

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



KEY TRIBUTE BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, AT THE MEMORIAL LECTURE IN HONOUR OF PROFESSOR
CALESTOUS JUMA

PUBLIC POLICY OPTIONS FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN AFRICA

JULY 19, 2018

NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

WINDHOEK

Check against delivery

Director of Ceremonies; Dr. Alfredo Tjiurimo Hengari – Press Secretary;
Founding President Comrade Sam Shafishuna Nujoma;
Right Honorable Prime Minister, Sarah Kuugongelwa-Amadhila;
Honourable Itah Kandjii-Murangi – Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation;
Honourable Naledi Pandor – South African Minister of Higher Education and Training;
Your Excellency Isaac Njenga – High Commissioner of the Republic of Kenya;
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Members of the Media;
Ladies and Gentlemen

Two weeks ago, I was in Nigeria, where I travelled to Ijebu Ode, to bid my final farewell to a friend, mentor and great thinker, Professor Adebayo Adedeji, who passed away on April 25, 2018 and was finally laid to rest in his home town on July 7, 2018. In June, we lost Comrade Billy Modise, another of Africa's finest diplomats and freedom fighters. And five days ago, Namibia, Africa and the world at large, learned with great shock that the life of Comrade Theo-Ben Gurirab, an outstanding freedom fighter and top diplomat, had come to an end.

The passing of Theo-Ben and Bayo was preceded by an eminent African scholar, Professor Calestous Juma, whose memory we are celebrating this evening. My brother, President Uhuru Kenyatta describes Calestous as, "possessing a clear-eyed devotion for innovation". I agree with President Kenyatta. Calestous is a man whose tremendous impact on the African and global educational landscape is befitting of tonight's tribute.

The Pan-African Intellectual Vanguard is mourning as a result of their loss. But we are comforted: for yesterday, 18 July 2018 was the Centenary of our wise elder, the

celebrated Nelson Mandela, a man who embraced the diversity of ideas and worked tirelessly for an inclusive humanity.

Calestous, Bayo and Theo-Ben are with Madiba in that rich Pantheon, having done what is humanely possible for a better humanity.

In his book, which can be described as one of the blueprints for Pan-Africanism, *Africa Must Unite*, Kwame Nkrumah dedicates a whole chapter to the Intellectual Vanguard. In the chapter, he grounds his argument on the importance of intellectualism by stating that, "The history of human achievement illustrates that when an awakened intelligentsia emerges from a subject people, it becomes the vanguard of the struggle against alien rule". Nkrumah continues his argument by highlighting the importance of developing an African personality "which must provide the educational and intellectual foundations of our Pan-African Future."

The hard work, dedication and intellectual journey of Professor Juma, embodies the concepts of the Intellectual Vanguard. He devoted his intelligence to unlock Africa's contribution to the Fourth Industrial Revolution dominated by innovation and technological advancement. By seeking to immerse Africa's policy options into the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Calestous Juma represents the true vanguard.

Every generation needs innovative scholars to act as gateways of ideas between the past, the present and the future. These extraordinary thinkers are the harbingers of change, because without thinking about constant change, society cannot progress. Hence change is the only constant. Without science, technology and immersion in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Africa will lag behind the rest of the world. I have always emphasized the fact that the only way Africa will attain its aspirations, as outline in AU Agenda 2063, is to make a quantum leap.

Great thinkers, including Calestous Juma, remain torchbearers and catalysts for that quantum leap and the transformation of Africa.

Professor Calestous Juma ascended to the highest levels of academia, cementing his name in the annals of one of the foremost Ivy League Schools; Harvard University, where he was the Director of the School's Science, Technology and Globalization Project. But his passion for Kenya and the African Soil animated his transformational scholarship.

He never let go of the thread that pulls us together - Pan Africanism. I had the pleasure to meet this great scholar for the last time during my visit to the United States in 2016, when I was invited to deliver a lecture at the Harvard Kennedy School. Professor Juma was the moderator of the event, and I had the pleasure to benefit from his incisive brain, and bonded with him during the course of that morning.

I did not know it at that time, but it was the last opportunity I had to experience the enthusiasm and warmth Professor Juma had for Africa.

In Africa, we have often been accused, fairly or unfairly, of not appreciating our scholars. Maybe it is due to the fact that many African scholars succumbed to the false belief, that to be considered a great thinker and intellectual, one had to don the gown of Afro-pessimism. Thus, many African intellectuals became synonymous with reactionary leanings and tendencies, causing a wedge to develop between the intellectual class and the ruling class. Furthermore, it could be argued that the glorious period of African independence, which saw the legendary feats of icons such as Kwame Nkrumah, Ahmed Sékou Touré, Julius Mwalimu Nyerere, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Jomo Kenyatta, Patrice Lumumba and others, was followed by a tumultuous period, characterized by coups d'état, one party states and military strongmen, who ruled without question. In this milieu, many scholars, who dared to question the conditions of that time, were considered enemies of the state and forced to flee the continent.

The scenario I have just alluded to, used to be referred to as the "Brain Drain". However, as we have seen through the endeavors of outstanding intellectuals such as Calestous Juma' and Adebayo Adedeji, it is actually a "Brain Gain" for Africa. Many of our foremost intellectuals who went abroad to study at leading Universities of the world returned their wealth of knowledge to disseminate to fellow Africans and to spearhead policy formulation and improve governance on the continent. Madame Pandor, you are among this distinguished group and a part of the "Brain Circulation" of African scholars from all over the continent, who continue to circulate or share their knowledge and by so doing, enrich Africa's intellectual landscape.

Many of our institutions, including the African Union, have and continue to benefit from the incredible insights of our scholars. The emergence of the New Africa we want, is a result of the endless sweat and perseverance of our erudite African thinkers, of whom Calestous Juma is a distinguished member.

Before his passing, Professor Juma was working on a paper titled Science and Technology Advice to African Presidents. In his paper, he highlighted the importance of evidence-based leadership in the age of exponential innovation. Some of us have been uncritically criticized for having too many advisors. But Prof Juma understood with a sense of urgency, the need for expert advice in supporting leadership. My Advisor for Youth and Enterprise Development, Daisry Mathias, had the pleasure to link up with Prof Calestous during my visit to the USA, where he announced his intention to work on this paper. As leaders, when we ask for advice from experts, we are provided with information to move our countries and the continent forward. Leaders need evidence-based advice to make informed decisions. Even the most powerful leader on the planet, the President of the United States, makes use of a myriad of advisors in sectors such as technology, economics, security, health, education and defense, to name a few.

In this modern era of leadership, one must choose suitable people, who possess the requisite knowledge, to assist the policy-making process. It is why we are gathered here today to pay tribute to our brother from Kenya, who understood that the only way Africa could remain competitive in the global landscape, is through the pursuit of science, technology and innovation.

One cannot complete a tribute to Professor Calestous Juma without talking about his greatest passions – Science and Technology. As earlier alluded to, another scholar and practitioner, Honourable Naledi Pandor, will give us a lecture on Public Policy Advice on Science and Technology. However, I wish to briefly highlight the importance of Science and Technology in the context of our developmental objectives.

Former Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon said, “One of the most effective channels for eradicating poverty, creating wealth and enhancing competitiveness is through the acquisition, adaptation and application of relevant technologies.” The New Africa we want, is still faced with several deficits with regard to its socio-economic architecture.

Issues such as poverty, income inequality and unemployment continue to trouble the minds of politicians and academics alike. There is a need for greater productivity within our various economic sectors to catapult us to sustained levels of global economic competitiveness. To achieve a rise in productivity levels, it is pertinent that we improve managerial practices, bring about organizational change and utilize science, technology and innovation in the production of goods and services.

By increasing investments in information and communications technology, we will improve the quality of capital and labour through enhancing the skills of workers within African economies.

There is also a need for greater emphasis on research and development, and other knowledge-based investments to sustain our economic growth levels.

Given this reality, it is crucial that we not only honour this intellectual giant through heartfelt tributes at this memorial lecture and beyond - but that we assume the responsibility to advance the extraordinary work he left behind.

We should pick up the baton where he left off, and continue the race towards a future of innovation, embracing Professor Juma's unwavering enthusiasm.

One of the greatest minds in the history of humanity, Albert Einstein, once said, "Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death." I am cautious not to disagree with this great mind, but I believe that Professor Calestous Juma's intellectual growth, which commenced at his birth near the shores of Lake Victoria in Busia, Kenya, did not cease with his death in Boston, USA. His legacy will live on, the ideas of his prodigious mind will continue to echo beyond the confines of his final resting place. We will ensure that the academic passion and zeal of this distinguished son of Africa will continue to enlighten students and policy-makers, as we endeavor to propel our continent towards scientific and technological excellence and innovation.

God bless his soul.

I thank you.