

Keynote Speech

By

**H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma
Chairperson of the African Union Commission**

**on the occasion of the
The Fourth African Green Revolution Forum**

Theme:

**BEYOND THE TIPPING POINT:
A NEW VISION AND STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSIVE
AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION**

2 September 2014

African Union Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

His Excellency Koffi Annan, Former Secretary General of the United Nations, Board Chair Emeritus of the Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa

His Excellency John Kufuor, former President of the Republic of Ghana

His Excellency Dr. Kanayo Nwanze, President, International Fund for Agricultural Development

Honorable Ato Tefera Terebew, Minister of Agriculture of Ethiopia

Honorable Fifi Kweti, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Ghana

Honorable Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, Minister of Agriculture of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Honorable Dr. Bokary Tereta, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Mali

Honorable Christopher Chiza, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Tanzania

Honorable James M. Beda Machar, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of South Sudan

Dr. Strive Masiyiwa, Board Chair of the Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa

Mrs. Jane Karuku, President of the Alliance for the Green Revolution in Africa

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me pleasure to welcome you to the AU headquarters for the Fourth African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF).

I am also very pleased to note that the theme of the Forum – “New Vision and Strategies for Inclusive and Sustainable Transformation – is very timely and in line with the AU Year of Agriculture and Food Security and in the period where we at the AU are working diligently to finalize our Agenda 2063 – the Africa we want.

**Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I know that you are all experts, so I will leave the experts to speak on agriculture. So I will say a few things mainly from Agenda 2063 which, I hope, you will read and make your inputs before the end of October 2014, if you have not done so already.

Distinguished Participants,

I will approach my talk from the viewpoint of an African woman. The Africa we want is an Africa where there will be no chronically malnourished children.

It's an Africa where no mother will endure the torture of the cry of a hungry child in the absence of food.

It's an Africa where no child will die of hunger; An Africa where no child will be underweight or stunted;

An Africa where all children are well nourished and will grow physically and mentally to their full potential.

So this Forum, as it has been doing before, must do what it will take to get us to that Africa.

**Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Africa we want is an Africa where children are healthy and do not suffer from preventable disease, and when they are ill, they have access to affordable health services.

An Africa where children have access to education, skills training, especially in science and technology, research and innovation.

The Africa we want is an Africa with world class infrastructure – agricultural infrastructure, irrigation, rural roads, storage, distribution, etc.

This Forum, I hope, will have a plan and a target when we shall enhance agricultural productivity and make local food production competitive enough to replace food imports and generate food surpluses to export, and also to position Africa not only to feed itself but contribute to feeding the rest of the world, increase wages in agriculture and make it a viable business for every farmer, and for the commercialization and modernization of agriculture. This has to be within the next 30 years. We cannot wait longer.

Distinguished Participants,

The Africa we want is an Africa where agriculture is modern and anchored in a solid science knowledge foundation, building resilient food and agricultural systems and self-financing; where we put an end to human drudgery in agriculture, where we see the final banishment of the hand-held hoe to the agricultural museum; where this sector is modern, profitable and attractive to the continent's youth and women.

It is an Africa that will take advantage of untapped arable land and be a major player in the global agro-food economy.

By 2025, intra-African trade in food and agricultural produce should increase to at least 50 % of the continent's formal food trade.

This would be made possible by deeper continental market integration, facilitation by the establishment of market and trade infrastructure – roads, railways, including high speed rail transport services – ICT, irrigation, storage, and also agro-processing facilities, commodity exchanges, market information and other structural trade facilities services which would connect farmers to local, national and regional markets through a dynamic web of value chain and strategic food agricultural commodities.

The Africa we want is an Africa recognized for its respect of its environment, for its ecological consciousness and its well established green economy and green energy. Africa's biodiversity, including its forests, rivers and lakes, genetic resources, land as well as our degraded fish stocks and coastal and marine ecosystems should be fully conserved and used sustainably.

Africa has the potential to determine the optimal, least cost energy mix to power her needs for household, as well as her industrial revolution.

Distinguished Participants,

How do we multiply and massify projects like the Songhai Project in Benin, run by Father Godfrey and others, which is an integrated agricultural food project using nature's perfect ecosystem, including biomass electricity production, food processing and household energy.

I was very impressed when I visited the Songhai project in Benin. I came back very enthusiastic. If we can multiply this, it would help. There are lots of other examples, but this is one of the good ones with multipliers. I think if we were to multiply the Songhais, we would make a big difference in our rural areas.

I do hope this Forum will indeed contribute to the Africa we want and quantify it, year by year, until we get to it within 30 years. The Africa we want is a prosperous, integrated, people-centred Africa, at peace with itself and a dynamic force in the world.

Is this Africa possible? My view is that it is very possible and that we are going to achieve it. If China, Japan, Korea, Singapore, to mention but a few, could move from the same level as us 50 years ago and be where they are today.

They do not have the amount of land we have. They do not have the amount of natural, mineral and marine resources we have. They invested heavily in their people – both men and women, especially in science and technology, innovation and research. They innovated,

added value and benefited. And they also built world class infrastructure, amongst other things.

More importantly, they did what worked for them, based on their situations. They did not do what everybody else told them to do.

We should also believe in ourselves, build our capacities. We did free ourselves from the yoke of colonialism and apartheid. How can we fail to eradicate poverty in Africa! The Green Revolution Forum must be a huge contributor to that Africa we want. This is an innovative forum that is doing what we want in Africa.

We Africans declared the 21st century as Africa's century. We have to bequeath future generations with a modern, prosperous, inclusive, transformed, peaceful Africa.

We should reverse this situation where we all acknowledge that Africa is rich but its people are poor. Let us create wealth for Africans, equitably distributed in inclusive and non-sexist societies.

So I look forward to a successful 4th African green revolution Forum, and I look forward to reading its conclusions. But, more importantly, I look forward to an improvement to the ground in Africa.

I thank you.