



**STATEMENT BY HIS HONOUR THE VICE PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA MR. GEORGE KUNDA SC, MP
ON THE DEBATE OF THEME: "TOWARDS GREATER UNITY
AND INTEGRATION THROUGH SHARED VALUES"
OF THE 16TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN
UNION ASSEMBLY OF HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT**

ADDIS ABABA

30TH JANUARY, 2011

- **Your Excellency the Chairperson of the African Union;**
- **Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government;**
- **Your Excellency the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Jean ping;**
- **Honourable Ministers;**
- **Senior Government Officials;**
- **Ambassadors and Diplomats;**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.**

From the outset, let me state that I bring greetings from his Excellency the President, Mr. Rupiah Bwezani Banda, the government and people of the republic of Zambia. President Banda could not be with you today because of pressing national duties that require his attention.

However, knowing the importance of this function, he has asked me to come and be here on his behalf. It is therefore my pleasure and honour to address the 16th ordinary session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

Let me join those who have spoken before me to express my delegation's congratulations on the election of his Excellency Mr. President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea as the new chairperson of the union. Your Excellency can rest assured of our support during your tenure as chairperson. I also wish to extend the same felicitations to other members of the bureau.

In the same vein, my delegation also wishes to pay special tribute to the outgoing chairperson, His Excellency Professor Bingu Wa Mutharika for his able stewardship during his tenure as chair. We equally pay tribute to his bureau.

Our Commission has worked very tirelessly to prepare documentation for the theme that we are debating as well as other items of the agenda. To Dr. Ping and his team, we say thank you for a job well done.

I will be failing in my functions if I do not acknowledge the kind and generous hospitality extended to me and my delegation by the government and people of the federal democratic republic of

Ethiopia since our arrival in the beautiful city of Addis Ababa. We express our profound gratitude for this generous hospitality.

Your Excellencies,

As my delegation takes the floor to debate the theme of this sixteenth ordinary summit of the assembly of heads of state and government of the African Union, we cannot help but to state that the theme "**Towards Greater Unity and Integration Through Shared Values**" could not have come at a better time than now when many of our members have attained fifty years of independence.

We believe the theme holds great relevance to the goals and objectives our founding fathers set out to attain which, guided by the shared value of Pan-Africanism, they set out to create the Organization of African Unity and its liberation committee which worked with resilience and determination for the total liberation of Africa from colonial and racial subjugation.

Your Excellencies,

For Zambia, the elements contained in the theme "**towards greater unity and integration through shared values**" are deeply entrenched in our national psyche as demonstrated by the value we attached as a country to the freedom of our brothers and sisters during the liberation struggles of southern Africa, regardless of risk.

For us in Zambia, the values of freedom and self-determination were values we could not enjoy by ourselves but which had to be shared with others throughout the continent. Today, we remain propelled by those same values to work for an Africa that is fully integrated continentally and globally with dynamism and competitiveness. We in Zambia see our destiny as being fully tied to that of Africa.

The same spirit that characterized our commitment to hold each other's hands when fighting for freedom against oppression and the brutal apartheid regime, is the same spirit which should drive us into the next half century as we promote prosperity.

Your Excellencies;

Regional and continental integration offer the best hope for Africa to achieve the promise of progress that we have pursued since the attainment of independence across the continent. Through regional and continental integration, we build larger markets, learn to compete before entering the global markets beyond the traditional product offerings of commodities. In addition, we build a truly Pan-African identity among all segments of African society.

Through the Abuja treaty, Africa committed herself to establish an African common market by 2023 and African economic community by 2027. Time between now and those target dates is short given the complexity of facilitating system wide integration.

We are happy that the regional economic communities of the East African Community (EAC), Common Market for Eastern and

Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) have taken the crucial step of building a unified free trade area among them. We now look towards the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to anchor the process of creating a unified free trade area for Central, West and North Africa, so that at a later stage, we can merge with minimum challenges, the two larger groupings into an all-Africa free trade area.

As we promote regional and continental integration, let us always remember that the process opens up new possibilities to address immense challenges like youth unemployment, infrastructure development; structural reforms and peace and security, among others. Integration is in this connection, an additional window of promoting development and stability.

For integration to become dynamic, it also requires of each and every one of us to think about innovative ways and means of financing the African union. A weak and underfunded African union will never make the desired impact of making our continent a strong, united and developed member of the international community.

**Your excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

Over the years, Africa has taken various decisions aimed at achieving closer unity and deeper integration. In doing so, we have by design expounded upon our shared values. A perusal of our declarations, acts, agreements and conventions, reveals that good governance stands out as the continent's greatest shared value.

This value finds expression in, among others, adherence to the rule of law, democracy and representation of popular will, popular participation in governance, free and fair elections, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, equity and equality, economic and social self-reliance, justice and culture.

We must, in this connection, focus on mainstreaming these shared values into our respective domestic spheres. We must ensure that these values become entrenched in our national governance systems, if we are to surmount the political, economic and social challenges to continental integration.

Lack of respect for these values in some parts of our continent has generated turmoil and conflict, thereby forcing a large number of our people to experience unnecessary suffering and pain resulting from wars, conflicts and displacement. Today Africa faces the challenge of more than 3 million refugees, 15 million internally displaced persons and several asylum seekers and stateless persons. In addition to the humanitarian challenges this poses, it unnecessarily destroys the talents of victims, who would have contributed to development of their communities given the opportunity. It also puts pressure on many of our countries who have been called to respond to these challenges. Zambia is today still home to about 60,000 refugees who have been victims to war.

Chairperson;

Your excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Before I conclude, I would like to state that Zambia has been honoured to be accorded the opportunity to host the 10th African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) ministerial forum and

exhibition from 6th to 8th June, 2011 in Lusaka under the theme: **“enhanced trade through competitiveness, value addition and deeper regional integration”**. As part of the part of the preparations, we are in the process of convening an AGOA review meeting which will serve as a stock taking platform of the 9th AGOA forum. Formal letters of invitation to both events will soon be sent out. Zambia is ready to receive all African countries to this forum.

As if conclude my remarks, I wish to make the point that values are nothing but our behaviour and culture. To a great extent, they determine our destiny. We would like to build a continent of greater unity and integration through shared values. As we adopt the declaration and decision on this theme, the next stage is to put what we commit into practice. As they, action speaks louder than words.

I thank you for your attention.