

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR SAM NUJOMA,
FOUNDING PRESIDENT AND FATHER OF THE NAMIBIAN
NATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON GLOBALIZATION**

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TOKYO

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Mr Koichiro Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO;
Prof Dr. Konrad Osterwalder, Rector of the United Nations University;
Representatives of the Government of Japan;
Your Excellencies, Former Heads of State and Government;
Distinguished Invited Guests;
Distinguished Participants;
Distinguished Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me to participate in the 2009 UNU/UNESCO International Conference on Africa and Globalization, and contribute to the sub-theme “Charting the Future of Africa: A Leadership Forum”.

As you all know, Globalization has been one of the major topics of discussion and concern in economic circles for many years now. It is multifaceted, affecting a whole range of our lives, that is, economic, social, political, environmental as well as cultural aspects, which affect each and every one of us in one way or another.

Alassance Quattara of IMF in his speech presented at the Southern Africa Economic Summit in May 1997, defined Globalization of the world economy as “the integration of economies throughout the world through trade, financial flows, the exchange of technology and information, and the movements of people”.

Although I agree that globalization is inevitable, in our modern world, I must stress that what we have seen in recent years has been more of the Americanization of the world, the propagation of Universal paradigm for economic and political development, and the dominance of unilateralism, as a way of conducting international relations. Globalization through Liberalization of trade has benefited the developed world more than the developing countries, because of unequal or lack of fair play. In the case of Africa, its position in the international system has been considerably weakened by the fact that it has been losing the race of economic and human development in particular, to other parts of the world.

Thus, economically, globalization has, on a whole, reinforced the economic marginalization of African economies and their dependence on a few primary goods for which demand and prices are externally determined. The consequences of this have been the deepening of poverty and economic inequality as well as the inability of the majority of Africans to live decent social and political lives in their own countries. This has also triggered enormous brain-drain from Africa, thus further weakening the ability of African countries to manage their own economies efficiently and effectively.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A number of people, especially from developed countries see globalization as being highly beneficial, creating more opportunities and improved qualities of life worldwide. I have a different view. I see globalization as a destructive force that has increased inequality within and between nations, and which disempowers the weak, creates unemployment and greatly increases poverty.

Although scientific and technological forces unleashed by globalization have facilitated to some extent access by Africans to advanced technology and information, this has been at the expense of killing the indigenous development of technology and distorting patterns of production in Africa, notably utilizing capital, as opposed to labour intensive methods of production, which in turn increases unemployment and poverty. In general, we see that the negative consequences of globalization on Africa are far greater than their positive impact.

Another negative development has been the introduction of EPA by the European Union to negotiate trade agreements with African countries. EPA will be another form of neo-colonialism, as it will benefit the European countries and their people, while disadvantaging the infant economies of the African countries and their citizens.

Now what should African countries do in order to reverse the negative impact of globalization, while enhancing the positive effects of it on Africa?

1. The most important resource of any country is its citizens. African leaders should therefore concentrate their efforts on educating their people, sensitizing, and educating them on their civic, social, economic and cultural rights and responsibilities, and empowering them so that they could defend their rights and interests, while contributing fully to the overall economic development of their own countries.

Africa needs to strengthen its health and education sectors because meaningful development cannot be realized without healthy people equipped with relevant technical skills and knowledge. African countries should therefore intensify their efforts and train more medical doctors, agriculturalists, mining engineers, quantity surveyors, electric and electronic engineers, geologists, marine biologists, amongst others to contribute and accelerate their socio-economic development. It is only by developing its human capital would African countries be in a position to take control over their destinies and be in a strong position to deal effectively on equal basis with the outside world.

2. As I mentioned earlier, development strategies and policies followed by most African countries are increasingly those formulated by outsiders, which are then imposed on African countries as a condition for foreign aid, investments, trade access, and political and military support. As a result, these strategies and policies serve more the interest of external forces rather than those of the African people they claim to be assisting. Africa needs a new approach to economic development that looks holistically at the nature, ownership, management, allocation, utilization and distribution of resources, keeping in mind that Africa is very rich in natural resources and yet these resources have not contributed significantly to their social and economic upliftment. African countries must therefore design policies that

maximize the potential benefits of Globalization, and minimize the downside risks of foreign destabilization and marginalization.

3. Because most African countries have weak economies, and few if any, can succeed on their own and be able to withstand the impact of globalization. Cooperation with others should therefore be a central objective of our countries. African countries should vigorously and proactively exploit modern forms of transport and communications, especially information technology, so as to strengthen the interdependence among them, and thus provide them the material base for economic, political, social and cultural cooperation and integration among them. There is thus a need to analyze, in respect of capabilities, functions, objectives and accomplishments, the current sub-regional and regional intergovernmental organization on our continent, with the view to enhance them, so as to ensure that they make effective contributions to economic cooperation and integration for the benefit of the African people, as a whole.
4. African countries must diversify their economies and move away from dependence on imports of goods from foreign countries and embark upon manufacturing and value addition to their natural resources for their own consumption and benefit and export the surplus to foreign countries.
5. By insisting on African countries to open their economies through trade liberalization, to allow in foreign goods and entrepreneurs, globalization has thus limited African countries from taking proactive and conscious measures which can facilitate the emergence and expansion of an indigenous entrepreneurial class. The indigenous entrepreneurial class, if adequately empowered, has the ability to contribute to the development of truly integration of the economies of the member states of the African Union.

In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen, for Africa to benefit from globalization, the strategies which I have outlined above need to be fully embraced by our African leaders, otherwise the negative impact of globalization on Africa will overwhelm our people, leading to greater instability and poverty.

I thank you.