



**EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF ERITREA,
Pretoria, South Africa**

**STATEMENT BY THE DEAN OF THE AFRICAN GROUP OF HEADS OF
MISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA ON THE AUSPICIOUS OCCASION OF
THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 57TH AFRICA DAY**

ON 25TH MAY, 2020

In 2017, the Assembly of the African Union adopted a strategic document, the **African Union Master Road map (AUMR) of Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020**. The adoption of the document was informed by the “continuing insecurity, instability disruption of political harmony, erosion of social cohesion, destruction of the economic fabric and public despondency in various parts of Africa”. It was therefore meant to be the *raison d etre* for mobilisation and intervention by the relevant African authorities and stakeholders to put an end to the sad conflict situations on the continent, the source of which are “poverty, economic hardships, violation or manipulation and mismanagement of Africa’s rich ethnic diversity.”

It was with great hope that Africa greeted the dawn of the year 2020 as two important event were set to take place during the year namely **Silencing the Guns** and the commencement of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Sadly, the battle against Covid-19 has enveloped the whole world in unprecedented global spread of the virus threatening lives, economies and disrupting normal human activities relentlessly.

It is against this background, and on the auspicious occasion of the 57th anniversary of the formation and foundation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the precursor of the African Union, that I felicitate with all Africans on the continent and in the diaspora and friends of Africa. I wish to note that, though, the commemoration of the Africa Day is taking place at a particularly trying time for Africa and indeed for the world, in view of the rather unfortunate Covid-19 pandemic ravaging and over stretching the health capabilities and facilities and economies of Africa and the rest of the world, the solidarity, collaboration and cooperation among and between African states and the rest of the international community, gives hope to the infected persons and portends well towards the eventual control, eradication and recovery from the pandemic.



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The commemoration, therefore, reminds us of the usefulness of unity and solidarity in overcoming the challenges we confronted in the past in the struggle against colonialism, slavery, apartheid and other forms discriminations. I firmly believe that the tools of unity, solidarity, faith and hope will also be useful now, as we struggle against the current pandemic and any other future challenges whether in the health sector or other sectors of human existence.

I wish to seize the opportunity of this occasion to recall that on 25th May 1963, African leaders made history with the establishment of the OAU the precursor of AU. Subsequently May 25 was adopted as the day of Africa with the objective to celebrate and acknowledge the struggle against colonialism, and the attainment of independence by the continent. The Day also provides the occasion to assess the progress made by the people and governments of Africa and reflect on the common challenges of the African countries in their interaction with the international community. Furthermore, it is part of the objective of the day to create, maintain and increase awareness of the African Union Agenda 2063, as well as the theme of the year including the promotion of African Unity through AU activities. The day is also an occasion to promote the visibility of the African Union and its activities in Africa, Diaspora and where the Union has representative offices and regional offices.

Consequently, may I remind fellow Africans that the year 2020 is the year in which the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is to come into effect effectively on 1st July. On that day, Africa will take further giant steps towards the integration of the economies of the continent in the further attempt to realise "the Africa We Want". In this regard, and towards the realisation of this objectives, all efforts and all hands should be on deck and mobilised, as no effort is too great or too little in the task now at hand for the realisation of both the specific and general objectives of the AfCFTA.

As indicated earlier, one of the objective of commemorating Africa Day is to celebrate the attainment of independence and sovereign status by African countries, more than 60 years ago. Sixty years after independence, this year's Africa Day celebration presents a unique opportunity for us to assess how independent is Africa in policy making, and execution in the face of dependence on aid and grants. Such assessments are sobering indeed. More



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trade among Africans, more investment in Africa by Africans and partners and less aid and less grants will surely enhance Africa's independence and freedom of action.

As Africa grapples and wrestles with Covid-19, and as we continue to struggle to strengthen the independence and sovereignty of our continent, I wish all Africans and friends of Africa in Africa and in the diaspora a safe, joyous Africa Day in African unity, solidarity, and in the hope that collectively we shall overcome our developmental challenges including the current health challenge occasioned by the Covid-19 ravaging and aggravating the health condition of the continent and the rest of the world.

Indeed, in cooperation, and collaboration and global solidarity, we shall collectively find recovery from the economic paralysis of our time a lot easier. Conversely, as countries, standing alone, without solidarity, we shall find economic recovery a lot difficult, if not well-nigh impossible individually.

An Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa!

Eternal Glory to our Heroic Martyrs!

Salih Omar Abdu
Ambassador