*obusa*”, “*amasha,*” etc. The Nubian word for “daughter” is a word I would not dare write here, especially when Their Excellencies are present. However, it is a word that is very much connected with the word “daughter.”

Therefore, the issue about Africa is not oneness, similarities or linkages. Those abound in plenty. The issue about Africa is that much of it was not governed together before colonialism. Even the empires that arose, did not sustain themselves – Ghana, Songhai, Mali, Zimbabwe, Egypt, the Bachweezi Empire etc did not sustain themselves. The problems that accounted for this low- level of political integration were geography and latitude. The geography of Africa is full of thick forests, rivers, swamps, high mountains and forbidding deserts. The latitudes ensured that a large part of Africa had warm temperatures that permitted the existence and thriving of man’s enemies – insect vectors (tsetse flies, mosquitoes etc) and the diseases they caused. This, in turn, meant a chronically small population in this huge continent. By 1900, the population of the whole of Africa was only 133 million people. Even today, when the population of Africa has gone up by leaps and bounds, it is still a bit smaller than the population of India which is twelve times smaller than Africa in land area. A small population and huge

land mass with plenty of natural resources, meant little incentive for integration or sustained integration the fact that the people were similar or linked notwithstanding. This was so, that in 1830, when one of the sons of the King of Bunyoro, Kaboyo, broke away a part of the Empire, Tooro, his father, Nyamutukura Kyebambe III, restrained the Army from attacking him to stop the secession. The father said: “Do not kill my son. Let him also rule that part.” In those pre-industrial, pre-capitalist, pre-money times, integration was not a crucial issue, given, moreover, the small population.

This was a fatal weakness when it came to confronting the new enemy – imperialism. The feudal rulers of Africa, isolated from global events, were full of egoism and selfishness. They were busy fomenting wars among themselves. They did not realize that a new powerful enemy, more advanced in technology, was coming. I will never forgive our traditional chiefs for failing to unite and confront the enemy. Vasco Da Gama went around the Cape of Good Hope in 1498. On his way to India, he passed

through Mombasa and the whole East Coast of Africa knew of the arrival of these new and more powerful people on the scene. It was only in 1862, a difference of 364 years, that Hannington Speke, the first European to do so, got to Uganda. What were our Chiefs doing to prepare for protecting us against these new powerful predators? Nothing. Just engaged in vain glorious self-praise as well as sycophancy from their intimidated and brutalized subjects and fomenting war among our people.

The consequence was that these little kings, by 1900, a mere 38 years since the arrival of Speke in Uganda, had been enslaved, along with their poor subjects. In the whole of Africa, it was only Ethiopia that defeated a European power and was not colonized. Even Ethiopia, however, led by the reactionary feudalists, could not for long guarantee its independence. Mussolini conquered it in 1935.

Why was Africa conquered by the Europeans? Was it just on account of technology? How about China? China was backward technology-wise; but the imperialists, Japanese and the

Westerners, could not swallow the whole of it. They ended up occupying only parts of China and, by 1949, the whole of China was liberated from the Kuomintang regime and the imperialists. Therefore, China, though backward, was able to defend herself. Why? On account of size and population – i.e. the degree of integration. The same with Japan. Japan was backward when it came in contact with the Europeans for the first time in the year 1543. Nevertheless, Japan rallied, modernized and even rivalled the imperialists.

Therefore, this phenomenon of low level of political integration had proved fatal in the past and it is still a great threat to our future and survival.

Fortunately, Africans did not perish like the Red Indians or the Australian Aborigines. Furthermore, we regained our freedom by a combination of factors:

- Factor one was the continued resistance of our people against colonialism.

- Factor two, was the support of the socialist countries to the liberation movements. The support by the USSR and China, not to forget smaller socialist countries like Cuba, was decisive in helping us to win our freedom back.
- The third factor was the fratricidal inter-imperialist wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45 which weakened them to our advantage.

That is how we regained our freedom — not by our own strength alone but by a combination of factors, some of them beyond our control. They were mere historical chance.

Unfortunately, we have neither learnt the import of the Ugandan proverb that I quoted at the beginning of this speech whose meaning coincides with the meaning of the English saying that says: “Once bitten, twice shy” nor have we really incorporated another crucial word in our political psychic and ideology. This word is: “Prosperity”. The question is: “How can we ensure prosperity for the families and for the individuals of

Africa?” Fortunately, the answer to this question links very well with our subject for today – integration. I normally like to use the example of my community, the Banyankore, part of the wider inter-lacustrine Bantus of the Lakes who share a common language comprised of different dialects but perfectly mutually intelligible. This community, with the guidance we have been giving them, along with the other communities in Uganda, are getting prosperous through production. As our people get out of the millennial old subsistence farming and enter commercial farming as well as other aspects of the monetary economy, the pseudo-ideology of community chauvinism is exposed for its bankruptcy . Uganda, in 1986, was producing 200 million litres of milk per annum. We are now producing 2 billion litres of milk per annum. The Ugandans, currently, consume only 800 million litres per annum. If it was not for East Africa and the export market in general, this industry would have collapsed by now. The same goes for maize. In 1986, Uganda was producing only 200,000 tonnes of maize per annum. We are now producing 4 million

tonnes of maize per annum. Uganda only consumes 2.2 million tonnes per annum. What would happen to all this maize if it was not for East Africa and Central Africa?

This is why principle two of our 4 principles vision is Pan-Africanism. Our Pan Africanism, in addition to the linkages and similarities of our people already described, is founded on the need for a framework for our sustained prosperity and that of our brothers and sisters in the Great Lakes. If Africa does not integrate, there is no way we can sustainably ensure our prosperity because even the route of exporting to the international markets will, in the end, depend on the size of our own market. With a bigger market, we can more easily negotiate for more distant markets using our own market as a bargaining card.

Even before we go to principle two of Pan – Africanism, in order to guarantee our prosperity, we cannot jump principle one – patriotism. This was our scientific conclusion after studying

the bankrupt sectarianism of the Uganda of the 1950s, 1960s etc. That sectarianism was based on religion and tribes. The question we asked that exposed the hollowness of sectarianism was: “How could the Banyankore, my tribe, guarantee our prosperity?” We found out that they actually contributed little to that prosperity. Why? This is because they produce similar products e.g. milk, beef, bananas, coffee, tea, fruits etc. A cannot buy from B because they produce similar products and vice versa. Therefore, the initial prosperity for the Banyankore comes from Uganda, Kampala. These are the people who buy the products of the Banyankore in the first instance before exporting to the region. They buy milk, beef and bananas. Coffee and tea are bought by actors from abroad e.g. the Arab world.

The chaos in the Arab countries has, for instance, caused the decline of tea prices. Within Uganda, therefore, patriotism is our torch on defogging the confusion of the opportunists and ignorance of some of the cadres. The one who promotes

sectarianism is an enemy of his community first and foremost before he becomes the enemy of the others.

It is not only prosperity that compels me to work for integration. There is the issue of strategic security. The Americans have a doctrine that compels them to seek superiority on land, superiority in the air, superiority at sea and superiority in space. Where does that leave us? Are we to continue with indifference to the destiny of our people, just as the chiefs of old continued to indulge in vain glory for 364 years until the Europeans descended on them and captured them like grasshoppers. The present leaders of Africa must be careful not to be like those chiefs. In order to guarantee our strategic security, economic integration alone is not enough. Political integration, where possible, is the answer in addition to economic integration. Unlike the Late Muammar Gaddafi, I neither think it possible nor desirable to aim at the political integration of the whole of Africa. As far as political integration is concerned, there must be a high degree of similarities and

linkages. It is not correct to incorporate in a political union disparate groups that have no similarities or linkages that are significant.

In the case of East Africa, not only do we have the similarities and linkages, we, above all, have the neutral Swahili dialect that is already spoken in Tanzania, Zanzibar, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi. Swahili is spoken in the whole of Eastern DRC up to Kisangani and can easily be learnt by any African interested. It is also spoken in North Mozambique and parts of Zambia. It is such countries with close affinities that should be part of the political union. The political union would address the issue of strategic security — on the land, in the air, at sea and in space. However, well developed Uganda would be, it cannot sustain a space science programme. East African Community (EAC) plus can support such a programme if it was in the Federation.

On the side of economic integration, however, there should be no limit. The whole of Africa should be involved. I can trade with anybody. However, when it comes to political integration,

it should be those that are most compatible. The two words: **identity** and **interests** should help us. The economic community of the whole of Africa deals with the interests. The only boundary that one would think about is geography — the whole African continent. When it comes to political integration, it should be both interest and identity that should be looked at.

Therefore, when we talk of integration in Africa, we are talking of two words: “prosperity” and “security” for sovereignty, for independence — the latter referring to strategic security. Put another way, when we talk of integration, we are answering two questions. These questions are: “How will the African families, how will the African businesses, become prosperous?” How will the Africans, individually and collectively, be secure at the strategic level? The answers to the two questions are: integration, sometimes just economic and, sometimes, both economic and political. It is that prosperity and that security that will give us growth and transformation.

Coming to the issue of handling diversity, this cannot be a problem. In Uganda, for instance, we have adapted a three

languages policy. The indigenous dialects are used in the first four classes of the Primary School System as a medium of instruction and, then, English is used after that. The Local dialects are used in the district councils where the districts are comprised of homogenous groups. We teach and use Swahili for regional interaction and in the Army. In some of the districts like Busia, Koboko, Moyo Arua, Obongi etc. etc. Swahili is used even in public meetings.

With a Federation, power and resources should be shared. Powers like defence, Foreign Affairs, Citizenship, Currency, external trade, the railways, air-craft regulation etc. could belong to the Federal level. The rest should either belong to the states or even the Local level.

On the issue of inequality, the first point is that integration actually cures inequality better than non-integration because people from even the still disadvantaged areas can move to the more prosperous areas and look for jobs, for instance, or for trade. Will this movement threaten the legitimate interests of the Locals? It does not threaten the legitimate interests of the

Locals at all. It actually enhances the legitimate interests of the Locals. I am a milk producer in my village in Rwakitura, far away from Kampala. Until recently, I have been suffering from my misfortune of being in that remote place. A litre of milk has been going for shs. 300. In Kampala, on the other hand, a litre of the same or worse milk has been going for shs. 1200 per litre. Why? The people near Kampala have for long had the good fortune of being near that big population centre. Hence, the higher prices. Therefore, these Ugandans, these East Africans who congregate in these urban centres are a great stimulus for prosperity. They consume and spend. Those who are idle and are not engaged in production or are members of the petty bourgeoisie in the bureaucracy, may not see this. Producers, however, see this very clearly. The Kings of a modern economy are two: the consumer and the producer. The rest, bureaucrats, infrastructure, people are just link persons between these two. Integration increases the numbers of these two categories — the consumers and the producers. Hence, its importance as far as prosperity is concerned. What should be

watched, however, is rural to rural peasant migration. This can cause tensions between the indigenous peoples and the migrants, especially if opportunists come in and try to exploit this for electoral purposes. However, where there is the firm hand of central government, this can be controlled by banishing sectarianism and emphasizing merit. The rural to urban migration does not present similar challenges. It is easier to deal with. Hence, expediting industrialization is crucial. You cannot expedite industrialization if you do not deal with infrastructure so as to lower costs of doing business in the economy so that investors can easily make profits and, therefore, expand their businesses.

Where there is inequality in infrastructure development, that can be deliberately rectified by focusing funds and attention. The under developed parts of the country mostly offer better prospects for large scale agricultural and industrial production. They often have freer and bigger land for projects, less need for compensation to previous occupants because they are fewer. Northern Uganda which was lagging behind in the past, is

offering better prospects for industrial growth and better planned at that, than the crowded and the not so well planned Kampala – Entebbe area. The industrial cities of Maruzi, Zambia, Kaweweeta and Kapeeka etc will be packed with factories as compared to Kampala which is, mainly, packed with shops, hair saloons, vegetable sellers etc.

On the issue of land, in Uganda, we provided that it should be handled by the districts so that the fear of the “foreigners” grabbing land goes away. The jobs in the bureaucracy and the extractive industries can be reserved for the Locals. However the jobs in, especially, industries must be open to all citizens of the Union because it is the purchasing power of the Union consumers that supports those factories. The services jobs need more discussion.

What are the key challenges? The main challenge is definitional. There is need to define the purpose of integration clearly to the people. If the people know clearly that integration is for their prosperity, they will support it. If they know that political Federation is for their strategic security and survival

as a free people, they would support it. It is the leaders that must understand this and convey it to the masses.

What are the lessons from the past integration efforts? I think the big lesson is that “procrastination is the thief of time.” Mzee Nyerere and Mzee Karume acted at the right moment and their product has endured and saved Tanganyika and Zanzibar from a lot of trouble, arguing, for instance, about the economic zones in the ocean etc. given that their geography is intertwined. Another mistake is that those who talk about “integration suffer from what I call Katangaism.” Katangaism is the myopia of thinking that natural resources are the most decisive factor of a modern life and forgetting that the human resource is the most decisive factor. As already pointed out, the human being is the consumer (the buyer) and the producer. Examples abound to illustrate this. Look at China, look at Japan. What natural resources do they have? Yet, they are among the most developed parts of the world. Realising the importance of human resources, leads to integration. Focusing on natural resources, leads to the mentality of the fewer the

better and eventually to Katangaism because those who sit atop the natural resources do not want to share in the imagined wealth with others. Yet the human resource, well utilized, will lead to greater prosperity and sustainability. That is how China, Japan, India and, even, South Korea are much richer than Saudi Arabia.

I thank you.

*30<sup>th</sup> July, 2015*

*Dar es Salaam*