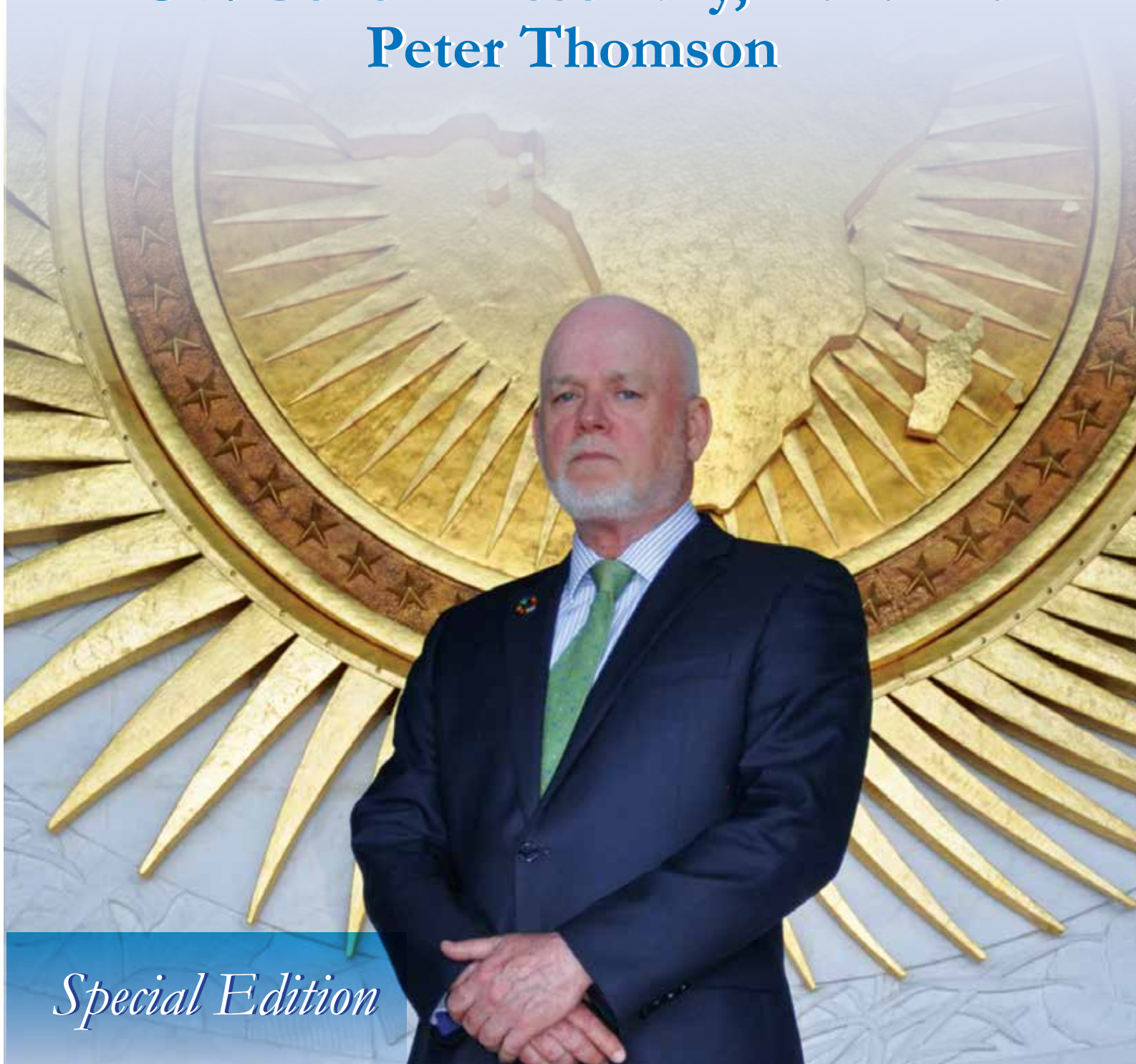




UNOAU Bulletin

A publication from the United Nations Office to the African Union
April 2017

Visit to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia of the President of the 71st Session of UN General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson



Special Edition

UNOAU Mandate

Background to the establishment of UNOAU

Since the transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) in 2002, and particularly since the 2004 launching of the AU peace and security architecture, there has been strong support among the UN and its Member States for closer UN cooperation with the AU. In 2005, the World Summit underscored the need to devote attention to the special needs of Africa. In follow-up to the World Summit, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in the 2006 Addis Ababa Declaration “*Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union*”, pledged UN support for the development and strengthening of the AU Commission, focusing “with priority, on conflict prevention, mediation and good offices, peacekeeping and peace building”. In 2007, the General Assembly adopted GA Resolution 61/296 on cooperation between the UN and the AU and requested the Secretary-General to take appropriate steps to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to meet the special needs of Africa.

In 2016, the AUPSC Members adopted the 628th Communiqué on the partnership between the UN and the AU on issues of peace and security in Africa. Later the UN Security Council (SC) adopted resolution 2320(2016) on partnership between the UN and Regional Organizations, in particular with the African Union. After the UN Secretary General report was presented on a new level of partnership. This was further strengthened by the new UN Secretary-General, through his expressed vision and priorities in which he stressed the fact that UN and AU must continue to keep a strong strategic partnership in the area of peace and security, through the implementation of both organizations programmes namely Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) was established on 1 July 2010 by UN General Assembly Resolution 64/288. The Office integrated three existing offices: Department of Political Affairs (DPA) Liaison Office, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) AU Peace Support Team and the Department of Field Support (DFS) Planning Team for Somalia to support the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), as well as the support component of the United Nations and African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) Joint Support Coordination Mechanism (JCM) office in Addis Ababa.

The mandate of UNOAU is to:

- enhance the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security;
- provide coordinated and consistent United Nations advice to the African Union on long-term capacity-building and short-term operational support matters;
- streamline the United Nations presence in Addis Ababa to make it cost-effective and efficient in delivering UN assistance to the AU

(A/64/762, A/RES/64/288)

About the UNOAU Bulletin: UNOAU Bulletin aims to increase visibility and awareness of the UNOAU mandate on relation with the African Union Commission, the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms in the area of Peace and Security on the continent. It illustrates the political role the United Nations is playing with the AU and other stakeholders on conflict prevention and management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

President of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Mr Peter Thomson visits Addis Ababa

The President of the United Nations General Assembly (PGA), H.E. Mr Peter Thomson undertook a two-day visit to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 28 to 30 March 2017 for the purpose of engaging partners in advancing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); promoting the broader agenda of the General Assembly; encouraging Africa's high-level participation and voluntary commitments for the upcoming Ocean Conference (New York, 5 to 9 June); and advocating for upcoming high-level SDG Action events.

Who is H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson?

On 13 June 2016, the United Nations General Assembly elected Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji to serve as President of its 71st session, which runs from September 2016 to September 2017.

In 1972, Mr. Thomson began his career as a civil servant in the Government of Fiji working in the field of rural development. In 1978, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Suva, where he took on political and overseas development assistance responsibilities before being seconded to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in 1979.

He was posted to Tokyo in 1981 as First Secretary until 1984 when he was appointed Consul-General of Fiji in Sydney.

In 1986, he returned to Fiji to become Permanent Secretary of Information, first under the leadership of Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, and then under Prime Minister Dr. Timoci Bavadra. In May 1987, he was appointed Permanent Secretary to the Governor-General, Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau.

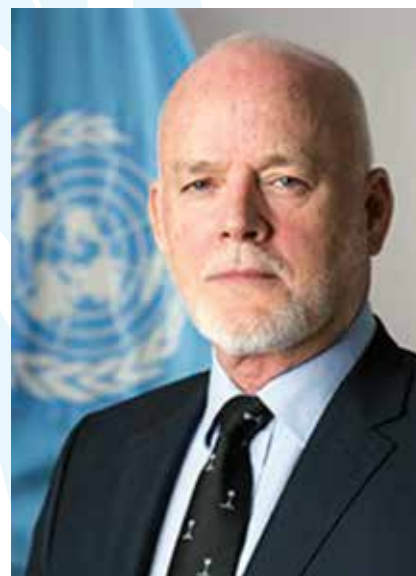
Mr. Thomson has served as a board member of the Fiji Visitors Bureau, Fiji TV and the Fiji Broadcasting Commission. From 1988 to 2009, he worked in private enterprise specializing in Pacific affairs. Mr. Thomson is a founding member of the executive committees of the Australia-Fiji Business Council and the New Zealand-Fiji Business Council.

Mr. Thomson took office in New York as Fiji's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in February 2010, serving concurrently as Fiji's Ambassador to Cuba. Mr. Thomson held office as Vice-President of the UN General Assembly in 2011-2012. He was elected as President of the Assembly of the International Seabed Authority's 2011-2012 session and then as President of the Council of the Authority's 2015-2016 session. For the duration of 2013, he chaired the United Nations' largest negotiating bloc, the Group of 77 and China. From January 2014 to January 2015, he served as President of the Executive Board of UN Development Programme/UN Population Fund/UN Office for Programme Support (UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS).

H.E. Thomson was born in Suva, Fiji in 1948 and was educated at Suva Grammar School and Natabua High School in Fiji. In 1966-1967, he attended the International Centre at Sevenoaks School in the United Kingdom and studied political studies (Auckland University, New Zealand) and development studies (Cambridge University, United Kingdom) thereafter.

He is a published author, with one of his books, "Kava in the Blood", being the winner of a Montana Book Award for non-fiction. In 2014, he was made Officer of the Order of Fiji, an award bestowed by the President of Fiji recognizing contributions and achievements by Fijians to the nation.

During his trip to Ethiopia, President Thomson was accompanied by his Special Political Adviser, Mr. Ioannis Vrailas; Senior Advisers Mr. Mateus Luemba and Mr. Abdelghani Merabet; and his Special Assistant, Ms. Signe Poulsen.



Meeting with the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

“I can congratulate Ethiopia for its leadership in implementing SDG 8 and 9”.



On 29 April, H.E. Peter Thomson met with the President of Ethiopia, H.E. Mulatu Teshome, to exchange on issues of mutual interest, including cooperation between Ethiopia and the United Nations on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. During their discussions, President Thomson expressed gratitude for Ethiopia's long standing commitment to the work of UN, including as one of the largest troop contributors to UN peacekeeping, and congratulated Ethiopia for the sustained economic growth achieved over the past decade and the nation's strong commitment to sustaining peace and sustainable development.

Meeting with the Minister of Economic Cooperation

“I have been very impressed in Ethiopia by the sustainable industrialization work that government is doing”

At his meeting at the Ministry of Economic Cooperation on 29 April, President Thomson met with H.E. Mr. Admasu Nebete, Ethiopia State Minister for Economic Cooperation. The State Minister elaborated on the success factors for the high economic growth rates of Ethiopia which include: a long-term plan and a vision to become a middle-income country by 2025; a rolling five-year development plan; a resource allocation framework supported by international partners. The State Minister informed President Thomson that Ethiopia had developed a National Action Plan for the implementation of the SDGs, and focuses on the development of infrastructure and poverty eradication. Ethiopia plans to open 17 agro-industrial parks in the various Ethiopian regions to boost agriculture and work-intensive industrialization. The PGA stressed the importance of sustainable industrialization for Ethiopia and informed the State Minister of his planned visit to Bole Industrial Park.

Visit to Bole Lemi Industrial Park in Addis Ababa

President Thomson visited Bole Lemi Industrial Park in Addis Ababa where he engaged with entrepreneurs and workers on the importance of innovation, industrialization and infrastructure for poverty eradication, increased employment. He also stressed the positive impact these have on the achievement of other SDGs.

Bole Lemi Industrial Park is located in the south eastern part of Addis Ababa and covers, 154 ha. The company employs around 10,000 workers. It is the first Ethiopian park developed by the Ethiopian Industrial Park Development Corporation (IPDC). It started operations in 2014 and rents out premises to foreign owned garments companies which are expected to engaged in export business and have created 8000 jobs rise up to 35 0000 when all enterprises will be in full operation. Currently, many foreign companies from India, China, South Korea, USA, Indonesia and Sri Lanka are flowing to the Bole Industrial Park.

After the visit to the park, known for its apparel textile, leather and leather products, H.E.Thompson praised Ethiopia as a leading nation in sustainable industrial development in Africa.

“I was very impressed by the visit to the Bole Lemi Industrial Park, particularly upon seeing over 5000 young Ethiopians employed in decent jobs. Ethiopia is demonstrating SDG#9 at work, thereby serving as an excellent example to other developing countries”.



Addressing the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) at the African Union

In addressing the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) and the AU Commissioners on Thursday 30 April 2017, H.E. Thomson expanded on the central theme of the General Assembly's 71st Session, which is achieving momentum for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He underlined the fact that, for the SDGs to succeed, Africa's interests must be central to the efforts of the international community. He also referred to the significant economic advances achieved in Africa over the last decade and commended the AU's consistent efforts in this regard.



He recognized that the continent was still home to 70% of the world's Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and was struggling in many quarters to consolidate peace and security. He emphasized that further strengthening cooperation between the AU and the UN was the way toward achieving peace and security. H.E. Thomson declared that it was clear that the success of the UN and the AU was deeply intertwined for achieving sustainable peace and development. "Both organizations have comparative advantages, with their hands immeasurably strengthened by working in partnership". Referring in particular to the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, he further stated: "given the inseparable nexus of sustaining peace and sustainable development, the stakes are high for meaningful implementation of the mosaic of multilateral agreements that have been committed to by the community of nations. H.E. Thomson called for all parties to the agreements, in the best interests of humanity as a whole, to stay true to the course. He informed that he was greatly impressed by the vision displayed in the AU's Agenda 2063 and the commitment shown towards achieving the goals, including through further integration of trade within the continent, sustainable industrialization, and the promotion of good governance, quality education and decent jobs.

The Chairperson of the PRC, H.E. Sidibe Fatoumata Kaba, Ambassador of The Republic of Guinea, thanked H.E. Thomson for prioritizing Africa during his presidency and spoke of the support his candidacy had received from the African block. She stated that it was important to reverse the narrative about Africa as a continent of poverty and conflict to focus more on employment generation, demographic dividends, the blue economy and fair distribution of resources. Regarding peace and security, H.E. Sidibe Fatoumata Kaba stated that the partnership between the UN and the AU, particularly in the financing of AU peace operations was critical, as underpinned by UNSC resolution 2320 (2016). She further declared that reforms of the UN Security Council (UNSC) were needed, including so that Africa could be better represented.

Members of the PRC welcomed the PGA and praised his focus on root causes of conflict, conflict prevention, education, and climate change. The PGA agreed with the need for UNSC reform. He emphasized that the UN (including the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General) remained seized of sensitive issues relating to peace operations, and called for a greater engagement between the AU Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council.

Meeting with the Acting Chairperson of the AUC, Commissioner Chergui

On Thursday 30, March 2017, H.E. Mr Peter Thomson met with Commissioner H.E. Mr Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security; H.E. Ms. Amira Elfadil Muhammed Elfadil, Commissioner for Social Affairs; and H.E. Mr. Albert M. Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and Industry, at the African Union Commission (AUC) Headquarters. Commissioner Chergui spoke to the bold decisions made by the AU Assembly on reform and financing. He highlighted the drought and famine in Eastern and Southern Africa, and the linkages between UN Agenda 2030 and AU Agenda 2063.

The PGA informed the Commissioners that, on taking up his appointment, he had written to every Head of Government, promoting youth and the inclusion of SDG-related education in schools. He informed that



he had been very pleased with the responses he had received. Referring to SDG 14, the PGA spoke of his mission to Senegal and his visit to a local fishing community to discuss climate change and ocean warming, and how these are affecting their livelihoods.

In Ethiopia, he had looked at SDGs 8 and 9 and visited the Addis Ababa Bole Industrial Park. He stated that there was momentum for the implementation of the SDGs and that the next step was to promote sustainable living and sustainable consumption among the general population. The findings would inform the PGA's mid-term report to the Assembly.

His final report would focus on accountability and sustaining momentum. He also informed the Commissioners that he had raised USD 1.5 million for the SDG Trust Fund, some of which had supported the establishment of an SDG implementation team, which included Ambassadors alongside seconded personnel from Member States.

The Commissioners welcomed his approach to SDG implementation and the lessons learnt from the MDG implementation. In addition, the Commissioners and the PGA discussed:

- (i) a revitalization of the UN General Assembly and the need to safeguard the integrity of the General Debate by reinforcing its status as the Parliament of the world, giving attention to decorum and greater respect for the Hall, and reducing the number of side events that distract from the main issues;
- (ii) the complementarity between UN Agenda 2030 and AU Agenda 2063, as demonstrated through the joint working groups;
- (iii) the global challenge of migration, which would be featured significantly at the coming General Assembly under the presidency of Slovakia;
- (iv) the plans for continental free-trade in Africa, including issues around building African economies and Africa's engagement in innovation and technology, as well as the partnership with UNIDO and UNECA in this area;
- (v) issues surrounding global terrorism.

With the UN Family in Ethiopia

PGA, SRSG Haile Menkerios and their teams

On 9 March, SRSG and UNOAU Head of Office, Mr Haile Menkerios, welcomed in Addis Ababa the President of the UN General Assembly on behalf of the UN Family in Ethiopia. They discussed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UN-AU cooperation, as well as peace and security challenges in the continent.



PGA Peter Thomson meeting with Nicholas Haysom, Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan (OSESSS)

With Mr. Nicholas Haysom, UN Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, President Thomson discussed the relations between Sudan and South Sudan, and the situation in each country as well as the Special Envoy's work on peace processes in the region.



UN PGA met with the UN Resident Coordinator Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie, the UN Country Team and the UNCT/Government of Ethiopia Task Force on SDGs

President Thomson held an interactive meeting with the UN Country Team (UNCT), under the coordination of the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie, and Officials of the Ethiopian Planning Commission on matters related to the implementation of the SDGs. He was briefed on how UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes are working to provide support to the Ethiopia national plans, and their commitment to 'deliver as one'. The UNCT in Ethiopia works to support the achievement of the SDGs and uses the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as the overarching framework for mainstreaming the SDGs. The National Planning Commission and the UNCT have agreed on an action plan to roll out the SDGs. The role of the UNCT is to support the Government of Ethiopia to integrate Agenda 2030 by mainstreaming, accelerating and supporting the policies. A joint Government-UN Task Force has been established to oversee the implementation of the SDGs rollout action plan. Before closing the meeting, a short presentation was provided by Mr. Teferi Mequaninte, the Ethiopian Director of the Productive Sector Plan Directorate, on Ethiopia's progress in the implementation of the SDGs.



Meeting with Ethiopian Youth

On 30th March, President Thomson had an opportunity to engage with a large group of Ethiopian youth at the Africa Hall, ECA premises during a break in a youth workshop organized by UNDP and AIESEC (Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales).

“I think that youth, because they will be young adults when 2030 comes around, would be the ones to really understand the logic behind the SDGs and the need for them to be implemented faithfully.”



President Thomson visited the Africa Hall within the ECA premises



While present in the premises of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), H.E. Thomson visited the African Union's Africa Hall. At over 600 square meters in size, it is one of the landmarks of Addis Ababa that was, inaugurated in 1961 by H.I.M. Emperor Haile Selassie. It has hosted numerous meetings and African Heads of State. Fifteen (15) key decisions on the continent, including the adoption of the Charter of the Organization of the African unity (OAU) were adopted in the Hall which, has immortalized the then Heads of State in its artwork.

UNOAU interview with H.E. Paul Thomson, President of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly



UNOAU is honored to welcome you in Addis Ababa and to receive your views/comments on a few issues. Can you please clarify what the SDGs are?

The SDGs, seventeen (17) of them, are the essential part of the 2030 SDG agenda. As you know, they follow the Millennium Development Goals, but are a much more comprehensive set of goals. The important differences are that they are universal and were adopted by all 193 countries of the world, and we are all expected to adopt them as our goals. This is very important when you look at areas like consumption and production, SDG 12. Whether you're from a developed or a developing country that applies equally to you and your consumption patterns: are they sustainable? So, the universality of the SDGs is very important. The goals relate to others they are integrated. If you've been involved in development, in my case, all my life, my career has been in development: you can see that the SDGs are an integrated whole; this is a recipe for humanity to live in a sustainable way, to develop in a sustainable way on this planet.

Why do we feel that an universal push is necessary for a meaningful implementation of the SDGs?

When I came to office in September 2016, the SDGs were one year old. It was clear to me that governments had done a good job in incorporating SDGs into national plans. I visited China and met Premier Li Keqiang, and I also visited India and met Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi. I saw the way they had incorporated the SDGs into their national plans. Very impressive what governments have done around the world in that regard. But I am personally convinced that most of humanity is still not aware of the SDGs, which is something that need to be corrected urgently because SDGs are the recipe for the security of our grandchildren. It is very important that everybody understands the logic behind them. This is why I made them the theme of 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly: a universal push to get momentum on the SDGs and to me, a large part of that, is spreading the message of SDGs around the world.

What have you achieved so far with the SDGs implementation and what have been the major challenges thereof?

I have set up a team which, this had not been done before in the Office of the President, led by an Ambassador who is on a day-to-day basis working on each of the individual SDGs, creating events and attending events related to each of these SDGs. I have convened many meetings at the United Nations and have many more which will be held between now and September 2017, events on the financing of the SDGs; on the link between climate change and the SDGs. We had a very good meeting on the link between sustaining

peace and the SDGs; we have one coming up on the SDGs and education; we have, of course, the Ocean Conference coming up in June, that is SDG 14. In addition, I have been doing outreach to Leaders around the world. I wrote a letter to every Head of Government in the world, urging them to have the SDGs entered into the curriculums of schools of their countries, because I believe the youth will be the real transformation agents for the way we consume, and the way we produce I think that the youth, because they will be young adults when 2030 comes around, will be the ones to really understand the logic behind the SDGs and the need for them to be implemented faithfully.

How do you think the UN and the African Union can collaborate in successfully implementing the SDGs goals in Africa?

I think the role of the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union is absolutely critical. Of course, the SDGs will be achieved through the activities of national governments. But I know that, here on the continent as elsewhere, we rely heavily on our regional organizations and on the world bodies such as the UN, for us to find where best practice lies. But from what I have seen, there is an excellent cooperation between the African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the UN Office to the African Union here in Addis Ababa. I don't have anything to add other than to congratulate everyone for the work they are doing.

What role can the General Assembly play in achieving Goal 16 which is, in restoring peace, justice and strong institutions?

As you know at the United Nations, peace and security under the UN Charter are the responsibility of the UN Security Council. However, the General Assembly has an important role to play in that regard as well. And SDG 16, of course, is there as our beacon for all governments and all of humanity to be working towards. All of us have adopted the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, but again, that implementation must be national-led; every country has unique circumstances, and we have to approach SDG 16 through those unique circumstances. But the goal is there, and certainly by 2030, I expect to see that all of the SDGs, including SDG 16, will be universally achieved around the world.

How are the SDGs funded for their full and successful implementation?

Funding is a challenge, but I think of it in a few ways. One is that, since national plans have absorbed the SDGs around the world and all governments, so national budgets are actually directed towards implementing SDGs. That is where the core funding comes from. And then, we have all the traditional sources of development assistance: these remain. Some of them are under threat, it is true; but the funds remain. The new approach is to use those funds for leveraging. They are there, in some cases to serve as guarantees on risks and so on, so that we can get more private sector funding the development of the developing world. This is where sustainable growth will come from, from the developing countries; so the private sector recognizes that and would like to invest, but as a matter of covering risk and so on. That is where the traditional funds can provide the assurance that allows us to leverage them into the private sector funding.

Finally, in concluding this interview, can I say that I am very impressed with the cohesion of the UN team here in Ethiopia. I think it really shows the efficacy of the "delivery as one" model, which the Ethiopian government has approved. I've also been very impressed in Ethiopia by the sustainable industrialization work that the government is doing. I went to Bole Industrial Park yesterday, and I saw over 5,000 young Ethiopians in employment, in good job, decent work, in garments and foot wear; high standards, good working conditions; so I am very impressed by that. That is SDG #9 and SDG #8 in action. And I congratulate Ethiopia for its leadership in that regards.

We thank you for your time, your Excellency Thomson.

Photo gallery

AUC and UNOAU teams waiting for the PGA at the Julius Nyerere building



PGA being received by Commissioner Chergui, Acting Chairperson of the AU Commission, and SRSG Menkerios, Head of UNOAU



Meeting with the AUC leadership



PGA and UNOAU at the Nelson Mandela Hall waiting for the PGA's address to members of the PRC



Meeting with UNOAU



Visit to Bole Lemi Industrial Park



At the dinner hosted by UNOAU



Addressing the youth



At the former AU Conference Hall, ECA



With UNDP-PIO, CCTV and Ethiopian Herald media



Meeting with the UN Country Team



Break between the two meetings





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