

UN Day for South-South Cooperation

Keynote Speech by Dr. Faustin Ntezilyayo, Chief Justice of Rwanda

Honourable Minister of Public Service and Administrative Reform of the Central African Republic,

Honourable Minister of Finance and Budget of the Republic of Chad,

Honourable Minister of Public Service, Administrative Reforms, Policy Coordination and Delivery of the Republic of the Gambia

Honourable Minister of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,

Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Rwanda,

Former Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation,

Your Excellencies members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Esteemed representatives of International Organisations,

Esteemed representatives of Rwandan public institutions and the Civil Society,

Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols observed,

It is an honour to speak in your esteemed company, as we gather to mark the United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation, as we all know that the past decades have demonstrated the power of South-South Cooperation to advance sustainable development.

Driven by a spirit of solidarity, respect for national sovereignty and equal partnership, South-South cooperation has offered concrete solutions to shared development challenges as we have a vast wealth of knowledge, know-how and initiatives to spur development, and that we stand to gain immensely from sharing this knowledge with each other to foster mutual growth.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Rwanda particularly believes this to be true, as our own development trajectory over the past two decades can testify. From near-universal health coverage through community-based health insurance, to being a prime destination on the continent for tourism and investment, to being at the forefront globally in the quest for gender equity, and strengthened institutional capacity to uphold the rule of law, these achievements have come as a result of Rwanda constantly adopting solutions from countries with similar contexts, and adapting them to its people's lived reality and context.

This date is an occasion to celebrate that spirit of South-South solidarity and Cooperation and all that our countries and our people have gained. Nevertheless, today is also a chance for us to collectively reflect on how to continue making the most of the opportunities that South-South and Triangular Cooperation present. This is especially true in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. For although communities of the Global South admirably came together in force to share knowledge and best practices to offset the effects of the pandemic, the latter also laid bare a number of important gaps that need to be bridged, for the good of our people and of the world.

We have to utilize all the capabilities for us to work together to develop our cooperation and to address the policy issues which are key for us to transform our developing economies into modern economies and advanced countries.

In this regard, allow me, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen to just stress one area that is vital for the prosperity of our countries, that is trade and economic integration. Narrowing down to trade agreements involving the global south, those agreements have been increasing in number, the most recent one being the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. Brokered by the African Union, the Agreement was signed by 44 of its 55 members States, and

as of July 2022, 43 of its 54 signatories had deposited their instruments of ratification with the Chair of the AU Commission, making them state parties to the Agreement. Numerous reports have pointed out how, if fully implemented, the Agreement could be a game changer for Africa's economic growth as it could deliver great benefits in terms of jobs, growth and poverty reduction. The 1st phase of the implementation of the Agreement started in January 2021. On 25th July 2022, the AfCFTA Secretariat announced the launch of the Guided Trade Initiative, which will take place on 26th September 2022. It will involve Cameroun, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Tunisia to begin provisionally and commercially trading on a pilot basis to test the environmental, legal, and trade policy, foundation for trading under the AfCFTA Agreement.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, you each represent esteemed partners and supporters who have been instrumental in Rwanda's development. The fact that you are here today assures me that you are also as committed as Rwanda is, to not only bridging the gaps I mentioned, but also to helping in the implementation of the high ambitious trade agreement, i.e. AfCFTA, as we race to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the next seven years. I am therefore confident that the dialogue and discussions that will take place today will engender impactful, actionable resolutions towards that goal.

I take this moment to thank Rwanda Cooperation for organising this important event, and all the esteemed experts who have accepted to grace us not only with their presence, but also with their wisdom.

I would like to conclude by assuring you all once again of Rwanda's commitment to working hand in hand with each of you to continuously work to achieve health, economic stability, peace, justice, and equity for our people as we resolutely forge ahead towards the Africa We Want.

I wish you a day of fruitful conversations. **Thank you for your kind attention**