



**OPENING REMARKS BY HIS  
EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT JULIUS  
MAADA BIO, AT THE MINISTERIAL  
MEETING OF THE AFRICAN UNION  
COMMITTEE OF TEN ON UNITED  
NATIONS REFORMS, FREETOWN, 14  
DECEMBER 2018**

Ministers,

Permanent Representatives and Ambassadors,

The Commissioner for Political Affairs of the

African Union Commission,

Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

On behalf of the people of Sierra Leone, let me

extend to each and every one of you a warm

welcome and felicitations for the festive season. It

is the season to be joyful and merry although for

all of you, it is going to be a busy two days of

engagement and critical thinking. If this makes

you feel any better, consider it a labour of love for the rights and dignity of generations of Africans.

But that beside, let me truly, wholeheartedly, and warmly welcome you to beautiful Sierra Leone.

We are here, charged with a common purpose. We have a shared agenda for a common goal. We are here because we believe that current geopolitical realities have placed Africa in a particularly stronger position than ever before to present a common position for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council and to call for equitable representation in all Organs of the United Nations.

We urge a common language to articulate these legitimate demands.

We argue that Africa is the only region without representation in the Permanent category of the Security Council. Africa is also under-represented in the Non-permanent category. We assert that Africa's demand for two Permanent seats with all the rights and prerogatives of current members, including the right of veto (although Africa is opposed in principle to the veto), and two additional Non-permanent seats is a matter of common justice.

We proffer that Africa has a right to have an equal say in decision-making on issues that affect the African region. We affirm that such longstanding injustice and imbalance as reflected in the present configuration of the Security Council must be remedied without any further delay. Africa is committed to on-going reforms that will make the United Nations fit for purpose.

As the Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the reform of the United Nations, I have articulated our grave concern over the continuous inaction to adopt measures that will lead to Africa

taking its rightful place in the Security Council.

We submit that the reform of the Security Council is long overdue and the organization is constituted on undemocratic and discriminatory principles.

We further argue that Africans constitute 1.2 billion of the world's population of 7.5 billion and about 70% of the decisions made at the UN Security Council ultimately affect those 1.2 billion Africans. Those 1.2 billion people are also affected by over 70% of the UN's resolutions. Africa is also contributing more than its fair share to promoting world peace and security.

Even if it is argued that the Security Council comprises the five permanent members who were victors in the Second World War, then there is no moral and historical justification for Africa's exclusion. Over a million Africans battled in the searing heat of the deserts of North Africa, over the perilous skies of Germany, through the jungles of North East India and Burma to the swamps and jungles of Malaya. Africans fought valiantly and contributed to the victory that granted the Permanent members the pride of place and entitlement in the UN Charter. It is fair to say that the over one million Africans who contributed through their gallantry and blood to the allied

victory have been largely erased from the grand narrative of the war and from the spoils of victory.

If it is demography, then what is the argument for excluding 1.2 billion of the world's population and the second most populous continent? If it is geography, then what is the argument for excluding the world's second largest continent?

So distinguished ladies and gentlemen, our task here is simple. We are not gathered here to revalidate our **legitimate** call for Security Council and UN Reform. We are not gathered here to restate the Common African Position as espoused in

the Ezulwini Consensus and in the Sirte Declaration. We are here to reflect on prior pathways and successes, contacts and drawbacks, ask critical questions, and assiduously map out a plan for continuing engagement toward the singular objective.

So I encourage all of us to ask the following questions:

a) What have we achieved or not achieved in the Intergovernmental Negotiations process on the reform of the United Nations Security Council? What other strategic pathways can

we adopt to further canvass, advance, and promote the Common African Position?

b) Considering the outcomes of the Ambassadorial and expert level retreat held in New York, in April 2018, i) What can we deduce from an Aide Memoire for the C-10 Heads of State to engage with P5 Countries? ii) What are the strategies for engaging with Interest and Regional Groups? iii) How do we develop a guide for the participation of the C-10 and the African Group at the IGN meetings in New York?

c) Can we propose, discuss, and agree on a strategic roadmap of activities with specific

timelines to be undertaken for advancing the work of the C-10?

So mindful of the fact that these deliberations will guide the work of the Committee of Ten at the upcoming African Union Summit in February, 2019, there is great urgency and seriousness of purpose. Let us engage, let us deliberate, let us ponder; and let us devise a clear roadmap for achieving the legitimate Common African Goal.

I wish the conference fruitful deliberations and I look forward to comprehensive outcomes that will guide the entire leadership. I thank you.