

MAURITIUS NGOs FORUM

[Affiliated with FONGAE]

“Main Mauritian Components: *United Nations Association, Youth Council, Council of Students & Youth Movement, Union of Women’s Committee, African League of Human and People’s Rights, SOS Disabled Children Association & Organization for Development and Cooperation*”

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AFRICA DAY 2009

Dear African Colleagues,

The above mentioned Mauritian NGOs, grouped under the umbrella of the Mauritius NGOs Forum have the honour to greet our African brothers and sisters in the continent as well as to those residing in the Diaspora of our militant and heartfelt congratulation on the occasion of Mother Africa Day 2009.

25th May – an important landmark in the history of every African, known as AFRICA DAY

May 25th is Africa Day, the official day of the African Union. It is an opportunity to celebrate African diversity and success, and join Africans around the world in highlighting the cultural and social energy of the continent. It is A DAY to remember of all struggles, sacrifices and hardships led by our African ancestors for giving us this opportunity of pride to be an African.

It is a day to remember by all African and to observe in connection with the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), by its founding fathers on 25 May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The 2009 Africa Day will be celebrated under the theme: **“Towards A United, Peaceful and Prosperous Africa”** in line with the first strategic pillar of the AU Commission dubbed **“Peace and Security”**, one of the four pillars of the AUC 2009-2012 Strategic Plan.

African NGOs have played an influential and invaluable role in the liberation of the continent, in promoting African Socio-Economic and Cultural identity where-as African Youth, Students, Women, Trade-Unions and other Civil Societies Organizations are unique to the rest of the world.

The vision of the AU is a united Africa with greater solidarity and unity between the different countries and all segments of society. One of the objectives to achieve this vision is to promote common positions on issues of interest to African countries and its people.

However, we cannot forget to takes into account the weak and peripheral standing of Africa in world affairs coupled with the dire conditions of poverty, powerlessness and voiceless that the majority of our people are subjected to despite more than four decades of self-rule.

As such a UN Security Council seat for Africa is a must.

We are of the view that Africa is yet to be independent for the simple reason that the people of the continent and their governments are yet to establish a system of governance that ensures freedom, respect for human rights and sustainable development in spite of the fact that the continent is incredibly rich in human and natural resources, knowledge and skills. Africa is endowed with plenty of natural resources, a pleasant climate, cultural diversity, and a rich historical past, yet it remains marginalized in the economic development process and global political scene.

Africa presents a paradox. Recent positive changes in Africa have brought hope for an African renaissance, evidenced by impressive real growth rates in some countries. On the other hand, there are still major issues threatening this African renaissance.

Africa must find a way to meet its basic needs, extricate itself from poverty and mainstream itself in the global economy, without undermining the very resources and environment on which it depends for survival.

As NGOs, we firmly believe that we have long way to go towards the total liberation of Africa. A new concept needs to be identified so that every-one could share and contribute accordingly in the national development process of each African State. The common plague and disease affecting major African countries among others is HIV/AIDS need to be addressed by all stake holders. Other challenges for the African that need to have immediate attention are among others: Elimination of Poverty, Illiteracy, Backwardness, and to focus on better Communications, Sustainable Development and without forgetting the implementation of UN MDGs by 2015.

Regional cooperation is appearing as a must for the African Continents to move towards a better regional cooperation where our national economy may have a boost through a regional trade exchange. African in the Diaspora has a key role also to play in our economic and cultural development.

We from the Southern African Region are witnessing a very good start of flourishing cooperation among the Southern African Nations through Southern African Development Community-SADC. We wish to learn more on other African regional body.

We would like to mention here few notes on SADC VISION:
The SADC vision is one of a common future, within a regional community that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice; peace and security for the peoples of Southern Africa. This shared vision is anchored on the common values and principles and the historical and cultural affinities that exist amongst the peoples of Southern Africa.

The signatories of the SADC Treaty agree that underdevelopment, exploitation, deprivation and backwardness in Southern African region will only be overcome through economic cooperation and integration. The Member States recognise that achieving regional economic integration in Southern Africa region requires them to put their full support behind SADC to act on behalf of all Southern Africans for their common prosperity, peace and unity.

We want to add that despite important progress and commonalities, however, the growth rates achieved so far fall below the 7% or higher annual growth rates required to put African economies on a sustainable path towards meeting the poverty reduction and related *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* set for 2015. Growth experiences have become increasingly diverse among African countries and sub-regions in the last decade, as the performance of many African economies continues to be crippled by weak human and institutional capacities, low savings and investments, lack of economic diversification, unsustainable external debt, rampant poverty, pandemic diseases, and violent conflict or its aftermaths; coinciding today with World Financial Crisis . All Africans States, Civil Societies, Private Sectors and other Stake Holders must work hands in hands and in total transparency so that the affairs of the nation be first over any other priority so as to be able in overcoming all obstacles on the way of national development.

But, after all, we as NGOs, we would like to see the African Union to push its member States to fully adopt the good governance policy – a key factor to African DEMOCRACY.

To achieve the concept of a strong political and independent African continent, we may here seriously evaluate the vision of moving the African Union towards a Federal African Government or simply a United State of Africa. The elimination of African borders can be easily achieved if our respective Head of States adopt a policy to unify Africa through a Central African Government which will pave the way for a healthy and strong African Nations.

Today in Mauritius, the NGOs Forum and its affiliates are organizing a symposium to mark AFRIDA DAY 2009.

Mauritius NGOs Forum

Press Release -25th May 2009.