

Remarks by Tom K Alweendo (MP)
Agenda 2063 Ministerial Follow-up Sub Committee
Safari Hotel, 22 June 2016

Distinguished invited guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honored to address this Ministerial meeting of the Follow-Up Committee on the implementation of Agenda 2063.

Agenda 2063 is our response as to what we as Africans need to do in order for us to achieve our dream of the Africa we want. The Agenda sets out the approach as to how the continent should effectively learn from the lessons of the past, build on the progress now underway and strategically exploit all possible opportunities available in the immediate and medium term, so as to ensure

positive socioeconomic transformation within the next 50 years.

I am also hopeful that the implementation of Agenda 2063 will help us to write our own African narrative. For too long Africa has been seen through the views of those who do not always have Africa's interest at heart. You will you will recall that not too long ago Africa was referred to as the Dark Continent. Lately we have seen that the narrative has changed to Africa the Rising Continent. I am still of the view that this positive narrative is as described by others and it is time that we as Africans own the positive narrative.

It therefore calls for a total paradigm shift. At its heart, this new African development roadmap emphasizes the importance of success through the restoration of the passion for Pan-Africanism, a sense of unity, self-reliance, integration and

solidarity that was a highlight of the triumphs of the 20th century. It calls on all of us to spare no effort in making Africa a prosperous continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Agenda 2063 is rooted in Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance and provides a framework for Africa to realize its vision and desire for a shared prosperity, unity and making the 21st Century the African Century. It represents a re-dedication by Africans for an integrated prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.

The seven key aspirations of Agenda 2063 represent critical values and principles that form the foundation for African prosperity. It should also be noted, however, that the success of Agenda 2063 at continental level will depend on the progress that each African Nation makes in developing

themselves. The aspirations of the individual African Nations have to be the same as the aspirations of the Continent as a whole. Therefore, individual African Nations' development plans, strategies and agendas have to encompass these principles.

In order to realize Africa's aspiration, we have to overcome the hurdles that so far have prevented Africa from becoming the force it potentially can be. It requires that we accept full responsibility – that we are the masters of our own development and that relying on others to develop Africa will be unhelpful. Africa will have to be developed by African ourselves.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me at this juncture concentrate my remarks on only three areas that I believe is of crucial importance for the development of the Continent, namely the importance of strong and effective

institutions; peace and stability; and the embrace of what is African. These are, amongst others, significant catalysts for our development without which the achievement of our Agenda 2063 aspirations will be elusive.

Strong and effective institutions. When referring to institutions in relation to development, we are not only referring to formal institutions such as Government departments or private sector companies. We are mostly referring to the rules of the game in a society - for example contract enforcement, protection of property rights, the rule of law, government bureaucracies, and financial markets. Institutions in its broader meaning can also include the societies' habits and beliefs, norms and social traditions.

There is wide-ranging evidence that institutions matter a great deal in determining the level of

economic development of a country. Indicators such as the degree of protection of property rights and the rule of law are strongly correlated to economic performance. Institutions determine the costs of economic transactions: they encourage development in the form of contract enforcement and increased availability of information - all of which reduce the costs of transactions. Institutions also determine the scope for expropriation of resources by the stronger members of a society. We know of societies where a small number of influential members dominate the economic exchanges and thereby severely limiting inclusive economic development.

It is also institutions that determine the degree to which the environment is conducive to cooperation and increased social capital. Inclusive and participatory institutions increase the flow of

information and the extent to which resources can be pooled to reduce risk and ensure sustained levels of wealth. Institutions strongly affect the economic development of countries and act in society at all levels by determining the frameworks in which economic exchange occurs. They determine the volume of interactions available, the benefits from economic exchange and the form which they can take.

Peace and stability. It is now commonly agreed that without peace and stability nothing else can happen. Our President, His Excellency Dr Hage G Geingob, has been talking about a new Africa where peace and stability reign supreme - an Africa where those who seek to govern through illegal means are condemned and ostracized by all Africans ourselves. There is no doubt that during the last twenty years, a lot has changed in ways human beings live and how

we share the available resources. The world population is growing such that soon we are going to reach a seven billion mark and this will put additional pressure on the available resources. Technology continues to permeate all our sphere of lives, making the world to be connected in ways not imagined thirty years ago. All these changes have an impact on peace and stability on our Continent and we need to be alert to them.

Without peace and stability, it will be difficult for us to manage these many and varied challenges. Peace and stability create the best environment in which our Agenda 2063 aspirations can be achieved. It is peace and stability that will make it possible for African men and women to produce; private sector business to create employment; entrepreneurs to innovate; and Governments to govern and regulate. We, as individuals and as a collective, are therefore

called upon to be active Ambassadors for peace and stability on our Continent.

Embrace what is African. Africa's ability to grow and develop continues to be curtailed by our attitudes as Africans towards ourselves and our products. More often than not, we emphasize patriotism at the political level. However, we are failing to extend our African patriotism to other aspects such as African products and services. As a result, we continue to disproportionately spend our incomes outside the Continent, thereby limiting the multiplier effects of incomes generated in our own economies and hence limiting our economic growth. We accept all standards from elsewhere except our own standards, which makes it difficult to trade with one another. We therefore need to start focusing on our own markets first as the foundation for African exports.

I am aware of the complaint that African goods and services are more often than not overpriced as compared to imported goods and services. While this might be the case in certain situations, it is my view that we have to accept that initially, and as part of the cost to achieve prosperity on the Continent, we will have to accept to pay a premium for our products. If we are not ready to do that, we will continue to import others' products and remain with a high number of impoverished people – indeed an unsustainable situation.

These, ladies and gentlemen, are some of the challenges facing us in delivering Agenda 2063. Our commitment as Africans should be not to relent. As African leaders, our pledge to the African people should be to do everything in our individual and collective capabilities to make Africa a better Continent to live in for all Africans. That calls for us

to be the agents of change in transforming our Continent into a dynamic economy capable of generating decent jobs our people are looking for. Experience has, however, taught us that change in any context, particularly in economic development, is always challenging and never just happens. It needs change-leaders as we are all, by nature, comfortable with the status quo.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In concluding, it is my wish that going forward we as Africans we will be more diligent in the transformation of our Continent – not because it is easy but because it is expected of us; that we will be audacious in our ambitions – not because it is a choice but because it is the only way we can overcome the challenges that lie ahead; to be innovative and pioneering – not because it is

fashionable but because it is the only way we can catch up with other Continents.

Let us therefore start to walk the talk in the implementation of Agenda 2063 such that poverty and underdevelopment on the Continent will soon be a thing of the past. Together and in the spirit of Harambee, let us all commit to build the future we want for Africa.

I thank you.