



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS
DR NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA, MP
MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR WOMEN,
YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**WOMEN IN BUSINESS SYMPOSIUM
THEME: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER (ULWAZI LUNGAMANDLA)**

18 AUGUST 2023

Programme Director;

Premier of KwaZulu-Natal Province, Ms Nomusa Dube-Ncube;

Minister of Transport, Ms Sindi Chikunga;

MEC for Finance, Ms Peggy Nkonyeni;

Stakeholders from various entities;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Ladies and gentlemen;

I am pleased to be with you this morning as we share insights on the empowerment of women during the month of August - a month dedicated to the advancement of women's empowerment and liberation.

The organiser of today's symposium, MEC Nkonyeni, gave me guidelines on what I must speak about. One of the main things that she highlighted is "**Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want**". Let me first explain what

“Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want” is, because some people misunderstand it. Some say, why Agenda 2063? We will not be there. Others say, we cannot wait for 2063, we must start now. This is a strange way of looking at things.

In order for us to properly frame our way of thinking, is it necessary that we take a step back and reflect on some aspects of our history as Africans.

Contrary to the mainstream narrative, Africa was a highly developed continent before colonialism. We had kingdoms, we traded with each other and our civilisation was organized. Some of the world’s great civilisations, such as Kush – who built the Nubian Pyramids as early as 700 BC, Egypt, Axum, Mali, Great Zimbabwe, and the Ashante, flourished in Africa in the years before 1500. Thousands of art, historical, and heritage artifacts such as the Benin bronzes were looted from African towns during the period of occupation. This was part of the colonisers’ plan to dehumanise us by dispossessing Africans of their identity.

We had sophisticated economic systems where Africans were trading among themselves with established trade routes, while some states had established important trading relations with India, China and other parts of Asia. There is evidence that Africa had its own forms of commerce, science, art and other measures of civilisation long before the arrival of the colonisers. This is corroborated by an account of the Spanish scholar, Leo Africanus who visited the royal court of Timbuktu in the 16th Century, and he had this to say:

“The people of Timbuktu are of a peaceful nature... The royal court is magnificent and very well organized... Here are great

stores of doctors, judges, priests, and other learned men, that are beautifully maintained at the king's cost and charges. And hither are brought diverse manuscripts or written books out of Barbie, which are sold for more money than any other merchandise."

This state of development was rudely interrupted by the era of slavery and colonisation.

Consequently, in 1945, our forebears from the continent and the diaspora met in Manchester at the Pan-African Congress. They took a resolution that Africa must be decolonized in 50 years, and they started putting together all the building blocks towards decolonisation of the continent. Some of those building blocks included the formation of the Pan-African Women's Organisation (PAWO) in 1962, and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, whose purpose, among other things, was to promote unity and solidarity of African States, coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa and to eradicate all forms of colonialism from our continent. Indeed, except for the Western Sahara, Africa was decolonised within those 50 years. The last country to be decolonised was South Africa in the 49th year after the congress sat.

In 2013 we celebrated 50 years of the existence of the OAU, which transitioned to be the Africa Union (AU) launched in 2002 here in Durban. At that time, we asked some critical questions, "What will Africans celebrate in the next 50 years?" "What is the agenda that we will implement between now and then to achieve the Africa we want?" And

that is why Agenda 2063 was conceptualised. From there, we began consultations with different stakeholders across the length and breadth of the African Continent.

We consulted youth, women, religious leaders, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), academia, trade unionists, artists, business, and AU Member States, among others. The ideas in the 7 Aspirations of Agenda 2063 came from the citizens of the continent rather than the officials at the AU. Agenda 2063 is founded on the AU vision of an ***integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena.***

The “***Africa We Want***” would not happen by a miracle – we need to be intentional. Much like when you want your child to be a doctor at 25, you need to plan. I can argue that this planning would be your “***Agenda 25***”.

If you plan in the short term, you tend to be constrained by your immediate circumstances and challenges. Planning 50 years ahead allows us to dream, to think creatively and sometimes crazy and we can leapfrog beyond our immediate challenges.

We aspire that by 2063, Africa shall be:

1. **A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development;**

- African people have a high standard of living, and quality of life, sound health and well-being;
- Well educated and skilled citizens, underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge society is the norm and no child misses school due to poverty or any form of discrimination;
- Cities and other settlements are hubs of cultural and economic activities, with modernized infrastructure, and people have access to affordable and decent housing including housing finance together with all the basic necessities of life such as, water, sanitation, energy, public transport and ICT;
- Economies are structurally transformed to create shared growth, decent jobs and economic opportunities for all;
- Modern agriculture for increased production, productivity and value addition contributes to farmer and national prosperity and Africa's collective food security; and
- Africa's unique natural endowments, its environment and ecosystems, including its wildlife and wild lands are healthy, valued and protected, with climate resilient economies and communities.

2. An integrated continent, politically united based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's Renaissance;

- Be a United Africa;

- Have world class, integrative infrastructure that criss-crosses the continent;
- Have dynamic and mutually beneficial links with her Diaspora; and
- Be a continent of seamless borders, and management of cross-border resources through dialogue.

3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law;

- Be a continent where democratic values, culture, practices, universal principles of human rights, gender equality, justice and the rule of law are entrenched; and
- Have capable institutions and transformative leadership in place at all levels.

4. A peaceful and secure Africa;

- An entrenched and flourishing culture of human rights, democracy, gender equality, inclusion and peace;
- Prosperity, security and safety for all citizens; and
- Mechanisms to promote and defend the continent's collective security and interests

5. An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics;

- Pan Africanism will be fully entrenched;
- The African Renaissance has reached its peak; and
- Our diversity in culture, heritage, languages and religion shall be a cause of strength, including the tangible and intangible heritage of Africa's island states.

6. An Africa, whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children;

- Is People-centred and caring;
- Puts children first;
- Has empowered women to play their rightful role in all spheres of life;
- Has full gender equality in all spheres of life; and
- Has engaged and empowered youth.

7. Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner.

- A major social, political and economic force in the world, with her rightful share of the global commons (land, oceans and space);

- An active and equal participant in global affairs, multilateral institutions, and a driver for peaceful co-existence, tolerance and a sustainable and just world; and
- Fully capable and have the means to finance her development.

In order to realise these Aspirations, we identified various flagship projects in order to accelerate implementation of Agenda 2063, among them being the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The AfCFTA intends to create a single market for goods and services, facilitated by movement of persons in order to deepen the economic integration of the African continent. The implementation of the AfCFTA will ensure that we increase intra and inter Africa trade in that it aims to address the tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade.

We should all understand that Africa cannot increase trade without industrialising, manufacturing and beneficiating its mineral and natural resources and accelerating investment in economic and social infrastructure.

I was recently in Ghana, and I was impressed that they have begun implementing strategies to ensure the beneficiation of their cocoa into chocolate. What Agenda 2063 requires is that this chocolate should be found in the shelves of supermarkets all over the continent, in order to grow that industry. As Ghana sells us its chocolate, there should be

proudly South African products that are beneficated from our raw materials to be available throughout the entire continent.

According to the United Nations, intra Africa trade stands low at just 14.4% of total African exports. UNCTAD forecasts show the AfCFTA could boost intra Africa trade by about 33% and cut the continent's trade deficit by 51%.

The Oceans Economy

The oceans economy is a big economic frontier we have yet to seriously take advantage of. Our continent is blessed with about 30 500 kilometres of maritime space, which consists of two oceans (Atlantic and Indian), two seas (Mediterranean and Red), lakes and rivers. About 90% of the trade in African imports and exports are transported through the ocean, and yet none of those vessels are ours, the seafarers are not African, the perishables are not procured in Africa and even the insurance is not locally based.

There should be initiatives to develop the oceans economy, in particular the development of skills within the Maritime sector and the creation of jobs and businesses, all of which must be of interest to African women, youth and persons with disabilities. Employment opportunities can extend to considerations regarding who insures our ships, who are the marine biologists, maritime lawyers, port operators, and marine engineers among others. The services sector is therefore critical, from insurance and legal

services, to tourism, sports and leisure, port management and logistics within the sector.

The maritime economy offers various opportunities and I believe that all of us have some ideas on how to tap into those opportunities, but I will also mention a few areas we should focus on, which include:

- Ports and Shipping
- Aquatic resources, fishing, aquaculture and the development of infrastructure such as storage, transport and markets to modernise this sector and to contribute to our collective food security
- Deep sea mining and energy resources such as oil and gas
- Commerce, industrialization and trade
- Employment, skills and social development
- Tourism and leisure services
- Aquatic sports and activities that young people can pursue

In addition, we must mobilise resources to make all of this happen, and hence the proposal for a Maritime Development Fund to finance local business in the sector in the continent.

The approach to the development of the oceans economy must be integrative, to ensure that we develop our space as a common African good. For example, one country's maritime security issues are dependent on its neighbours' ability to secure its own, which further impacts on the

protection and sustainability of its resources. The aquatic resources of our oceans and seas are being pillaged through illegal activities and overfishing, damaging the livelihoods of indigenous small-scale African fisher communities. Our efforts need to therefore speak to an inclusive, participatory approach to the empowerment of these marginalised communities within the blue economy.

This requires that we implement the AU Blue Economy Strategy which speaks to the development of the blue economy as late-arrivals and to reclaim our space, we will do better if we do it in a cooperative and Pan-African manner, acknowledging the strength in our unity.

In the USA, foreign vessels can only dock in one port, and local ships are then the ones to transport goods between the different ports within that territory. We need to implement a similar system in Africa, which can only be done once we are the owners of vessels moving goods on the continent.

We need to expand our shipping industry to include building, ownership, and operations of ships so as to transform the entire value chain. We should encourage Africans to participate actively in the fishing industry.

Our education and skills training curriculum should include all the areas which are directly linked to our endowments, whether it be in mining, agriculture, the oceans economy and energy, among others, so that we are not forced to recruit skills from outside our borders under the guise of scarce skills, whilst our young people are unemployed.

In implementing Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects, we will be able to reverse the African paradox of a rich Africa and poor Africans.

Firstly, Africa, with all its vast mineral and natural resources and immense wealth, land and the sun yet Africa is characterised by poverty, inequality and unemployment. This disparity raised pressing questions about the distribution of wealth, the management of resources, and the socio-economic structures that perpetuate such inequalities.

Secondly, our continent is characterised by oceans of opportunity and shores of despair. The majority of Africans living along the coastline are poor despite all the opportunities.

Third, our continent has a production and consumption dilemma: We consume what we do not produce and produce what we do not consume. A cycle of producing raw materials, which are then exported without undergoing local processing or value addition continues to weaken our economies. Consequently, Africa often finds itself importing the very products it could produce, leading to an economic model where it consumes what it does not produce and exports value along with much

needed jobs to the rest of the world. This not only deprives the continent of potential revenue but also reinforces a dependency on external markets and industries.

Fourth, the problem of arable Africa importing food: Our continent has 65% of the world's remaining uncultivated arable land, an abundance of fresh water and about 300 days of sunshine each year. This natural bounty is mirrored by our human capital, with over 60% of the continent's workforce rooted in agriculture, tilling soil that is predominantly fertile and rich. Yet, despite these advantages, we have food insecurity, and our economies continued to lose much needed foreign exchange by continuing to pay for food to be imported.

So we felt it is important that Africa reverses this trend: by **cultivating, processing, consuming, and eventually exporting our own produce.** Embracing modern agricultural practices, which incorporate technologies for drought resilience, crop protection, and yield enhancement, would not only improve employment and wealth but also significantly elevate health and nutrition standards. Consequently, agriculture is not just an industry it is the bedrock of Africa's self-reliance.

We also needed to respond to **Africa's Youth Conundrum:** While our vibrant and dynamic youthful population holds the promise of driving the continent's future, a significant portion of this population remains economically inactive, idle, and mostly disillusioned. The lack of opportunities and the allure of a better life elsewhere has driven many to

undertake perilous journeys across the Mediterranean, seeking greener pastures in Europe.

Overall, the problem of Africa was and continues to be our inability to realise our worth, the worth of our continent to ourselves and the worth of our continent to the rest of the world. So, we needed a vision of how we re-position ourselves in relation to prevailing geopolitical realities.

Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want, is an agenda for reversing all these things we have talked about. But we cannot reverse these, unless we ensure that women and youth are the drivers of this agenda, and they participate in all areas of human endeavour equally. Women and youth on the continent should also ensure that they organise themselves to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA and the implementation of Agenda 2063.

AU Member States should also institutionalise Agenda 2063, and integrate it with their national development plans. While I was still at the AU, some Member States had begun this work, and I hope more Member States continue to do the same.

As I conclude, I would like to reflect on the words of one of the forebears of our democratic movement, O.R. Tambo who said:

“No nation can boast of being free until its women are free.”

Further, the former President of the Republic of Mozambique, Samora Machel said:

“The emancipation of women is not an act of charity, the result of a humanitarian or compassionate attitude. The liberation of women is a fundamental necessity for the Revolution, the guarantee of its continuity and the precondition for its victory. The main objective of the Revolution is to destroy the system of exploitation and build a new society which releases the potentialities of human beings, reconciling them with labour and with nature. This is the context within which women's emancipation arises.”

It is therefore critical that as we commemorate the valiant women of 1956 who marched to the Union Buildings during the month of August, the empowerment of women remains a priority all year round, particularly as the women of the continent are yet to be free.

Malibongwe!