

Check Against Delivery

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY BENJAMIN WILLIAM MKAPA,
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, IN HIS
CAPACITY AS THE CO-CHAIR OF THE WORLD COMMISSION ON THE
SOCIAL DIMENSION OF GLOBALISATION, TO THE FIRST AFRICAN
UNION SUMMIT MEETING, DURING A BRIEFING ON THE WORK OF
THE COMMISSION, DURBAN, 9 JULY 2002**

Mr. President;

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government;

Honourable Ministers;

Secretary-General;

Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Missions;

Distinguished Representatives;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I asked for this opportunity to formally inform my colleagues, and all stakeholders on our continent, about the establishment, work, objectives and expected outcome of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation, which was launched on 27 February 2002 in Geneva, and of which the President of the Republic of Finland, Her Excellency Tarja Halonen and I are Co-Chairpersons.

I do so because what will henceforth preoccupy our minds, here and elsewhere, as we launch and promote the African Union, and its economic programme encapsulated in the New Partnership for African Development (NePAD), will be the interface between globalisation and our efforts at the sustainable development of our continent.

Indeed, a great deal of what Africa has been doing, and will be doing in the days ahead, will most certainly inform the work of the Commission, work that requires inputs and contributions from all regions and stakeholders. Even though membership of the Commission is on a personal capacity, I call for such inputs and contributions so that in my work with the Commission I may rest assured that I have the benefit of the wisdom and ideas of my brothers and sisters from Africa.

The Commission has been established under the auspices of the International Labour Organisation, (ILO), which has an historic mandate to promote social justice, and hence to link economic and social policies, which are both equally important and

mutually supportive. It was, therefore, the decision of the ILO Governing Body in November 2001 to establish the Commission.

The Commission is composed of 2 Co-Chairs, and 23 Commissioners, of which 4 are ex officio members. This is an independent Commission, and, as I said, members were appointed in their personal capacity. We have 18 months to produce our report.

The composition of the Commission, embracing policy makers, academics, business people, workers and other social actors from all walks of life, provides a unique opportunity for addressing the formidable challenges of an integrating world, and formulating concrete proposals on how to regulate and shape the forces and process of globalisation.

Your Excellencies,

Last year when NePAD was launched, Africa made an evaluation of her challenges and opportunities. The NePAD launch document in Chapter II, titled "Africa in Today's World: Between Poverty and Prosperity" makes pertinent observations under the sub-heading "Africa and the Global Revolution". It states as follows:

"40. The case for the role of national authorities and private institutions in guiding the globalisation agenda along a sustainable path and, therefore, one in which its benefits are more equally spread, remains strong. Experience shows that, despite the unparalleled opportunities that globalisation has offered to some previously poor countries, there is nothing inherent in the process that automatically reduces poverty and inequality."

"41. What is needed is a commitment on the part of governments, the private sector and other institutions of civil society, to the genuine integration of all nations into the global economy and body politic. This requires the recognition of global interdependence with regard to production and demand, the environmental base that sustains the planet, cross-border migration, a global financial architecture that rewards good socio-economic management, and global governance that recognises partnership among all peoples. We hold that it is within the

capacity of the international community to create fair and just conditions in which Africa can participate effectively in the global economy and body politic.”

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation has a weighty responsibility in precisely that regard: To guide that will and capacity within the international community of nations and institutions to create fair and just conditions under which even the poor in Africa and elsewhere can integrate and relate to the rest of the world on mutually beneficial terms.

I accepted to Co-Chair the Commission in full recognition of the magnitude of that challenge and obligation. I, however, also did so keenly conscious of the just demands of Africa and of the developing world for social and economic justice and fairness. I am also humbled by the recognition that the World Commission has a significant role to play toward the realisation of the pledges we have made, not only in the context of NePAD, but also in the ideals and vision of the African Union. In this regard I have been extremely encouraged by the shared commitment for social justice by the Co-Chair, President Halonen of Finland, as well as the other Commissioners. Now, I ask for similar practical support from each of my colleagues, and from our continental organisation.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Globalisation is a growing and pervasive reality. Remarkable technological developments have brought down borders, particularly in the fields of communications and information, are transforming production, consumption and investment worldwide. These unprecedented changes affect economic structures, social attitudes and the nature of work and enterprises.

Globalisation has much potential for widening opportunities, raising prosperity and promoting development. Increasing numbers of countries have taken advantage of the expanding global markets to generate rising living standards. For them, globalisation has been a resource, an instrument for progress.

But, as rightly noted in the NePAD launch document, despite the unparalleled opportunities, many countries and people, particularly in Africa, feel that they do not participate in the decisions that determine the process and pattern of globalisation, or are excluded from its benefits. There is, indeed, nothing inherent in the process of globalisation that automatically reduces poverty and inequality.

Instead, gaps between winners and losers are increasing, both between countries, and within them. Such gaps, if not attended to, can destabilise societies, nations or even the international system. Globalisation has to be guided to serve the development aspirations of all people, without damaging the spirit of entrepreneurship and enterprise, or the positive aspects and driving force of the market.

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is widespread perception that globalisation exacerbates inequalities, raises uncertainty and insecurity, that it may erode basic rights, that the risks and benefits for people and enterprises are distributed unevenly or unfairly. Yet, to be sustainable, the process of globalisation must address squarely and urgently these concerns.

There is a national dimension to solving these problems, but regional and global initiatives and actions are likewise necessary. Unquestionably, the global institutions and instruments to address the social dimension are still weak. We must speak with one voice in demanding action at that level.

Much has been done and achieved at the national level. The vast majority of African countries have liberalised their politics and their economies, but the dividends are yet to be seen on a satisfactory and sustainable level.

There is need for new thinking, new initiatives and new policies. The Commission will create space for that, with a view to generating practical ideas for change to make the process of globalisation more inclusive, and more beneficial to more people. It will address the needs of those who feel marginalized, as well as those who have benefited, but feel uncertain about the future. It will do so while recognising and respecting cultural and regional diversity, and the universality of our humanity and our shared values.

The Commission has met twice – in February and May. At those meetings it considered a series of central questions, identified key issues and decided on a general

approach. In this context, the Commission does not pretend to have all the answers. In order to stimulate debate and ensure that it obtains the broadest possible range of views during its lifespan, and increase ownership of its final report, the Commission will conduct a number of national dialogues and regional consultations, which will be held around the world. Indeed, a pilot national dialogue is due to be held in Senegal in the next few months. These dialogues seek to engage national and regional stakeholders, including representatives of the civil society. In addition the Commission is organising an in-depth programme of research to supplement and consolidate the intellectual dimensions of its work being coordinated by a Secretariat established at the ILO Headquarters in Geneva.

Mr. President,

The mission of the Commission can, therefore, be summarised as one to develop a consensus on ways to make the process of globalisation more inclusive, in ways that are acceptable and seen to be fair to all, both between and within countries. Such a consensus must embrace issues, which are of concern to people in their daily lives, those of employment and decent work; and those of poverty, economic development, social justice, and human security. It must be based on common values to underpin sustainable policies for open societies and economies. This would create a sense of shared purpose, which can enable countries and institutions to withstand exceptional pressures of social change without violence, or the rapture of social fabrics.

Mr. President,

If any region needs to embrace the work of the Commission it has to be Africa, a continent most at risk from the adverse effects of globalisation. The Conference on the Financing of NePAD held in Dakar, in April 2002, underlined this aspect succinctly:

“Africa considers itself to be a part of the globalisation process. Because of Africa’s continued marginalisation, however, the continent today holds only 1.7 percent of international trade; Africa is the last continent in terms of growth and development; and it is the poorest region in the world.”

Indeed of all the regions of the world, Africa manifests the worst record of the negative effects of globalisation, at a time when it should be the one to make the most

of it to develop rapidly. But, alas, most of the positive aspects and potential gains normally ascribed to globalisation - such as increased trade and investment, integration into the global economy, technological advancement, long-term employment prospects and enhanced quality of life, are not in evidence. With rising unemployment, growing informalisation of jobs, over 300 million people in poverty, and a pitiful 1.7% of world trade, the increasing global insignificance of the region and its marginalisation and exclusion are palpable, threatening and foreboding. These facts are well known; the challenge for national, regional and global governance is to act on them now.

The concern is that the conditions under which advantages of globalisation could be sustainably obtained are lacking or poor on our continent. These include technology, knowledge and skills, capital formation through domestic savings and Foreign Direct Investment, infrastructure and other economic services, and institutional frameworks that are essential to effectively operate in increasingly competitive environments.

If we are not careful we will be irrelevant to the evolving global investment and trade regime. It is incumbent upon us, the leaders of the new African Union, to ensure we do not become irrelevant by doing more for ourselves, and seeking constructive and enabling partnerships with the outside world under the NePAD framework.

Mr. President,

For globalisation to service the war on poverty in Africa, massive and sustained efforts will be required by all actors, including global development institutions. They will have to work critically and constructively with operating corporate giants, African Governments, Africa's regional development communities, and the international financial institutions to focus on points of impact.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion let me repeat what I said at the first meeting of the Commission in February. Globalisation may be inevitable, but it is not beyond human capacity to ensure that the process is inclusive at all levels; that it produces fair and equitable outcomes for all. For globalisation can, and should, act as a powerful engine for growth, for international cooperation and for development. But it must also conduce the kind of growth, cooperation and development that adequately rewards entrepreneurs, fairly rewards the workers that create wealth, fairly and sustainably

serves communities and their environments, ultimately prospers all nations, and stabilises the global order and the international community. Current anxieties – indeed at times overt and abrasive tensions – need not necessarily characterise our present and future human condition.

The Commission will strive to find ways to make globalisation a well organised and globally owned, shared and managed process. Its mandate is to seek constructive and balanced solutions to what are common problems, namely, to identify policies, strategies and other measures that promote open economies, and engender broad-based growth and development with social justice. It will issue a call to action and renewal of commitment to the realisation of these objectives. The new African Union too must call for such global and genuine commitment towards action.

In so doing we are seeking to realign the asymmetry in power relations that characterise globalisation. It will, therefore, not be an easy task. But true to our NePAD declaration, “it is within the capacity of the international community to create fair and just conditions in which Africa can participate effectively in the global economy and body politic”.

The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation will strive to do nothing less. It seeks to harness that capacity of the international community we acknowledge. It seeks to complement our own efforts and determination towards becoming effective participants in the global economy and body politic. That is why the Commission will need your views, your support, and your encouragement.

But we must be realistic. Those who benefit from the existing system are neither keen nor in a hurry to change the framework in which globalisation takes place. That is why, whenever I address fellow Africans on the work of the Commission, I end up quoting the inspirational words of Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere who, in similar circumstances at the inauguration of the South Commission on 20 October 1987 had the following to say:

“From the elders of my tribe I learned a wee story. Here it is in the original!

‘Wakasusu, nihe wagya?

Nagya kwita Wanzugu.

Oragya kutura?

Ndagya Kusaya-sayamu, Ndimukira!

Rabbit, where are you going?
I am going to kill the Elephant.
Can you do it?
Well, I'll try, and try again.'

The South can do what it needs to do. The South must never give up."

Mr. Chairman,

Africa must never give up!
I thank you all for your kind attention.

AFRICAN UNION UNION AFRICAINE

African Union Common Repository

<http://archives.au.int>

Organs

Peace and Security Collection

2002

Statement

African Union Commission

Peace and Security

<http://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/2486>

Downloaded from African Union Common Repository