

**GCA Policy Forum**

**Speech of**

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**President of the Republic of Botswana**

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On behalf of the co-Chairpersons of the Global Coalition for Africa, it is my pleasure to express our gratitude to President John Kufuor, and through him to the Government and people of Ghana, for hosting this GCA Policy Forum. I am sure that I speak for all participants in conveying our appreciation of the warm welcome and hospitality extended to us. Ghanaians have been pioneers for many positive developments in Africa. The first President of Ghana, the late Kwame Nkrumah, was a torchbearer of Pan Africanism and many Ghanaians have followed in his path.

In addition to trailblazing the African independence movement, Ghanaian scholars, judges and civil servants have assisted many of our countries to establish and consolidate our own national institutions. My own country, Botswana, is a case in point.

After going through its own period of economic and political difficulties, Ghana has been among the leading countries to adopt, persist and persevere with sound economic reforms. During the past decade, the country has demonstrated the value of an open, inclusive and tolerant political culture. The smooth transfer of power following Ghana's last national elections was a valuable example for the rest of the continent, which has since been followed by Kenya.

Your Excellencies and distinguished participants: the 15 months since the last GCA Plenary Meeting -which we had the pleasure to host in Gaborone - have seen significant developments globally and within Africa. Some have been discouraging. Economic growth in the major industrial countries was at best sluggish, and in some cases negative. This inevitably translated into reduced demand and historically low prices for many of Africa's exports. For a number of countries, especially in Southern Africa and the Horn, the situation was further compounded by adverse weather conditions. Above all, the scourge of HIV/AIDS continued to inflict immense costs, not only in terms of human lives, but also in reversing decades of hard-won economic and social achievements, as in my own country.

However, the picture was not all negative. At the global level, during the period since our Plenary, there were several international conferences with promising outcomes. The WTO launched a new round of multilateral trade negotiations, now commonly referred to as the Doha Development Agenda. Others included the UN Conference on Financing for Development, resulting in the Monterrey consensus. The High Level Plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly on NEPAD and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Of even more direct relevance to Africa was the announcement at the G8 Kananaskis Summit, of their Africa Action Plan as a direct response to NEPAD. Delivering on the pledges made at these important forums needs determined follow-up, both by African countries and by our partners.

Continently too, there have been notable developments during the past year. The inaugural Summit of the African Union was held in Durban in July 2002. In addition to launching the African Union and its key institutions, the Summit endorsed NEPAD and approved its initial work plan. NEPAD itself has also evolved significantly in structure and content. Support for this unique African initiative has been growing both within Africa and among Africa's external partners. Nevertheless, as agreed at the Gaborone GCA Plenary, it is important to ensure that NEPAD is widely embraced and gets the full support of all key stakeholders.

The Global Coalition for Africa intends to play an active part in the realisation of NEPAD objectives. At its 2001 Plenary, the GCA was encouraged to work in support of NEPAD, which was recognized as a major new initiative for the continent. I am pleased that in this first Policy Forum to be held since the Plenary, we are doing exactly that. My fellow co-chairpersons and I hope that as a result of our discussions here we will all recognize what each and every one of us needs to do to ensure, that NEPAD's various programmes are successfully implemented. We also trust that our exchanges will further deepen participants' commitments to the goals and objectives of NEPAD.

NEPAD is about partnership – partnership among African Countries, partnerships between Africa and the international community, partnership between governments and their ordinary people, partnership between government and civil society institutions, partnerships between governments and the private sector in Commerce and Industry. To be successful, it requires all of these partners to play their part, to seize the opportunities it offers, and to work together. We will have an opportunity today to discuss how we can do this, and what challenges we need to overcome.

Although NEPAD is still in its early stages, it has already had an impact. It has sent a message to the world that African countries are committed to taking responsibility for their own development, facing up to difficult issues, and charting a new course. The task ahead of us is to turn that message into concrete strategies, programmes and actions that will yield concrete and durable results and progress.

Excellencies and distinguished participants: peace, stability and security are prerequisites for economic and social development. Without these, NEPAD goals cannot be achieved. It is for this reason that the Policy Forum is devoted specifically to a discussion of security within the context of NEPAD. In many of our countries security is undermined by a wide range of political, social and economic factors. We have made real progress as a continent in establishing more representative systems of governance and in promoting inclusive political participation.

We Africans need to continue to deepen democracy, because over the long term this will contribute to lasting security. In addition, the human rights of all members of society must be respected because, without this, security cannot be guaranteed. But we also need to understand, that for many in Africa, unemployment, lack of economic opportunities and abject poverty are major determinants of insecurity. And we also need to recognize that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a real threat to security that requires concerted and collective action by all, i.e. not only by us Africans or only by us the Heads of State and Government

This broader view of human security demonstrates the fundamental link between security and development. It is clear that lack of security undermines development. Without security, people are not going to invest their time and energy and money, because they cannot be certain that they will enjoy the results of their efforts. But lack of development also leads to and compounds insecurity. It is in fact disheartening that many Africans do not have even the most basic determinant of security - the knowledge that they can feed themselves and their families.

In recent years, security has been discussed in a number of GCA forums that have brought civilian and military officials together with experts and representatives of civil society. These meetings have deepened understanding of a range of issues, including security sector reform, the military and political transition, civil military relations, peace-keeping operations and democratic oversight of security forces. It is therefore pleasing to be discussing issues of security in this Policy Forum with a broader range of participants, because security is of critical importance to us all.

Provision of security is obviously one of the core functions of the state. But it cannot be left only to governments. All stakeholders have important contributions to make. During our discussions here we will be able to reflect on the role African governments, civil society and our development partners can play. It must also be realised, that new threats to security, such as transnational organized crime and international terrorism, concern us all. Recent developments have shown that the tendency to think that Africa was not affected by such problems is incorrect. It is increasingly apparent that insecurity and instability in one country can no longer be seen as a problem for that country alone and hence the need for increased international co-operation on security.

Insecurity resulting from violent conflict is one of the major problems that Africa faces. Security cannot be promoted without seriously addressing the problem of violence and war. Conflict in one country can spillover to others, threatening their stability and the security of their citizens. And the legacy of conflict remains long after the war is over, through the proliferation of small arms and increased violent crime that constitute ongoing threats of security.

The GCA has been concerned with conflict management for some time. Most recently, in December 2002, a group of eminent Africans with considerable experience of peace processes met to share lessons learnt, and to consider how recent progress in bringing some of Africa's long-standing conflicts to an end could be sustained and built upon. This is an issue that should concern us all. We need to ensure, that the prospects of durable peace in Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, yet to become truly democratic, and Sudan are deepened and strengthened. We also need to support peace negotiations in Cote d'Ivoire, and try to bring a negotiated end of the conflict there, as indeed the West Africans are doing, The costs of conflict are high - too high for the continent to continue to bear - and so conflict prevention has to be one of our priorities.

I would like to remind participants of the GCA's tradition of open and frank discussion, and constructive dialogue about difficult issues. I am sure, that this Policy Forum will be no exception. We have the opportunity here to really consider how challenges to security can be met, so that security can be enhanced throughout the continent. The discussions should also explore how we can all work together to promote NEPAD and to encourage effective implementation.