



# **GLOBAL AFRICAN DIASPORA SUMMIT**

Sandton, South Africa 23 - 25 May 2012

## **Closing Remarks by the President of the Republic of South Africa**

**H.E. Mr. Jacob Zuma**

on the occasion of the Closing Session of the

## **Global African Diaspora Summit**

under the Theme:

*“Towards the Realisation of a United and Integrated Africa and its Diaspora”*

**Sandton Convention Centre**

25 May 2012

**Excellency the chairperson of the African Union, President Bon Yayi of the Republic of Benin,**

**Excellencies Heads of State and Government,**

**Excellency Dr. Jean Ping, AU Commission Chairperson,**

**Ministers and Deputy Ministers,**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

We have come to the end of a very productive and meaningful Summit.

Once again, as Africans, we have asserted our shared descendancy; our shared vision; our shared history; our shared experience, and our shared commitment to overcome the challenges faced by our people on the African continent.

Once again, let me take this opportunity to commend the AU for the sterling work they have done in putting this Summit together.

The Commission has used this partnership to put together an event which is very close to the hearts of all Africans who really care for the development of this continent.

The work we have done collectively is a true reflection of our hard work and dedication in ensuring that this event emerges victorious. This is our victory. This victory is a true reflection of our true advocacy to Africa's regeneration.

For us what remains critically important is how we are going to collectively realise the goals we have set for ourselves in this Summit. For this, we require a lot of courage, hard work and support for one another, especially our brothers and sisters in the Diaspora.

I am particularly pleased that during our meetings at Heads of State level, we had an opportunity to engage on issues related to strengthening the AU and its agencies.

We reflected on the need to create more opportunities for Africans in the Diaspora, integrating the African Diaspora into all socio-economic and political activities of the continent, and the promotion of good education and youth development.

It is through education that we shall conquer the ills of poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment.

In this regard, the much acclaimed African scholar, Ben Okri, has this to say about Africa and its developments:

“Africa is a challenge to the human race in the 21st century because, through her, humanity can begin to feel at peace with itself. Africa is our conscience.

“There can be no true progress for humanity till the sufferings of our brother and sister continents are overcome, till people everywhere live good lives, free from vile diseases, undernourishment, illiteracy and tyranny.”

Okri’s assertion resonates well with some of the key elements of our foreign policy objectives, chief amongst which is strengthening the African Agenda.

Our view of placing the African Agenda as the foremost priority in our foreign policy is indicative of the value we attach to the prosperity of this continent.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The decisions we have taken and interventions we have made during this Summit are reflective of our vision for our people, especially the Diaspora.

The vision we have as African leaders is that which seeks to provide access to basic human needs for our people – at home and abroad.

We must, therefore, ensure that we provide decent jobs to our people, through the linkages we have made throughout our consultations. We must ensure that all our people live in a safe and secure environment.

I think we should take this opportunity to congratulate ourselves for making time to engage in all these activities related to the future of Africa, its people, and indeed, its Diaspora.

We have had all forms of interaction, and went through the important processes in which we took stock of our common vision and ideals.

We have documented all resolutions taken. Now work will have to start in earnest to ensure that we do not betray the people of Africa.

We have set ourselves timeframes within which we shall have reached implementation phases of our resolutions. It was important to document what we did and the extent and depth to which we have committed ourselves to the goals we have set for this Summit.

We did so because we believe, as Heads of State and Government, that as and when we perform our duties, we never go astray and lose sight of the bigger picture.

This, we also did for posterity. The future generations should be able to tap on the same ideas we collectively shared in order to move this continent to greater heights.

It is our firm belief that this Summit will become a showpiece of our intended collaboration with our African brothers and sisters in the Diaspora.

Whilst this project must inspire us, its outcomes are a clear demonstration that even though we are situated in different parts of the world, nothing must prevent us from working towards a common goal – that of creating a better life for the people of Africa, and the Diaspora.

The resolutions we have taken in the Summit demonstrate that Africans are more than capable of successfully taking their destiny into their own hands.

As we have come to the end of this Summit, I wish you all a safe journey upon your return back home to your people, and indeed, your different constituencies.

As you leave Africa, I have no doubt in my mind that you will take back with you the fond memories of your stay in this Southern part of the continent.

We hope you will forever cherish the moments you spent here on our shores, and most of all, the friendships you have forged with your brothers and sister.

### **Your Excellencies, My Brothers and Sisters in the Diaspora;**

This is your home; please take part in the activities that are geared towards developing this continent. Let us join hands and strengthen the AU and its agencies. It is in our best interest as a collective.

Africa is calling. A continent poised to drive the future global economy, the next growth pole.

### **Happy Africa Day!**

I thank you.