



Daily Message by the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs, Hon. Evarist Bartolo

25th May 2020

Today, May 25, we celebrate Africa Day - 57 years since the birth of the African Union.

The African continent is the second largest in the world, after Asia.

It is home to 1,400 million people, half of whom are under the age of 25 and in 30 years time, this number will reach 2,000 million.

It is such a large continent that it can fit Europe, India, China, the United States and Australia.

It is made up of 54 different states, all but two of which were colonies and today also commemorate their national liberation.

30 percent of all minerals in the world are found in Africa.

The best African leaders do not want their country to live with the crumbs falling from the table of rich countries, nor their country to continue to be robbed of their wealth.

They want investment, they want development, they want serious and good governance for millions of Africans to build their future in their own country instead of trying to cross the Sahara and the Mediterranean in search of a better life in Europe.

One of the best African leaders of today is Paul Kagame of Rwanda who built his country after the 1994 genocide of 1 million people.

He says Africa needs to unite because it is divided and even the largest African country, alone, is small.

“We still act too much on our own: Rwanda, South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania ... in the process, those who want to continue exploiting us will enjoy seeing us divided and continue to sow division between us.”

Kagame holds that it must be the Africans themselves who solve their country's problems through good governance, for their own good and not upon instructions from other countries.

Kagame says there are still many prejudices against Africa and is annoyed by foreign leaders and journalists telling Africa what to do and what not to do.

Kagame is rooting for his country to learn from other countries, but only to adapt to the reality of his country and not to imitate faithfully, even when it does not make sense.

A few months ago Malta launched its strategy for Africa - paving the way to build trade, political and cultural relations with a number of African countries.

We already have companies that are doing very well in their trade with African countries. We must continue to strengthen these links.

We are certain that there is strong potential for sincere cooperation with African countries in different areas including education and technology, guided by mutual respect.



Many of us are still blinded by ignorance and prejudice towards Africa and see it only as a continent full of diseases, misery, war and corruption.

It is certainly a continent where many problems remain, with people below the Sahara living on just over 50 cents a day (more than 22 million are expected to fall into greater poverty due to the economic effect of Covid-19).

But there has also been strong industrial and scientific development and success stories in the development of democracy and equality.

It is also positive that in the coming months, together with the European Union we will be giving more importance to relations with Africa because so far the European Union has been almost absent in Africa and its gap has been filled by other countries.

This despite the fact that Europe and Africa are closer (14 kilometers) than Valletta and St. Paul's Bay (17 kilometers).

The future of Europe, the Mediterranean and Africa is intertwined.

Evarist Bartolo

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