

# AFRICA MUST UNITE - MUSEVENI



President Yoweri Museveni has urged African countries to work towards regional integration as this is a sure way to achieve economic integration. He said, "This is the major therapy that Africa needs."

While addressing Heads of State and delegates at the opening of the 16th Summit of the COMESA Heads of State and Government on 23 November 2012 in Kampala, Uganda, President Museveni said that integration should have two dimensions: economic and political. He however noted that although it is unrealistic to aspire for the political federation of Africa at this time, the East African Community is already aiming at political federation as its ultimate goal.

"The people of East Africa have been

yearning for both political and economic integration while COMESA aims at economic integration because political integration at a continental level is unrealistic. However, I am glad that we are in the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite which will enable us to achieve economic integration," Mr Museveni added.

He commended COMESA for the efforts made in the pursuit of economic integration in Africa and added that the efforts made so far were realistic and necessary and applauded the EAC-SADC-COMESA Tripartite agreement, which has seen Africa's trade volumes increase to about US\$ 18.8 billion and added that these figures will increase with improved infrastructure, especially in railway linkages, throughout the region.

President Museveni compared China to

East Africa and outlined how the latter has attracted about US\$ 1.32 trillion in Foreign Direct Investment despite their communist ideology and lack of multi-party democracy. "The stimulus factors that have aided phenomenal growth in China include the size of its population, land mass, dynamism and rich societal culture as well as the lack of political balkanisation. These factors have led China to become the second biggest economy in the world."

He added that on the other hand, Africa was characterised by balkanisation which undermine the continent's bargaining power and capacity to negotiate as a larger economic bloc.

President Museveni urged delegates to operationalise the Lagos Action Plan, which advocates for African nations to organise themselves for trade and tackle balkanisation.

Delegates were urged to create a unified trading space for posterity by concluding talks on the African Common Market as this will foster better negotiation with trading partners in the United States, European Union, Russia, South America and Japan.

He concluded by urging COMESA to unite in a bid to realise strength.

At the same function, President Museveni of Uganda took over the chairmanship of the COMESA Authority of Heads of State and Government. He takes over from Her Excellency, Mrs Joyce Banda, President of the Republic of Malawi and outgoing chairperson of the Authority. The chairmanship of COMESA is on a one year rotational basis.

# EMPOWERED WOMEN VITAL FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT - ZUMA

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Ms Nkosazana Dlamini - Zuma has urged governments to provide women with access to land, credit and extension services as they constitute more than half of Africa's population.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 16th Summit of the COMESA Heads of State and Government held on 23 November 2012 in Kampala, Uganda, Ms Zuma said that women are the critical half that produces powerful leaders and are responsible for the continuation of the human race.

"Women are also mainly involved in agriculture, which is the backbone of Africa's economy. Fifty percent of land in Africa is arable and has the potential to develop the African people and countries if used optimally to guarantee food security," she said. She gave the example of China, which has provided food security and infrastructure for the citizens and experienced exponential economic growth.

She also encouraged delegates to operationalise the Abuja Treaty, which urges African nations to self reliance without cutting ties with the rest of the world.

"The fact that the growth of the African economy is driven by export in raw materials should be discouraged. Since Africa has 30 percent of the world's reserve of natural resources, there is need to change paradigm and use our natural resources as this will make a big difference in our economies."



Ms Nkosazana Dlamini - Zuma

In line with COMESA's theme for the Summit, 'Enhancing Intra-COMESA trade through micro, small and medium enterprise development', Ms Zuma said, "MSMEs are increasingly becoming a powerful engine of wealth creation in Africa as they constitute over 90 percent of businesses in Africa and are responsible for creating over 50 percent of employment. We should therefore take advantage of the sector as it is pivotal for growth."

COMESA was commended for its initiative in laying a solid foundation in trade for the African people by spearheading Tripartite negotiations which, when concluded, will create huge momentum for continental integration.

Ms Zuma encouraged delegates to exercise inclusion and equity to curtail underdevelopment as it is a threat to peace and stability.

"Conflicts threaten development and therefore, there is need for us to come up with our own solutions geared towards not only preventing

conflicts but also solving those that arise. I encourage delegates to take advantage of the African Union as the premium voice of the continent in collaboration with the regional economic communities and increasing the pace for peace, integration and prosperity. This will drive Africa to take its place among the greatest."

Ms Zuma was pleased to announce that the OAU/AU is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with a call to African nations to communicate and inform themselves of their past and future.

"As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU this year, there is need for us to communicate and inform ourselves of our history and where we are going. Let us talk about prosperity and not poverty. There is need to plan a smoother route for Africa for the next 50 years so that it can become a dynamic force in the international arena as a united force of African people cannot be ignored," she concluded.



# Be like Women Entrepreneurs – Mugabe

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President Robert Mugabe of the republic of Zimbabwe has challenged the business men in the COMESA region to emulate the attitude that the Business women have in the region if their region's is to record meaningful economic growth and development. The Zimbabwean President said this when he addressed the COMESA Heads of State and government Summit at the Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort in Kampala Uganda on 23rd November 2012.

President Mugabe stretched that women world over have been associated with very caring hearts with a lot of passion to see growth in their endeavors especially when it comes to business.

He however took a swipe on the businessmen in the COMESA region urging them to stop their lavish behavior every time they had made a lot of profits from their business venture.

"I would like to argue you the business men in here to emulate our mothers when it comes to managing businesses.

You should stop this attitude of showing off to your friends because you want your friends to see who is driving the latest Mercedes Benz car, its not necessary and spending money on marrying too many women', Mugabe said.

He urged the businessmen to instead continue investing in their businesses so that they can maximize on the profits giving of examples that women are always keen to see their businesses grow.

He said; "You should be like the women, they are so caring, they want to see growth in their business, the women work together so that they can make use of their strengths but for us men all we want to spend money aimlessly. We even forget that we have children to take to school. Some of our mothers took us to schools until we completed university, with the money they used to hide from our fathers", he added.

He further said that COMESA should come up with programmes targeted at the Women Micro, Small and medium Scale entrepreneurs in order to foster

their development in the various businesses they engage in.

President Mugabe also challenged men from the region but in the diaspora to come up with enterprises that will help foster economic development and job creation in the region instead of investing their Knowledge and resources away from their homes.

"We have so many qualified engineers from this region but are based in various parts of the world working for big companies as if they can not work from here. Why cant they come back to the region and create companies that will create jobs for the youths, why cant they come back and contribute to the tax base in the region instead of these foreign companies getting almost half the money back to their soils?", Mugabe questioned.

He said there is potential for the COMESA region to have the biggest companies run by the people from the region, which would ensure that the region does not export raw materials but instead add value and hence making the products cheaper.

# COMESA Authority Appoints 4 News Assistant Secretary General



The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa COMESA has a new Assistant Secretary-General In charge of Programmes at the secretariat.

Ambassador Dr. Kipyego Cheluget who was sworn in by COMESA legal council Mr Brian Chigawa in full view of the COMESA authority pledged to deliver to the best of his ability as he takes up the new position.

Ambassador Dr. Cheluget was until 23rd November 2012, Kenyan Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia and Permanent Representative to COMESA from the Republic of Kenya.

He takes over from Stephen Karangzi who resigned from COMESA as Assistant Secretary-General responsible for programmes in 2011.



# Selected Photo focus



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