

SPEECH

BY

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Her Excellency, the Vice-President, Excellencies, the Heads of delegations to the Ateker Convention,
Their Highnesses the Cultural Leaders of Uganda,
Ladies and gentlemen.

On the behalf of all the Ugandan People, I welcome you to Uganda. I am glad that some People among the Ateker Communities of the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa, have finally realized and are beginning to appreciate what God did long ago. In the Bible, in the book of Acts : 17: 26-27, it says that God created different Peoples in the World and gave them different parts of the World where each would live, with known boundaries. The exact quotation goes as follows:

“From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from anyone of us. (Acts: 17: 26-27, NIV).”

In the case of Africa, God enabled the following linguistic groups to reside here on the African Continent. These are: The Niger-Congo (the Bantus and the Kwa groups of Southern Nigeria); the Nilo-

Saharan (the Nilotic, Nilo- Hamitic, Cushitic and the Sudanic groups of languages); the Afro-Asiatic (Arabic, Tigrinya and Amharic); and the Khoisan groups of Southern Africa. The Ateker groups are a sub-cluster of the Nilo-Saharan cluster.

We, the Pan- Africanists, led by Padmore, W.E.B Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, Mwalimu Nyerere, Modibo Keita, Sekou Toure, Gamal Abdul Nasser, Muammar Gaddafi, Ben Bella, King Muhammad the V of Morocco, Patrice Lumumba, Jomo Kenyatta, Tom Mboya, etc, detected and isolated three historical missions for us, the Africans, to achieve if we are to survive as free People or even survival at all and thrive.

These historical missions are: Prosperity for the African People; Strategic Security; and taking advantage of the Undugu (brotherhood- fraternity) of our People, given to us by God.

We always start with the question: Where does prosperity come from?” can prosperity be achieved by begging from other Countries? If that was the case, then all the African Countries would be very Prosperous because they have excelled in that enterprise, all these years. So, would Latin America from where you see desperate throngs of People

walking on foot and going to the prosperous USA. Where, then, does prosperity come from? Prosperity comes from producing a good or a service, with ekibaro (assessing the optimal returns), sustainably and selling the good or somebody using that service and paying the service provider. In that case, the producer of the good or the service, will get income and solve the problem of food, shelter (house), clothing, health, education for the children, etc, as well as creating jobs for other Citizens and paying taxes to support the Country. If that is the answer for achieving prosperity, then the next question is: “Who will buy those goods and services sustainably and on large scale so that your prosperity is sustainably supported?” Here, we get to the question of the market. If you produce goods and services with ekibaro to solve your problem of prosperity, who will buy those products sustainably and on a big scale enough to sustain your prosperity? Is the market in your tribe enough? How about the market in the Country where your tribe or part of your tribe, as is normally the case, were put by the colonial borders? Is that market enough to support your prosperity? Experience has shown that when the People wake up from ajoo (sleeping) and start producing goods and services with ekibaro, neither the tribal market nor

the Country market, can be enough. Since the NRM woke up the Ugandans to some limited extent- not fully- the internal market of Uganda has shown that it is not enough. We have surplus of almost everything: maize, milk, sugar, fruits, beef, bananas, eggs, poultry, beers, soft drinks, cement, etc etc. Besides, there are other examples in the World. Take the example of Latin America. In terms of natural resources (water, forests, minerals, Agriculture, etc), Latin America could be much richer than the USA. However, on TV, you can see how miserable those People, walking in thousands on foot or hanging dangerously a top over-crowded trains, or even Petrol wagons on trains, trying to go to the “heaven” of the USA. What caused the difference between the two- USA and Latin America? In my view, the answer is: integration- economic and political – versus fragmentation. Political and economic integration among similar, linked or contiguous People, appropriately done, means strength and prosperity while political and market fragmentation, means weakness and misery on account of poverty and insecurity.

That is why our movement, the NRM, which started as a student movement in the 1960s, distilled the 4 ideological principles: patriotism (love Uganda

because you need it for your prosperity); Pan-Africanism (love Africa because you need it for your prosperity- Uganda is not enough to guarantee your prosperity); social- economic transformation (the community needs to undergo metamorphosis from a non- money traditional way of life to a money economy); and democracy to ensure that People hold the leaders accountable and they are elected by them.

Therefore, what you the Ateker People are doing here, is a step in the right direction. You are reminding yourselves that you are similar People, the colonial borders not with-standing.

The second historical mission we identified was strategic security- ability to defend ourselves against any and all threats from wherever. The colonization of the whole of Africa except for Ethiopia by 1900, was an existence threatening phenomenon. Some of the Colonized Peoples either were exterminated or survived as small marginalized groups, their lands having been taken over by other People. Today, there are actors in the World who talk of 4 dimensional superiority: on land (land forces), in the air (air force), at sea (the Navy) and in space. Where does this leave Africa? How can it be that People who survived the nightmare and that existence threatening

phenomenon of colonialism, cannot immunize themselves against such future threats? That is why some of our leaders, such as Mwalimu Nyerere, Dr. Obote and Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, on the 3rd of June, 1963, had declared the intention to form the East African Federation that year. Unfortunately, some actors frustrated the effort. The East African Federation, would have addressed both the issue of economic integration for prosperity and political integration for strategic security. Indeed, if that Federation had taken off that time, we would never have had Idi Amin in Uganda. May be the Rwanda and Burundi problems could have been solved earlier and without the terrible loss of life that we witnessed. The problem of South Sudan, could have been solved earlier. May be the problems of Somalia would not have exploded the way they did. Indeed, a Somali delegate was in that meeting with our leaders in Nairobi. I am glad we revived the EAC treaty and the treaty provides for the creation of the Common Market, Customs Union, the Monetary Union and, eventually, the Political Federation. The present generations, push for this insurance for the survival of the Black race. I am also glad that the African leaders, finally, agreed on the CFTA – the Continental Free Trade Area. Push for the consolidation of that

effort because it addresses the aspect of the African People's prosperity through the market integration, mentioned above.

The final historical mission we had identified, is the Undugu (fraternity) of the African Peoples, part of which you the Ateker People are addressing by getting together here in Soroti. I encourage you to continue. The similarities and linkages among the African Peoples, make it easy for Africa to integrate in order to achieve the first two historical missions: prosperity and strategic security. Apart from the linkages and the similarities among the four linguistic groups identified above into which the 1.5bn Peoples of Africa fall, we in East Africa and the Great Lakes, have the additional advantage of Swahili- a non-tribal Bantu dialect that can be used to unite all this area. It has quite a number of Arabic words in it and can be expanded to integrate words from other African dialects.

However, you the Ateker, you need to catch up with your colleagues in other parts of East Africa by working with the Governments to create peace, provide water to the semi-arid parts of where some of you live, abandon nomadism, engage in commercial agriculture and emphasize health and education.

I thank you and wish you success in your convention.

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA.