



TOWARD THE 8TH PAN-AFRICAN, CONGRESS, ACCRA, GHANA

Introduction

The Local Organising Committee of the 8th Pan African Congress, Accra, Ghana wishes to inform the global Pan African World that the 8th PAC will be held in Accra, 4 – 7 March, 2015 at the Accra International Conference Centre.

The 7th Congress in 1994 adopted resolutions that need to be revisited – more than 20 years on. In addition, current events have demanded a serious consideration of ways to advance the economic independence of the global African community.

The OAU/AU Golden Jubilee celebrations between May 2013 and May 2014 as well as the development of the African Union Agenda 2063 both present an opportune moment to revisit and revive ideals and public discourse on Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. To this end, the Pan African Movement secretariat and a number of African institutions, organisations and individuals have been collaborating in a process that aims to re-ignite the Pan-African spirit, enthuse commitment to our African identity and inject energy into the Pan-African Movement (PAM).

This process was kicked off by a Multi-stakeholder dialogue held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on the 22nd and 23rd of May 2013, on the side-lines of the celebratory African Union summit of Heads of State and Government.

The AU Summit of May 2013 adopted the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration. Which emphasised the responsibility of African Heads of State and Governments to act together with the African people and the African Diaspora to realise our vision of an integrated Africa.

The time has come to concretise the process of genuine integration of the African continent, as well as demonstrable collaboration with the African Diaspora of economic resources and potential for the benefit and progress of our people.

It has also become imperative to promote people to people engagements including youth, women and civil society exchanges in order to strengthen Pan-Africanism, not just in words, but in reality. In doing so, it is crucial to foster solidarity with people of African descent in the Diaspora in their struggles against racial discrimination; and resist all forms of influences contrary to the interests of the continent.

To achieve any of the above, it is important for African organisations, particularly within the activist communities to meet, no matter how large, to deliberate on these issues and forge the way forward.

Consideration was given to the fact that to hold such a large meeting within any country, it would be necessary to address the security concerns. This requires the consent of the host country in which such a gathering would be held.

We were there delighted when the Government of Ghana agreed to host the 8th Pan African Congress in Ghana in 2014. The Government of Ghana has since then, been liaising with the African Union and the Government of Uganda, the host of the current PAM Secretariat to smoothen transition arrangements towards the 8th PAC. The first International Preparatory Committee met in June 2014 in Kampala Uganda, with the Local Organising Committee (Ghana) to set up the framework of the Congress.

The Congress has faced two postponements already. The original date for 21-23 September 2014 had to be rescheduled because it was coinciding with the meeting of the United Nations General Assembly. This was to enable Pan Africanist leaders interested in attending the 8th PAC to attend the Congress. By September 2014, it was realized that the spread of the Ebola disease in parts of West Africa would threaten attendance. It is in view of this that it was rescheduled for 5-7 March 2015.

Contextual Background:

The agenda for the unity of Africans to fight for self-determination devoid of racial discrimination and prejudice has evolved over nearly a century since the first Pan African Congress (PAC) was held in 1919 in Paris, France by African and other anti-colonial and progressive movements.

The 1945 Pan African Congress in Manchester, United Kingdom has become an important landmark because it signalled the kick starting of the struggle to achieve de-colonisation in the African world. Seventy years on, Africa is still bedeviled with the domination of our economies and social lives by non-African entities. It is now clear, that political independence would be meaningless unless it is linked with genuine economic independence in the African world.

When the Organisation of African Unity/Africa Union was founded on 25th May, 1963 it saw as its initial primary focus a determination to end racial discrimination, achieve de-colonisation, and political independence as well as the right to self-determination. The dismantling of apartheid in South Africa in 1994 was a remarkable milestone of the OAU's primary mission of achieving decolonisation and political liberation of African states.

Independence Vs. Citizens' Expectations

It is an undeniable fact that Africans want more than a nominal political independence. They want an independence situation which removes the pre-independence social and economic status quo. They therefore do not find as acceptable when they now come into the realization that their economic and social conditions are becoming exacerbated in spite of political independence and new flags.

Although the success of the OAU/AU success in the decolonization process is unquestionable, especially with the dismantling of apartheid in 1994, the African continent still has Western Sahara as an African nation on the continent under colonial occupation.

However, across the continent, various hitherto marginalised groups – workers, women, youth, producers, traders and intellectuals that joined the fight for political independence to eliminate the exploitation, discrimination and repression are still seeing their aspirations being whittled away by the dominance of their lives in the economic and social fields. The newly independent countries have not been able to build institutions that would assert economic self-determination. In the process, the people continue their desire to pursue their

aspirations undermined by policies that have turned their nations into “new-colonies” under the flag of neo-colonialism.

Institutional versus people-centred Pan Africanism

It is significant to note that successes in institutional pan-Africanism have not necessarily translated into a people-centred pan-Africanism in the sense of shared freedoms, shared prosperity and a common political citizenship within and across borders. The critical projects of African state formation and African nation-building have been tossed aside by the continued domination of individual African economies by Western finance capital and its local agents. The latter were too often catapulted or at least sponsored into national politics through the patronage of their old colonial masters.

These forces came to independence with their assumptions of entitlement intact. They reproduced national political cultures dominated by greed, ethnic divide-and-rule tactics, repression and impunity. The nation-state building project - save for a few exceptions - was thus characterised by a disconnect between power and service. State power became increasingly associated with the capture of state resources by political, clientelistic elite. These trends were worsened by the cold war which “justified” an illiberal and repressive politics dominated by perceived state security priorities.

Devoid of a sense of shared citizenship – political or even legal - the nation state building project easily degenerated, replaced by divisions that could be used to legitimise, or at least distract attention from, continuing exploitation and repression. African society has become dominated by narrow nationalisms, ethnicity, geographic or religious identities and the almost universal suppression of the rights of women - a mainstay of colonial strategy.

With these processes dominating national level politics and with the OAU’s non-interference policy there has been little chance of the wider continental project remaining a peoples’ project. The pan-African project has increasingly appeared to be little more than a group of largely unaccountable male leaders gathering annually at Addis Ababa for mutual back-scratching exercises devoid of the participation of citizens of the continents and the Diaspora.

The tragic result has been that millions of its people have turned their backs on the continent and voted with their feet in search of better livelihood in the former mother colonial countries even at the risk of their lives in the desert heats of the Sahara or in the dingy boats of the Mediterranean Sea.

The emancipation of the African woman

One of the various important themes in Pan Africanism and the African Renaissance movement must be the symbiotic link between political, social and economic liberation, and the emancipation of women. In Africa's ancient civilizations, women played an important role in the struggles against slavery and colonial domination, including liberation struggles. These struggles were inherently struggles for the emancipation of not only men but also of the women to ensure gender equality in the new Africa. It, thus, came as no surprise that the Pan African Women's Organisation (PAWO) was founded in 1962, a year before the formation of the OAU.

The African woman has continuously been engaged in "the struggle for recognition and the right of African women to participate in decision making in the fields of political, economic, cultural and social life; contributing to the improvement of the situation of African women and children; eliminating flagrant violation of human rights; the protection of Africa in all aspects; the effective unity among African states through friendship and co-operation; participation in all action for disarmament and reinforcement of peace world-wide and continuous relations of friendship and co-operation among African women all over the world."

Re-energising the African integration project

It was thought that the creation of the African Union would give impetus to a renewed Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance - a Pan-Africanism rooted in African people; their images, their memory, their expressions, their ideas, their aspirations and their dignity.

However, serious challenges remain in the integration effort which are both internal and external in nature. Internal challenges include lingering cultures of autocratic use of power and accountability gaps; the continuing vacuum of a sense of common citizenship to underpin nation building; the dearth of visionary, transformational, developmental and democratic leadership; entrenched patriarchy; threats of state fragmentation and lingering intra-state and inter-state

conflict and pervasive poverty, growing inequalities and weak and dependent economies. These factors tend to be exacerbated by crisis and instabilities arising from the global economy because of the continent's dependent and subordinate position.

The African people have to grasp any genuine opportunity to rediscover, reinterpret and reconstruct an agenda for the pan-Africanism of the 21st Century. The thrust of this agenda should be a programme of social, economic and political rejuvenation that links the past, present and future in order to create a new generation of Pan-Africanists.

The 8th Pan African Congress provides the opportunity to remember our heroes and histories, celebrate our triumphs and take stock of our losses and failures; a time to tell our stories through literature, art, music, film. Even more than that, this is a time to construct a Pan-Africanism of the 21st Century – the Pan African World we want in 2063 – For prosperity, peace and sustainable development.

Goal and Objective:

The main goal of the 8th PAC is to galvanise the African people and institutions, Pan-African efforts towards Africa's integration and renewal, including its total socio-cultural and politico-economic independence, self-reliance and liberation.

The specific objectives of the Congress include:

- o To propel informed dialogue between African leaders, leading African intellectuals, policy experts, practitioners, artists, elders, historians, literary minds, youth and civil society activists to reflect on the last seventy years of Pan Africanism and project a new vision for the future;
- o To reflect on the critical question of African citizenship (including migration and free movement of people) and the state-society relationships underpinning Africa's progress, or lack thereof, for economic and social transformation, for expanding rights and opportunities for all, for democratic governance, for ensuring peaceful and equitable societies and for protecting our environmental resources;
- o Reflect on current threats and opportunities within the global political economy for the rapid growth and rejuvenation of Pan Africanism and the

agenda for African integration (Africa and the rest of the world) and economic and social transformation, peace and security;

- o Propose some strategies on how to advance a “New” Pan African agenda that effectively responds to Africa’s and African peoples’ needs within the context of the OAU/AU Golden Jubilee celebrations and the evolving African Union Agenda 2063.
- o Reflect on Africa's external relations with the rest of the World and how to reduce Africa's dependency and underdevelopment in the international system;
- o Mobilise African people against neo-colonialism, imperialism and all forms of external domination including obnoxious illicit financial flows from Africa;
- o Make recommendations to the AU on measures for the full integration of the African continent, with the involvement of Africans in the Diaspora.

Expected Outputs

Expected Outputs of the Congress include:

- a) A strategy for the promotion of the spirit of Pan-Africanism among young people, including the revitalization of the teaching of Africa’s history in our schools and colleges, including the proper profiling and documentation of its progressive leadership and heroes.
- b) A draft “Declaration/Communiqué” that will be presented to the AU and CARICOM.
- c) A draft programme of work for the Pan African Movement (PAM) for the subsequent 12 months.
- d) A strategy for engaging with/feeding into, the AU Agenda 2063 process. Identification of international opportunities(regional and global) for engaging with the pan-Africanist agenda.

Key Thematic Areas

In re-energising Pan Africanism and African Renaissance, the 8th PAC will discuss in plenary and parallel working groups, the following topics:

- The Foundational Roots of Pan Africanism and African Renaissance
- African Economies in the Global World
- The Diaspora

- The Youth in the Pan African Movement
- Role of Women in the Struggle for a New Africa
- Trade Unions and Workers of Africa

Methodology

The 8th PAC will be organised in both plenary and parallel sessions. It will aim to be interactive, participatory and all-inclusive. Discussions will normally be kicked off by panels of resource persons. Even if they have prepared papers, resource persons will be encouraged to summarise these papers or presentations, just focusing on major highlights. Use of power points or other audio-visuals will be highly encouraged. The format is meant to encourage informed conversations and information exchange – real ‘around the fire’ dialogue-African style.

Participation

In all, the 8th Congress will have 500 participants representing community organisations and think tanks, as well as willing Heads of State and government and former leaders.

Coordination Arrangements

Coordination of the preparatory arrangements as well as the actual holding of the 8th PAC is the responsibility of the International Preparatory Committee, the Secretariat of the Pan African movement and the Local Organizing Committee in Accra, Ghana.

Languages

Deliberations of the consultative Congress will be conducted French, English, Arabic and Portuguese.

Pan- African organisations and Pan-Africanists who are interested in participating in the 8th Pan African Congress may contact Mr. Kwasi Adu on: kwasi.adu@outlook.com

Interested participants should also visit the 8th PAC website at: www.8panafcongress.com to register on line.

Local Organising Committee (Ghana)

© 20th January, 2015