Tasks of the African Progressive Movement

I would like to insist that the task to achieve the fundamental social transformation of our Continent – its renaissance – belongs to the African people as a whole.

By Thabo Mbeki

All Africans throughout our Continent are fully aware of the fundamental challenge all of us face that we must successfully and urgently address, namely, the interconnected phenomena of the eradication of the poverty of the billion African masses and the underdevelopment of the African Continent.

At the same time, I am certain that all progressive persons throughout the world agree with Africa that it is imperative that our Continent must engage in the fundamental social transformation processes that must end this pervasive poverty and underdevelopment.

I would also like to believe that all Africans throughout our Continent are fully aware of the specific challenges all of us face relating to these interlinked tasks of the eradication of African poverty and underdevelopment.

Accordingly, it must therefore be that the principal task we face is to answer the critical question – what must be done to achieve the objectives which all Africans and progressive humanity accept as being of fundamental importance to the renewal and renaissance of Africa!

Everybody familiar with the fundamentals of African history over at least the last half-a-century knows that central to the ebbs and flows in the evolution of independent Africa, in all its elements, has been the task of successfully responding to the fundamental social transformation to which I have referred.

Elements of the African progressive agenda.

Immediately, with no intrusion even by our own intelligentsia, political parties and organised civil society, the African masses know that *some* of the major challenges our countries face, constituting the strategic national and therefore African interest, are:

- establishing genuinely democratic systems of government, including accountable State systems;
- entrenching peace, security and stability;
- achieving national and social cohesion as well as social development;
- eradicating poverty and underdevelopment through sustained and sustainable economic growth and equitable economic development;
- ensuring African integration and unity; and
- securing Africa's rightful place among the world community of nations.

All these outcomes, which are critical to the realisation of fundamental social transformation, can only be achieved through conscious, purposeful and concerted action by ourselves as Africans.

I argue and firmly propose that the goals I have listed above constitute the core of *the contemporary African progressive agenda*. It therefore follows that to achieve them demands of *the African progressive forces* that they discharge their responsibilities to ensure their realisation.

Naturally, if this has not been done already, these progressive forces within each of our countries would have to detail how the goals of the African progressive agenda would be achieved, taking into account the national conditions.

However, at the same time, I would like to say some things about these goals.

Democracy and accountable governance

It is true that the overwhelming majority of our countries now have elected governments, contrary to what happened in earlier decades when millions of Africans were ruled by military governments or lived in One-Party States.

This is an important positive development which the African progressive forces helped to bring about.

However it is important that as Africans we should make a serious effort critically to examine *the quality of our democracies* to determine whether they actually live up to the strategic perspective – *the people shall govern*!

It seems clear that in some instances the democratic process in our countries has served to hide the reality of *the entrenchment of antagonistic tribal or ethnic divisions* perpetuated by politicians to gain power through 'democratic ways and means'.

> **❝It seems clear that in some instances the democratic process in our countries has served to hide the reality of *the entrenchment of antagonistic tribal or ethnic divisions* perpetuated by politicians to gain power through 'democratic ways and means'. ❞**

It is self-evident that this development is fundamentally inimical to the achievement of the genuine democracy our Continent needs, and must therefore be resisted and defeated.

It also seems clear that there has emerged in our countries a *'professional political class'*, concentrated in the many political parties we celebrate as a manifestation of a progressive system of multi-party politics.

This 'professional political class' seeks election to political positions merely to ensure that its members earn a State salary at the end of the month, make the living for which it will fight whatever the cost, and use its positions to dispense such patronage as will ensure its perpetuity.

In addition it also seeks such election because in many of our countries the governance system is abused by this 'professional political class' as the only or most easily accessible and available route to corrupt self-enrichment.

Further, this 'professional political class' is part of and a representative of a dominant political, economic and social elite in our countries which has little interest either in changing the lives of the millions of people for the better, or empowering these masses actually to make their voices count in effective ways in the system and process of governance.

On our Continent this translates into the marginalisation and disempowerment of important social strata which constitute the majority of our population, including the peasantry, the working class, the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie operating in both the formal and the informal economy, and the professional echelon.

All this is also directly related to what I referred to in the goals I listed earlier as – accountable State systems!

The African democratic State can only derive its legitimacy from its commitment to serve the interests of the masses of our people and its practical activities in this regard.

However, what I have said above relating to our politics means that in reality many of our African State systems have been reduced to a patrimony of a predatory elite, controlled by its self-serving 'professional political class'.

In earlier decades, the progressive African intelligentsia warned us about the threat of the emergence and domination of this predatory elite, at whose core would be an admixture of a *'bureaucratic and comprador bourgeoisie'*.

It is vital that we revisit these propositions, taking into account the actual African experience and reality, as an important part of the process of assessing the quality of our democracies.

With the domination of our politics and societies by the *'bureaucratic and comprador bourgeoisie and its attached political class'*, it became inevitable that

the African State would be corrupted to enrich the elite I have mentioned, with little serious concern that it should serve the interests of the masses of the people.

Government employees, the civil servants, taking the cue from the political leaders, join in the scramble for corrupt self-enrichment and treat themselves as masters of the masses they should serve as public employees, rather than their servants.

Consequently, and of importance, the State also becomes an instrument of repression and intimidation against the people, to stop them from rebelling against what becomes, relative to their interests, a predator State.

It is also the same predator State, or at least elements of this State, controlled by the self-serving African elite, which cooperates with international capital among other things to enable and facilitate the illicit export of the capital from our Continent. We need this capital for our development.

Thus does the putative democratic State become a social institution which serves the interests of a *'rent seeking'* elite whose goals amount to no more than preserving its political power and using this power to extract the 'rent' which ensures its enrichment.

It is for this reason that I have said we must seriously assess the quality of the democracies which Africa is striving to establish, and therefore reflect on the developments I have mentioned, among others.

In this regard, fortunately, as an important example, detailed and instructive assessments have been made by fellow Africans about the circumstances, among others, in North Africa, which led to the popular 2011 uprising in Egypt which led to the defeat of the Hosni Mubarak government and regime, and the subsequent developments to date.

In this context, obviously, we also have to consider what our democratically elected Governments actually do to maintain regular contact with the masses of the people – the electorate – and to listen and respond positively and practically to the views of these masses.

Peace, security and stability

We must also celebrate the fact that

over the years of African independence for the bulk of our Continent, violent conflicts on our Continent have been significantly reduced, guaranteeing the vitally important greater peace and security for large numbers of our fellow Africans.

At the same time, we must also confront the reality that these conflicts have not ended.

Given that one of our strategic tasks remains achieving peace among Africans, we must also make a serious effort to understand the fundamental causes of the violent conflicts among ourselves.

Necessarily, in this regard, our first objective must be the prevention of the outbreak of these violent conflicts.

> 66 In addition it also seeks such election because in many of our countries the governance system is abused by this 'professional political class' as the only or most easily accessible and available route to corrupt self-enrichment. 99

In this context we must break with what seems to have emerged as Africa's established response to its challenges of peace, security and stability. This is to help negotiate ceasefire agreements among belligerents and then deploy troops to police the implementation of these agreements.

Necessary as such interventions are, we must make a determined effort systematically to understand the root causes of these conflicts, the better to inform us about what we should do to stop them from breaking out.

The central point I would like to make in this regard is that fundamentally the violent conflicts in our countries are born of our fractured societies.

This represents what the outstanding African scholar, Professor Mahmood

Mamdani, has described as the failure to build *"a common political citizenship and a law-based order…a nation-state equal to realising social justice."*

In this regard I am certain that an honest examination of such violent conflicts as those in Mali, the eastern DRC, the CAR, Sudan, Somalia and Kenya in 2007, and others, would confirm the correctness of the observation made by Professor Mamdani.

Accordingly we must take this fully on board: that successfully to accomplish the strategic task to ensure peace, security and stability on our Continent we have to address the various challenges I have mentioned relating to such matters as the quality of our democracies, equitable economic development, national and social cohesion, and so on.

In addition to all this, we must also integrate into our thinking and confront a development that originates from outside our Continent.

This is the seeming determination of major Western powers to intervene on our Continent to address our challenge of peace and stability, ostensibly on the basis of a shared objective to advance the supposedly non-antagonistic national interests both of our countries and these Western powers.

We must answer the questions seriously – what are these national interests and to what extent are they non-antagonistic, especially in the context of practically affirming our independence as individual countries and as the Continent!

Related to this, we must continue seriously to address the important matter of constructing a correct relationship between the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the UN Security Council (UNSC), within the context of all the provisions contained in the UN Charter and our own Protocols.

It is also in this context that we should consider what should be the correct relationship between Africa and such bodies as the International Criminal Court (ICC).

National and social cohesion and social development

The national and social cohesion I

have mentioned, of concern in part to the challenge of peace and stability, is also directly related to the observation made by Professor Mamdani as cited earlier.

It requires focused attention as a strategic task we must pursue in its own right.

Thus indeed should we, in each of our nation-states, work to nurture and cultivate a common sense of nationhood and a shared patriotism. We have to do this attending to both the subjective and the objective spheres.

Our nation-states are constituted as diverse societies. It is therefore imperative that a conscious and sustained intervention is made to give practical expression to the principle and vision of achieving *unity in diversity*.

The specific actions to be taken in this regard in the context of the subjective sphere might vary from country to country but would surely include such matters as:

- what is taught in our schools;
- what is done not to marginalise any language or culture; and
- avoiding the abuse of the fact of the co-existence of different ethnic groups and religious faiths as a means to divide the people, and so on.

On the *objective plane*, we have to attend to such challenges as ensuring balanced regional socio-economic development, also bearing in mind that in many of our countries these regions also coincide with the ethnic dispersal of our populations.

There is of course also the important challenge of the balanced relationship between the urban and rural areas, especially taking into account that in many of our countries the overwhelming majority of the population is rural.

As all of us will surely agree, the national and social cohesion we have to achieve demands the inclusion of women in the equitable socio-economic development I have mentioned. It is not possible that we can speak of such cohesion in the objective circumstance of the social exclusion of women.

It is partly for this reason that earlier

I mentioned the matter of social development related to the national and social cohesion I have been discussing.

As this relates to women, this social development means that we must implement sustained programmes effectively to achieve gender equality, based on the objectives to empower the women of Africa and realise their emancipation.

In general, such social development also means that, among other things, we must take all necessary measures to ensure that all our people achieve the necessary levels of literacy and numeracy, and have access to health care, first of all through an effective primary health system.

> **❝Government employees, the civil servants, taking the cue from the political leaders, join in the scramble for corrupt self-enrichment and treat themselves as masters of the masses they should serve as public employees, rather than their servants. ❞**

Economic growth, development and equity

All available information suggests that for many years during our years of independence, the aggregate African economy declined. This meant that liberated Africa was generating continuously reduced volumes of wealth, even as the African population was increasing significantly.

Practically what this represented, perversely, was that African political liberation was accompanied by the growing material impoverishment of the liberated African masses.

However, and fortunately, again available information has communicated the firm message that from the 1990s to

date, this aggregate African economy has changed course.

Accordingly, it is now expanding, and therefore creating new wealth, at very encouraging relatively high rates of growth. It goes without saying that this is a very positive development, which all of us must welcome and encourage.

However, in this article we will not discuss the sources of this welcome outcome, which important matter has to be addressed in a specific and focused presentation.

Only for the purposes of this article, I will take it as given that the fact is now established that Africa has the capacity and will in practice to continue to develop an economy that will grow at positive rates, thus to create new wealth.

However it is surely a critically important part of the progressive agenda to focus in detail exactly on this matter – sustainable economic development.

In this regard, the progressive agenda must prioritise:

- the progressive transformation of the rural areas, including through the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP);
- industrialisation, including beneficiation of raw materials, to move away from Africa being a mere exporter of raw materials;
- comprehensive infrastructure development relating to transport, energy, communication technology and economic and social infrastructure in both urban and rural areas;
- human resource development, aimed among other things, at reducing levels of youth unemployment;
- environmental protection, including the struggle against desertification and the degradation of agricultural land, the protection of our tropical forests and marine resources, proper management of our water resources; and
- ending the seepage of capital from our countries especially through illicit financial outflows.

The critical matter on which we must comment in greater detail is

the challenge that must be addressed with regard to what I have referred as *equitable economic development*.

The naked reality is that despite the higher and sustained rates of economic growth I have mentioned, this has not impacted to any significant degree on such important progressive socio-economic goals as:

- reducing the general levels of poverty;
- reducing income and wealth disparities;
- providing resources for comprehensive infrastructure development;
- reducing unemployment levels; or
- helping to accelerate progress towards the fundamental restructuring and modernisation of the African economy.

With regard to all this, one of the major points I must make is that the sustained higher economic growth rates I have mentioned have been driven by sustained demand for African raw materials, especially by China and India.

In the main, these raw materials are extracted and exported from our Continent by foreign companies.

Accordingly this has meant that a good amount of the revenues due to Africa from the export of raw materials, including those without any value addition in Africa, accrues outside our Continent as dividends and other legal and illicit disbursements to the foreign companies.

In addition, some of these revenues accrue to a small group of domestic *'rent entrepreneurs'*, who are only interested in private wealth accumulation, with virtually no commitment to national economic development. These also participate in the export of the capital we need for our development.

It therefore seems obvious that to address the strategically important matter of equitable economic development, the African progressive movement must attend to the challenges:

- to ensure that significant volumes of the revenues from the export of raw materials are retained within our countries, while respecting the legitimate interests of the foreign investors in this sector;

- to add value to these raw materials as part of the process of industrialisation, thus to end our status as exporters of raw materials;
- to minimise the proportion of these revenues that accrues to our domestic rent-seekers; and
- to direct the revenues generated by the export of raw materials to finance the fundamental transformation of our economies, rather than pay for increased recurrent non-capital expenditures and add to the growing income and wealth disparities and inequality in our societies.

It is therefore a central strategic task of the African progressive movement to help ensure that the greater wealth

> 66 **For each of our countries even truly to maintain their independence and implement a progressive transformation agenda requires that they enjoy solidarity support from other African countries, thus to defeat the forces of neo-colonialism.** 99

which Africa is producing is used:

- to benefit our rural and urban working people, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the African population, not merely a privileged elite; and
- to act as a motive force or motor driving the sustained socio-economic transformation of our Continent.

I am certain that, in this regard, the African progressive movement understands very well that the achievement of these and the other socio-economic goals we have mentioned will entail a challenging struggle that must answer the question: – who sets the national agenda!

This is a vitally important and

strategic question to which I will revert later.

African integration and unity

Earlier I suggested that the African progressive movement must take seriously as one of its strategic tasks the acceleration of progress towards achieving African integration and unity.

For well over a century, the broad African liberation movement, including the African Diaspora, has recognised the importance of the integration and unity of Africa as a vital strategic imperative for the achievement of the liberation and renaissance of Africa and the Africans.

The contemporary African progressive movement must understand that it inherits this legacy as one of its most valuable heritages, on which it must build.

We enjoy the very fortunate outcome that centuries of the export of millions of Africans as slaves, especially to the Caribbean and the Americas, and the fracturing of African communities into colonially created nation-states, have not destroyed the sense of cohesion among ourselves as Africans in Africa and in the Diaspora.

The African progressive movement must build on this historic reality.

Early political economists such as Adam Smith and Karl Marx identified *the process of globalisation* as an important driver in all future global socio-economic development, though it would not distribute the benefits equally or equitably.

Thus even as the global genuinely progressive movement since the 19th century argued for the right of nations to self-determination, thus to end imperialist and colonial domination, it also sought to encourage the voluntary integration of these independent nations in political federations or unions.

Centrally this was because this progressive movement understood the need for these independent States to develop sufficient strength to defeat the predatory practices of the system of imperialism, especially globalising capital, which had denied them their independence in the first place.

During the current period, the process of globalisation has accelerated

enormously, leading to some among the world intelligentsia and *'political class'* wrongly to characterise this phenomenon as a new development.

Within this context, we have seen examples across the world of countries grouping themselves together in various economic/political blocs the better to enhance their prospects for economic growth and development. Some of the better known among these blocs are the EU, NAFTA, ASEAN and Mercosur.

I mention all this because Africa is characterised by a large number of small States which need to belong to African multi-country economic blocs to acquire the required and necessary economic viability, bearing in mind the fact of the process of globalisation.

Experience during our years of independence has also confirmed that for each of our countries even truly to maintain their independence and implement a progressive transformation agenda requires that they enjoy solidarity support from other African countries, thus to defeat the forces of neo-colonialism.

Indeed we can say that our Continent as a whole cannot guarantee its independence and its possibility to realise its transformation agenda unless it acts in unity!

The absolute need for this unity has been confirmed for instance during the now aborted WTO negotiations to implement the Doha Development Round and the contentious negotiations that have attended the conclusion of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between Africa and the EU.

It is imperative that existing decisions to strengthen the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are implemented, thus accelerating African regional integration.

The general position our Continent has taken is that the RECs are the fundamental and critical building blocs we need to advance towards achieving African unity. Accordingly, they should address both economic and political integration.

The African progressive movement must therefore address this matter, in particular to help address the obstacles to the required regional integration.

Acceptance of the general proposition to build African unity from below, through the RECs, does not and should not mean that this is in contradistinction to interventions from above to help accelerate progress towards this unity.

This means that part of the African progressive agenda must focus on strengthening both the institutions of the African Union and enhancing the capacity of the Union to ensure that all its Member States actually implement agreed Continental policies and programmes.

One advantage we have in this regard is that through policies they have adopted through both the OAU and the AU, African countries have accepted the principle and practice of the limitation of state sovereignty in the process to achieve African integration and unity.

However, one of the serious challenges to give effect to this is

> **❝The major Western powers feel that they have the freedom to act individually or collectively to determine the destiny of our Continent.❞**

illustrated by the fact that the bulk of the funds to finance the programmes of the AU, without exception, are provided by non-African donors rather than contributions from the Member States.

Practically this means that our preeminent Continental organisation, the AU, cannot properly implement the transformation programmes contained in the agreed all-Africa policies unless external donors agree to finance these programmes. This is unsustainable!

The conscious African masses are committed to the vision and strategic objective – *Africa Must Unite!*

It is imperative that the African progressive movement must also understand that one of its historic obligations is to help ensure the realisation of this strategic objective.

As originally argued by the political economists Adam Smith and Karl Marx, Africa is fully integrated within the rest of the international community.

Our Continent cannot extricate or subtract itself from this fact of global integration, which is centuries old. Neither can nor should it seek to achieve a state of autarky as an island, sufficient unto itself. In reality such autarky would bring disaster to the billion Africans.

However, in many instances, and arguably in the main, our integration among the world community of nations disadvantages us, the Africans. Accordingly, we have a strategic task to intervene to help define the terms and conditions of our integration within the international community.

It is for this reason that the African progressive movement must accept that yet another of its strategic tasks is to help secure Africa's rightful place among the world community of nations.

Africa's place in the world

In this context we cannot overemphasise the fact that to achieve our goals in this regard will require the united action of our Continent.

The *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)* held a Summit Meeting in Beijing in November 2006. The Meeting adopted a Declaration and an Action Plan for 2007-2009.

Among other things, the Declaration said:

> We hereby solemnly proclaim the establishment of a new type of strategic partnership between China and Africa featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchanges…
>
> "We urge that diversity of the world should be respected and upheld, that all countries in the world, big or small, rich or poor, strong or weak, should respect each other, treat each other as equals and live in peace and amity with each other, and that different civilisations and modes of development should draw on each other's experience, promote each other and coexist in harmony.

I believe that all this describes exactly the kind of relationship Africa should establish with the rest of the world to achieve what I have described

as *securing Africa's rightful place among the world community of nations.*

This re-emphasises the need to have a strong African Union capable of defending, representing and advancing the interests of our Continent.

In turn, this underlines the related imperative for our Continent to act decisively to implement its agreed socio-economic development programmes, such as NEPAD, which, among other things, visualise ending Africa's status as an exporter of raw materials and capital and an importer of manufactured goods.

We are also faced with the critical importance both of helping to build strong and effective multilateral institutions and the transformation of these institutions so that they are properly representative of the developing countries, including Africa.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the European socialist countries, and therefore the end of the Cold War, meant a radical redistribution of global power and the emergence of what was called 'a unipolar world'.

More recently, and certainly as this relates to Africa, this has translated into what seems to be a 'new reality' that:

• the major Western powers feel that they have the freedom to act individually or collectively to determine the destiny of our Continent;

• they are therefore ready to intervene anywhere on our Continent regardless of our views as Africans;

• they view the involvement in Africa of other countries, and especially China, as a strategic threat to their interests, which include unfettered access to the ever-expanding proven reserves and deposits of natural resources on our Continent; and

• they would like to use the historical relations between our countries and themselves, including those imposed on Africa during the colonial period, to preserve our Continent as their exclusive sphere of influence, in their interest.

We should add to this the fact that the process of globalisation, driven by dominant Western drivers, has resulted in the further unequal integration of Africa within the global community

on terms and conditions that are essentially defined by the West.

Earlier I cited part of what appeared in the 2006 FOCAC Summit Meeting Declaration. This same Declaration also said *"Faced with the growing trend of economic globalisation, we call for enhancing South-South cooperation…"*

It went further to call for global negotiations, including through the WTO, *"to promote balanced, coordinated and sustainable development of the global economy to enable all countries to share its benefits and realise common development and prosperity."*

I refer to this because the post-Cold

> **❝ It is imperative that existing decisions to strengthen the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are implemented, thus accelerating African regional integration. ❞**

War period has also enhanced the possibility for more effective South-South cooperation, to achieve the mutual benefit indicated in the FOCAC Summit Meeting Declaration.

To this we must add the potential for Africa to redefine its place in the world as represented by BRICS and the Africa-Arab Cooperation Forum.

In summary I would suggest that for it successfully to help address the historic challenge to secure Africa's rightful place among the world community of nations, the African progressive movement must attend to such challenges as:

• strengthening the AU, to enable our Continent effectively to act as a united entity capable of advancing its interests;

• implementing the agreed African socio-economic development programmes, as represented for instance in NEPAD;

• acting to defend the right and

possibility for us, the peoples of Africa, individually and collectively, freely to determine our destiny consistent with international law which prescribes the right of nations to self-determination;

• strengthening and democratising the multilateral institutions, to ensure respect for international rule of law even by the most powerful countries in the world;

• constructing equitable North-South relations especially as these relate to Africa; and

• enhancing South-South cooperation.

About the African progressive movement

This article has focused on the tasks of what I have identified as the objectives of the African progressive movement.

It seems obvious that we must also answer the important question – who constitutes this African progressive movement?

The answer to this question is also directly relevant to another question I posed earlier – who sets the (national) African agenda?

Throughout the years of the African struggle for liberation against colonial rule it was not difficult to define both the African progressive liberation agenda and the African motive forces – the African progressive movement – which would engage the offensive to achieve the objectives specified in this African liberation agenda.

The historic African victory which caused the complete global collapse of colonialism and therefore the independence of all nations, posed new challenges.

These include the challenge to answer the questions:

• what are the progressive goals which the independent African States must aim to achieve; and

• what forces in our independent States can ensure the realisation of these goals?

In this article I have tried to elaborate on the progressive agenda which independent Africa must address, which is largely and essentially consistent with decisions our Continent has already taken through its inter-

SMART ID CARD IS HERE!

- Wait to be invited to apply for your Smart ID Card
- Applications will be according to months of birth
- Free for 16 year-olds and pensioners 60 years and above
- Be patient as government rolls out the Smart ID Card
- Smart ID Card for a Smart Nation
- Life has improved since 1994

Smart ID Card – consolidating the restoration of national identity, citizenship and dignity to all South Africans

home affairs
Department:
Home Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

We Care!

20 YEARS OF FREEDOM

governmental institutions.

However I would like to insist that the task to achieve the fundamental social transformation of our Continent – its renaissance – belongs to the African people as a whole.

Accordingly, it cannot be sub-contracted only to our Governments, even if these are put in place through democratic elections.

It is because of this that the question arises – what progressive movement exists to engage in struggle to address the agenda I have sought to detail in this article?

Obviously, this is also to ask the question – who in our countries will benefit from the implementation of the all-Africa programme I have suggested?

The fact of the matter is that our years of independence have confirmed that in practise it is impossible to maintain our *'national unity'* exactly in the manner and form in which this manifested itself during the era of struggle for our national liberation.

In good part this is due to the undeniable reality that African independence has resulted in the emergence in our countries, as I mentioned earlier, of *a dominant predatory political and economic 'class' as a rent-seeking elite* which pursues selfish interests that have nothing to do with the fundamental aspirations of the generality of the African masses.

In practice this elite acts as a junior partner in the perpetuation of an all-round neo-colonial relationship between Africa and the major Western powers.

It is in this context that the challenge arises to ensure the strengthening and/or establishment of an African progressive movement that must struggle to achieve the objectives detailed in this article.

This progressive movement must understand that to achieve its objectives it must defeat the neo-colonial project, fighting against the resistance of its domestic African representatives and the foreign patrons and beneficiaries.

Recognition of this reality imposes the obligation to identify and organise the social forces on which we can rely to pursue the African progressive agenda I have tried to detail.

It is obvious that here we are talking of those in our African society who would have a material interest in the successful implementation of this agenda. In reality, this is the overwhelming majority of the peoples of Africa.

I am certain that the masses of the African people are directly very interested in the outcomes I have mentioned as part of the African progressive agenda, such as:

• involving the people in the political processes that help to determine their destiny;
• ensuring peace and stability among all Africans;
• generating sustainable economic growth and development which benefit the people as a whole;
• advancing towards the integration and unity of Africa; and

> 66 We still need the united action of the very same forces to achieve the objectives in the progressive agenda I have sought to detail, which are fundamental to the process of advancing towards the renaissance of Africa. 99

• restoring the dignity of Africans among the peoples of the world.

Accordingly, as has happened for decades, it would be incorrect to leave the task to pursue these historic goals only to our Governments. Instead, we should understand and determine that their achievement is part of the people's agenda for the renaissance of Africa.

This is exactly why it must be driven by the African peoples themselves through what I have characterised as the African progressive movement.

We are therefore confronted by the strategic task to build this movement.

Practically this means that our African progressive political formations have an obligation to work consistently and urgently to draw into one active process or movement, around an agenda such as I have suggested, other formations genuinely representative of the African peasant masses, workers, women, youth and students, religious communities, the indigenous petty and bigger bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia and workers in culture and the media.

We achieved our liberation from colonialism, leading to the universal collapse of this system, through the united action of these forces, which constituted our broad movements for national liberation.

We still need the united action of the very same forces to achieve the objectives in the progressive agenda I have sought to detail, which are fundamental to the process of advancing towards the renaissance of Africa.

In this regard, our first task is to demonstrate this practically: that we have the progressive political formations that must take the lead in terms of building the broad progressive movement to which I have referred, united around a shared vision and programme!

Conclusion

One of the most recognised and popular statements made by our late leader and distinguished African patriot, Amilcar Cabral, is what he wrote as a *Party Directive* to PAIGC cadres in 1965, that:

"Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children…"

These are exactly the goals which must unite the broad African masses behind the progressive movement we must build!

The same Party Directive contains the similarly famous injunctions:

"Hide nothing from the masses of the people. Tell no lies. Expose lies whenever they are told. Mask no difficulties, mistakes, failures. Claim no easy victories."

Neither should our contemporary African progressive movement tell lies by making claims about easy victories that are not possible! ∎