



**REMARKS OF H. E. DR. DLAMINI ZUMA,
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION
AT THE ECOWAS-ECCAS SUMMIT ON
MARITIME SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA.
YAOUNDÉ, CAMEROON JUNE 24, 2013**

Your Excellency President Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon,
Your Excellency Prime Minister Hailemariam DESALEGN, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Chairperson of the African Union
Your Excellency President Alassane Ouattara, Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, and President of Cote d'Ivoire
Your Excellency President Idriss Déby, President of the Economic Community of Central African States,
Your Excellency President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, Chairman of the Gulf of Guinea Commission, and President of Angola;
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government here present
Your Excellency the Representative of the United Nations Secretary General,
Your Excellencies Heads of International and Regional Organizations,
Distinguished Ambassadors, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Honorable Mr. Gilbert Tsimi Evouna, Government Delegate to the City of Yaoundé,
Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission deeply regrets her inability to join Your Excellencies personally for this very timely and topical and therefore very important event, due to prior commitments on her heavy agenda.

She has asked me to deliver the following message to Your Excellencies on her behalf, and I quote:

“First and foremost, allow me to please commence by expressing my profound gratitude to H. E. President Paul BIYA, our honoured host, to the Government, and to the great people of the Republic of Cameroon, for their warm welcome and truly fraternal hospitality accorded the African Union Commission’s delegation and other delegations.

I also wish to extend my sincere appreciation to all those who have, in one way or another, contributed towards making this most timely Summit a reality.

My heartfelt gratitude further goes particularly to the Chairperson of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the President of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Chairman of the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), and all Member States of these valued Regional Communities for their brilliant idea of getting together for this historic event that will undoubtedly contribute



towards the rise of Africa and the African people. It will afford our principals gathered here an opportunity to share experiences, exchange views and test new ideas.

Tomorrow, June 25th marks a memorable day designated in 2010 by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as “The Day of the Seafarer.” Dedicated to Seafarers, the day reminds us all of the necessity to honor and pay tribute to our seafarers and sea-workers in general for their invaluable contribution to international trade and world economy. Holding this Summit on June 25th, the “Day of the Seafarers,” is more than expressive as it manifests the constructive revolution that is about to take place in the African Maritime Domain in line with the principles of the International Maritime Organization.

It is therefore an honor and privilege to be here today as we all gather for the adoption of the Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa, within the context of the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSC) 2039 (2012). This is indeed a milestone achievement and a logical reason to be beaming with pride to be an African.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Exactly one (1) month ago, on May 25th, 2013, we were happily gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the OUA/AU under the theme: “Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.” During that Golden Jubilee, we also reflected on Africa’s Blue Economy i.e. the Maritime dimension of African Renaissance. This led to the incorporation of Maritime issues into the Agenda 2063. So, African Maritime geostrategic challenges and opportunities now occupy a golden space in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 of the African Union Commission.

While our struggles for liberation are still fresh in our minds, we are conscious that we must still continue to strive for Africa’s full economic liberation by innovating sustainable ways that open up new opportunities for strong, inclusive, resilient and sustainable development.

This is a signal that Africa is more than ever committed to taking the lead and determining her own destiny by gaining control over the geostrategic and geopolitical challenges faced by the African Maritime Domain, especially in terms of safety, security, maritime resources and various other abundant resources provided by Africa’s inland waters, Seas and Oceans.

As I recall the words of H. E. Mr. James Michel, President of the Republic of Seychelles in the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Book, we Africans need to take ownership of our Blue Economy by seriously paying attention on our inland waters, our Seas and Oceans as the opportunities inherent in these geostrategic spaces belong to us; and only us have the sole right and duty to design creative frameworks able to develop such an immense source of resources that has, unfortunately, for quite some time, been virtually neglected,

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under-developed, but which remains a source of incommensurable wealth and a synonym of enhanced dignity for future African generations.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

In this current highly competitive, complex and interconnected globalized world, security and development go hand-in-hand. Therefore, human societies can hardly enjoy security without development and vice-versa. Consequently, it is necessary that we design smart comprehensive and integrated strategies, like the 2050 African Integrated Maritime Strategy, which we intentionally call “AIM”-Strategy, susceptible to benefiting African societies and populations.

As we may recall, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Pursuant to two Decisions of African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government issued in July 2009 and July 2010 in Syrte, Libya and Kampala, Uganda, the Commission endeavored to develop the 2050 AIM-Strategy, which is an African-driven comprehensive long term multilayered common Vision to tackle the cross-cutting geostrategic and geopolitical challenges and opportunities that we face in our Maritime Domain. This includes the new frontier in mining which is opening up as we see a growing rush to exploit very high-valued minerals in the depths of the oceans. The scale of mineral deposits in the world's oceans is staggering with several hundred years' worth of cobalt and nickel. The under seabed nodules are known to contain up to 28% metal - 10 times the proportion found on land.

At this point, allow me to express gratitude to His Excellency President Paul Biya, for seconding Samuel Kamé-Domguia to the AU Commission in 2007 at Cameroon's cost. Samuel, who is now the Coordinator of the AU Commission's 2050 AIM-Strategy Task Force is the key architect that initiated this development. Your Excellency, I thank you for that gesture of sincere commitment.

Other significant policy documents include: The Africa Maritime Transport Charter (AMTC), which was first adopted in 1994 and revised and updated in 2009; the Plan of Action on Maritime Transport adopted in Abuja in 2007 and updated in Algiers in 2008 and in Durban in 2009, the Durban Resolution on Maritime Safety and Security and the Protection of Environment, as well as several activities being implemented at regional and national levels, as well as those carried out within the framework of the United Nations and other relevant international institutions such as the IMO, which initiated the Djibouti Code of Conduct on the Suppression of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in the Western Ocean and the Gulf of Aden.

As the second biggest continent and the largest Island on earth with more than 26,000 nautical miles of coastline, it is now time that we start to better understand our Maritime Domain so as to strategically innovate winning frameworks that would help us to take advantage and maximize the wealth opportunities provided to us by our inland waters, Seas and Oceans.

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For reasons sometimes beyond our control, we Africans have, for a long time, been more land-centric in a total ignorance of the incommensurable wealth and economic growth potential sited beneath our inland waters, Seas and Oceans. Such a situation led to Africa losing, in the past five (5) decades, more than one hundred billion US Dollars from illegal fishing. Our ignorance and negligence of our Maritime Domain led to, according to a special report from the United States Institute of Peace, African economies in the Gulf of Guinea losing more than one hundred billion US Dollars from illegal crude oil bunkering between 2003 and 2008.

As leaders, we remain accountable to our populations and can no longer afford to allow this to continue. We must now redirect the curve, reclaim the benefits of our maritime natural heritage and assets so as to enable meaningful improvements in the lives of our populations and ensure a brighter future to our young generations. So, this Blue Economy must now become the new frontlines of our fight and struggles for Africa's economic rise and prosperity. This paradox of African people dying from hunger, starvation and poverty while immense resources are dormant in our Maritime Domain must now be brought to an end.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Africa has now become a major hub for global crude oil theft, money laundering, illegal arms and drug smuggling, human trafficking, human smuggling, asylum seekers travelling by Sea, environmental crimes, piracy and armed robbery at Sea, and maritime terrorism. So, if we don't take our responsibility by strategizing our **future ... now**, if we lose ownership of these strategies, African future generations will definitely suffer from the burden of having to be obliged to cope with a future that others have shaped for them.

National, regional and continental coordination appears to be a *sine qua non* condition if we want such a visionary strategic comprehensive approach to bear fruits for our continent. This is exactly the reason of our gathering today as we have all realized that it is our shared responsibility to take leadership roles towards meaningfully and positively changing the destiny of African people.

Recalling the historical background of today's event, I would like to express my deep gratitude and congratulations to H. E. Dr. Thomas Yayi BONI, President of Benin, who had the vision to attract the attention of the international community on the threat of piracy, armed robbery and illicit maritime activities in the Gulf of Guinea.

Ensuring Maritime safety and security is now a must for African economy; hence the necessity of an interagency joint coordinated effort so to better overcome and effectively address geostrategic and geopolitical challenges because as we all know, *Together, we are greater than the sum of our individual ambitions*.

These cross-regional synergy efforts, needless to point out, will, without any doubt, advance shared cross-cutting maritime interests on our continent, contribute to job creation for African youth, help improve Africa's

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security environment and global competitiveness. The reality of these benefits attached to Africa's inland waters, Seas and Oceans also justifies the determination of the AU Commission to put Maritime Affairs as a corner stone of its activities, especially through the design and implementation of the 2050 AIM-Strategy.

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Globalization has generated transnational challenges that no longer recognize borders or nation-states. In this regard, foreseen and unforeseen geostrategic challenges will grow bigger in the years ahead. No single nation can pretend to have the capacity to meet all these challenges alone. It is in this spirit that synergies, maritime partnerships between and among our Regional Economic Communities (RECs), cooperation among AU Member States, local communities and the civil society are more than needed.

Clearly congratulations are in order for **your** efforts and commitment to provide Africa with this long-term comprehensive Maritime Strategy aimed at addressing its multifaceted challenges, maximizing the opportunities through the promotion of African Maritime industry. And as stated by H. E. Mr. Koji Sekimizu, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) during the 5th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) last June 4th, 2013, "capacity building and ensuring investment for the maritime infrastructure holds the key for sustainable development in Africa as set out in the African Union 2050 African Integrated Maritime Strategy." Developing the African Maritime Domain should be considered as a high priority in Africa's agenda.

I must, therefore, take this opportunity to congratulate all the Experts who have dedicated so much time and effort to develop such a winning Strategy or Code of Conduct. I express my full support to the implementation of this Code of Conduct that will ensure a better maritime viability for Africa and the development of a sustainable African Blue Economy for the benefit of African populations.

I have full confidence that with full appreciation of our own challenges, a full ownership of our Maritime Strategy, a full collaboration of all our Member States, a full commitment of our populations, the future of our continent will be fully bright.

Together, let's aim at it because it makes sense to us!

Together, let's go for it because it makes sense to our populations!

Together, let's do it because it is one of the viable ways to positively change the destiny of African people!

Together, let's then take up the challenge so to realize our dreams because the future is now and we are even already navigating in the future!

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I wish you all a very successful and fruitful Summit!

God Bless you all, and God Bless Africa!

Thank You Very Much!"

End of quote.