

SOUTH SUDAN NATIONAL DAY

Ottawa City Hall,

July 9, 2019

Notes for Remarks by David Kilgour, J.D.



Today at city hall

David Bassiouni, a former staff member for UNICEF, after the 2010 referendum in south Sudan noted: "[The referendum] marks a milestone in the lives of people in Sudan; many of us thought we'd never see this day. We are hopeful that God has brought us this far." Southern Sudan has never had the opportunity to decide for itself, he added.

Permit me to offer a few candid thoughts:

1- Former president Omar al-Bashir long sought an exclusively Arab country, so the formal creation of South

Sudan helped him to achieve a goal. With 98.8% of the more than three million southerners who voted for independence in a referendum deemed free and fair by all observers, both peoples could benefit from an amicable divorce resulting from irreconcilable differences over half a century of suffering, violence, two million deaths and many more displaced families.

2- On good governance, South Sudan must ensure that the Bashir model in Khartoum is not transferred to its new capital in Juba. As Hustin Laku of Sudan/Canada has noted, South Sudan should create an African model of democracy rather than seek to import practices from elsewhere. Laku also urges:

- creation of a nation that offers equality, acceptance, respect, freedom, separation of religion from state, peace, collaborative governance, reconciliation initiatives, the need for the creation of national consciousness and an awareness of common values... Failure to do so (will cause) the 63 plus tribal groups (to) rebel against the South Sudan government because the government is not inclusive...
- South Sudan should encourage the role of the diaspora in the development of South Sudan.
- It is vital that women be equal to men in the new South Sudan state. The late John Garang once said that women are the 'poorest of the poor and the marginalized of the marginalized'.
- Equal representation from all groups. (The) SPLM leadership can talk about unity, but unity will not exist without fight(ing) tribalism, corruption, nepotism, and ethnic favouritism.

- Maintain peaceful relationship with the North for the peace of the region.

Canada's former ambassador to Sudan, John Schram, noted that Canada and the estimated 40,000 Sudanese diaspora across our country are willing to help with infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals. Diasporas in other countries also want to help.

Conclusion

There are good reasons for optimism about brighter days ahead for Africans generally. Multiparty democracy has swept through much of the continent. By 2000, 32 out of 54 African heads of state had been chosen in elections against rivals backed by opposition parties.

One lesson is that economic renewal and democratisation best go hand in hand. Botswana and Mauritius have experienced the highest long-term growth rates, while also enjoying the longest period of democratic governance. Positive growth has returned to Benin, Ghana, Mozambique and South Africa, where the resurgence of democracy has been strong. Those having the most difficulties during the 1990s were not cases of failed democratisation but failed governance.

Another encouraging development across Africa is the resurgence of civil society, which has been at the forefront of the struggles to dislodge authoritarian regimes. It is in states everywhere where civil society and independent media are weak that the greatest challenges to genuine electoral competition and accountability exist.

African perseverance towards a better future inspires the world to help in making the continent a place of peace and prosperity. Every effort should be made to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals to end poverty and hunger, establish universal education, gender equality, and child and maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, promote environmental sustainability and global partnerships.

Two additional recommendations to consider:

Strengthen investment in education

Nelson Mandela said, "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that a son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another."

Education is one of the most effective ways to help tackle poverty, diseases and ethnocultural conflicts and other challenges facing Africans. As a result of the rising level of education, in a continent that was once almost entirely dependent on foreign aid, there are now 16 countries that have achieved annual growth rates in excess of 4.5 percent for more than a decade. Several African countries, including Senegal, Mozambique, Burkina Faso, Cameroon,

Uganda, and Ghana are on course to cut the number of people living in poverty by half.

Encourage corporate social responsibility

Three-quarters of Africa's foreign trade is based on the extraction of natural resources. Corporations that are involved in the resource extraction should be encouraged and in some cases be required to ensure that they support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights as well as the environment.

Companies should be encouraged to take initiatives in support of the rule of the law instead of being complicit in corruption which undermines the development of the rule of law. The governments of developed countries should apply them in regulating corporations with operations in Africa.

Nelson Mandela said: "I dream of of an Africa which is in peace with itself. I dream of the realisation of the unity of Africa, whereby its leaders combine in their efforts to solve the problems of this continent. "

To realise Mandela's dream, that of John Garang, and so many others who gave their lives for the people of South Sudan, and millions of others in Africa and around the world, for a continent united in peace and prosperity, we must be first and foremost united in our shared responsibility to help build governance systems that encourage accountability and deter corruption by strengthening the rule of law and respect for human dignity.

In post-dependence Kenya, nationals used a slogan for pulling together: 'harambee'. Harambee was a call to

cooperate in the name of national development. Today, the world community must come together to address political, social, economic and environmental issues in South Sudan as we address these problems elsewhere. Only when we achieve this solidarity will we achieve a true African renaissance, one of peace and prosperity. Harambee!

Thank you.