

## **AFRICA DAY MESSAGE – YEAR 2018**

25<sup>th</sup> of May is a special day for all Africans across the continent, the island states and beyond, as we come together as a single unified entity to celebrate Africa Day. It is a time not only to reflect on our achievements but also on challenges ahead and how we may further collaborate for the transformation of Africa into a better, safer and more prosperous continent for the African Union family.

2018 is an important year for Mauritius. As we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary, we are also reminded that the decolonisation of Mauritius is still not complete. We thank our African sisters and brothers for their unflinching support as they strongly rally around Mauritius in our quest for the sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago in all relevant fora.

2018 is also an important year in the calendar of the African Union as it marks the halfway of the first Ten Year Implementation Plan of our Agenda 2063, our shared vision for a better Africa. Despite inherent difficulties strewn on our path, achievements are manifold. The African Continental Free Trade Area constitutes the crystallisation of years of concerted efforts at regional level through the regional economic blocs coupled with the staunch determination of our leaders to put Africa first in trade and business matters.

The holding of the African Economic Platform - another continental project under the First Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 - is yet another milestone, in fostering a conducive platform and environment for policy makers, academia and business leaders to chalk out appropriate continental business strategies.

Indeed, Africa has transformed and is still transforming. With the gradual but steady implementation of the Constitutive Act, we have turned into a people centric organisation with immediate focus on those who need our support, particularly the vulnerable groups, the youth and the women - largely affected by poverty, insecurity, wars, atrocities and calamities - who have for long been left behind.

“Silencing the guns by 2020”, in this context is a laudable initiative but can only happen with the support of all African leaders. Mauritius is also helping this cause through its contribution to the African Union Peace

Fund and the elaboration of appropriate maritime security roadmaps to counter transnational crimes especially piracy and drugs.

In this regard, it has often been said that the challenges lying ahead have a common denominator which is the deeply entrenched scourge of corruption. African leaders have signalled their strong intent to tackle this major problem by declaring the 2018 African Union theme: “Winning the Fight Against Corruption-A Sustainable Path to Africa’s Transformation”.

Mauritius has been pro-active on this front. Apart from national measures being taken, Mauritius has ratified the all-important African Union Convention against Corruption.

Much has been done and there is need to salute and commend the efforts of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption as well as those of the AU Commission. However, much still remains to be done and we need to cement our efforts both at the continental and national levels in our common endeavours to meet the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and achieve “The Africa We Want”.

Mauritius firmly believes that a strong, secure, united and economically independent and prosperous Africa is central to our own economic progress and social development. Our expanded Africa strategy punctuated by our contribution to the debate on Africa’s development during meetings at the highest level is a key indicator of our resolve to work with the African Union for a better Africa for future generations.

**Long Live Africa!**  
**Long Live Mauritius!**