



**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. SAM
NUJOMA, FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE
NAMIBIAN NATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
CONFERMENT OF THE 2015 AFRICAN UNION SON AND
DAUGHTER OF AFRICA AWARD,
ON THE MARGIN OF THE 6TH AU ANNUAL RETREAT ON THE
PROMOTION OF PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY IN
AFRICA
HELD UNDER THE THEME
*“TERRORISM, MEDIATION AND ARMED GROUPS”***

21-22 OCTOBER 2015

WINDHOEK

NAMIBIA

***Check Against Delivery**

Director of proceedings;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

The people of Namibia share with you their joy in humility in learning that the African Union, through its Commission for Peace and Security, has decided to bestow on me an honour of recognition by conferring the 2015 African Union Son and Daughter of Africa Award.

This award, I am informed, salutes the contributions made by Africans to promote peace, security and stability in Africa and is given on the margin of the AU 6th Annual High Level Retreat of Distinguished Special Envoys and Mediators on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa, being held in our beautiful Capital City of Windhoek, here in Namibia, under the theme *“Terrorism, Mediation and Armed Groups”*.

Indeed, this honour is not only in recognition of my personal efforts but also for the Namibian people for whom I was honoured and privileged to provide guidance during the last thirty years of foreign rule of our country until the attainment of our freedom and genuine independence on the 21st March 1990. Thereafter, the people of Namibia entrusted me with the heavy responsibility of leading our country during its difficult years of transitions to consolidate the gains of our independence.

Allow me therefore to first and foremost express my deepest gratitude to the African Union, in general, and its Commission for Peace and Security, in particular, for this award.

Similarly, it gives me great satisfaction to be conferred upon this prestigious award together with Madam Maria Neto, the Founding First Lady of the Republic of Angola and widow of my dear friend, the late Dr. Antonio Agostinho Neto, the Founding President of the Independent Republic of Angola.

I am therefore most grateful for this distinct honour and I accept it with humility and pride, on behalf of the Namibian people.

Director of Proceedings:

If I am allowed to elaborate on the important aspect of peace, security and stability, it is common knowledge that the on-going debate about the need for social, economic and political reforms in Africa centres on issues of peace, security and development. These are viewed as necessary conditions for social stability and the promotion of human security.

Conflict in a significant number of African countries has often resulted in severe disruption of social and economic development. Consequently, efforts to reduce poverty and sustain basic human rights have been severely constrained; leading to recurrence of violence where peace agreements have been sealed and the escalation of violence where conflicts have hitherto been latent.

Against this background, this Retreat provides us with a unique opportunity to concertedly and holistically review the achievements made so far in the area of peace, security and development in Africa and the challenges ahead. More specifically, the Retreat has the vital objective to reflect on the experiences of the AU in realizing its vision and goals since its establishment and examine current and emerging conflict trends and dynamics on the continent.

Accordingly and rightly so, the establishment within the AU of a fully-fledged peace and security architecture, including the Peace and Security Council, the African Standby Force, the Panel of the Wise and the Continental Early Warning System, is considered as an affirmation by Africa of its determination to resolve its problems.

Furthermore, the development within African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of entire conflict resolution mechanisms and structures denotes the recognition by African regions of not only the regional dimension of African conflicts, but also of the necessity for regional responses if conflicts are to be comprehensively mitigated.

Unfortunately, despite the progress made, the objective of a conflict-free Africa and the vision that underpins it continue to elude millions of Africans, who continue to suffer from violence. Furthermore, complex and daunting challenges continue to face the continent as demonstrated by the situations in the Eastern Democratic

Republic of Congo, Central Africa, Burundi and Burkina Faso as well as other parts of the continent.

Indeed, Africa is confronted with challenges linked to terrorism, transnational organized crime, piracy, secessionist movements, and challenges of state-building, coupled with election-related violence, unconstitutional changes of Government, border disputes as well as the increasing prevalence of violence occurring at the local level.

Boko Haram has apparently transformed from being just a Nigerian problem to becoming a sub-regional threat, with Cameroon also coming under frequent attack and refugees threatening a humanitarian crisis in Chad and Niger.

On the other hand, In South Sudan, nearly 2 million will have been forced to flee their homes because of the fighting. The mass displacement of cattle and the spread of livestock disease are also increasing social tensions. Thousands of migrants have crossed the Mediterranean, with warning that thousands more are waiting in Libya, which serves as a transit route for migrants trying to make the treacherous crossings on unseaworthy vessels.

Against this background, there is need for renewed and robust efforts by all relevant stakeholders under the leadership of the AU.

While peacekeeping and peace enforcement should remain options to be implemented whenever the need arises, priority should be given to the prevention of

conflicts both through the effective implementation of relevant AU instruments on governance, human rights and democracy and respect for diversity as well as strengthening the capacity of the AU to more effectively deploy preventive diplomacy initiatives to address potential crises and avoid their escalation to full blown conflicts.

In this regard, we must mobilize increased resources from within the continent to support the AU's peace and security agenda, as a sine qua non for Africa's leadership and ownership of peace efforts.

This we must do proceeding from the premise that Africa is one continent; that her peoples are one people; and therefore our unity is of paramount importance to the pursuit of Africa's development.

Once again, I accept the 2015 African Union Son and Daughter of Africa Award with honour and humility, on behalf of the Namibian people.

Long Live the African Union!
Long Live the Unity of Africa!

I thank you.