



**Statement by the Chairperson of the African Union,  
H. E. President J.A. Kufuor,  
on the Occasion of Africa Day, 25 May 2007**

*Fellow Africans and Friends of Africa.*

Once again, we celebrate yet another Africa Day, an occasion that affords us the unique opportunity to take stock of our achievements and to rededicate ourselves to address the challenges that confront us as a continent.

Since the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU), we have all worked collectively as member states and individually as countries and citizens of Africa to accelerate the pace of Africa's development in order to catch up with other advanced parts of the world.

In doing so, we have established new organs like the Pan African parliament and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council that have given a voice to the people of Africa to play a more meaningful and representative role in the governance of Africa.

We have established the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and are in the process of operationalising its architecture, including the Stand by Force, the Continental Early Warning System, the panel of the Wise and the Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development elements, in order to bring durable peace and stability to the continent. As we are all wont of saying, without peace and stability, there can be no sustained economic growth and sustainable development of the continent.

In the area of governance, human rights and the rule of law, we have made tremendous progress. The adoption of the Charter on Governance, Elections and Democracy and the urgent steps taken to operationalise the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights are testimonies to our common desire to fight impunity on the continent and to ensure transparency and accountability in the political governance of the continent.

The adoption of the new Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the development programme of the African Union and its African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has also enhanced political and corporate economic governance of the continent. Since its adoption, the Heads of State and Government have used it as a platform in their engagement with Partners all over the world to mobilize resources for the development of the continent. It is in this connection that in March this year, the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee took the momentous step to further define its role and functions to accentuate its niche as the developing wing of the African Union.

In spite of these efforts, the challenges facing us as a continent remain daunting. As we adopt all possible measures to address them, we have become increasingly aware that we



need to forge more unity and solidarity to deal with these challenges in a more holistic and comprehensive manner, and in partnership with other developed parts of the world. This added impetus justifies the theme for this year's celebration: *Strengthening Africa's Place in the world through Strategic, Balanced and Responsible Partnership*".

In the past, we have pursued partnership arrangements with the developed countries which constitute the G-8 and the European Union. In recent times, we are trying to develop more contacts with emerging partners like China, India, Brazil and South America in order to bridge the huge development gap that exists between us and them.

The kind of partnership, both with the traditional partners and the emerging powers, should be consistent with the clearly articulated vision and mission of both the African Union and its NEP AD programme. The immediate objective of the partnership is the building of Africa's infrastructure in all its aspects, the industrialization of the continent, including the service industry, and the diversification of Africa's economy generally to enable Africa to compete effectively in a globalised world. The partnership should harness the experiences and comparative advantages of all the partners, including private sector operators and Africa's Diaspora, to achieve this objective.

All these efforts will bear ready and abundant fruit only if we start with deepening the partnership arrangements among ourselves as Africans before we go out as a continent to access what others can bring to support our efforts. Fortunately, there is a growing recognition among us today of the need to work on agreed strategic areas of focus, including a common understanding of continental integration and the constraints against such an integration process. We therefore look forward to the July 2007 Summit in Accra dedicated to the *"Grand Debate on Union Government"* which, hopefully, will help us identify the strategic goals, objectives and actions that will help our embattled continent to gain its rightful and dignified place in the globalised world.

*Fellow Africans and Friends of Africa,*

On the occasion of the Celebration of yet another Africa Day, let us rededicate ourselves to work to turn Africa into a larger expanse of peace and stability and the dream of an African Economic Market with its free movement of people, goods and services and the spread of prosperity as a tribute to Africa's unity and solidarity.

Long live the African Union!

May God Bless Africa!