
**SPEECH BY THE ALLIANCE AFRICA PRESIDENT MR.
STANLEY C. MUCHIRI ON THE OCCASION OF THE 95th
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CO-OPERATIVES HELD ON
SATURDAY 1 JULY, 2017.**

**The Guest of Honour
Chairmen, National Co-operative Organizations Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Dear Co-operators,

Receive my warmest co-operative greetings.

I wish to thank you all for finding time from your busy schedules to come and celebrate this 95th ICA International Day of Co-operatives with us. The theme of these celebrations is **Inclusion**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Academicians and philosophers alike have tried to define inclusion, coming up with several definitions ranging from: embracing all people, giving people equal access to opportunities and getting rid of discrimination and intolerance. I say **Inclusion is embracing the spirit of cooperation.**

Inclusion not only captures the people-focused nature of co-operative enterprises, it also echoes the co-operative principles of voluntary and open membership, democratic member control and member economic participation. Co-operatives provide a space where all people, regardless of race, gender, culture, social background or economic circumstance, can meet their needs and build better communities

Looking at the world at large and the continent in particular, there are several key issues impeding cooperation and inclusive growth that we all desire. Africa plans well but implementing the plans remains a challenge characterized by poor infrastructure, overregulation of trade and marketing, unemployment for the majority of the population comprising young people, terrorism, corruption and lack of coordinated approach to trade and markets. Amidst much talk of the potential Africa, still there is a lot which needs to be done.

Looking at statistics, the slowest rate of poverty decline is in Africa. Population growth has exceeded poverty reduction. Inequality rates remain high and it is estimated that about 415 million people in sub-Saharan Africa live in poverty. Amongst what is labeled as Africa's middle-class i.e those earning between \$2 and \$20 per day, 60 percent make up the floating class those earning between \$2 and \$4 per day with the danger of relapsing into poverty.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Co-operative Business model is the final frontier to recurrent problems Africa faces. Africa offers boundless economic opportunities due to the enormous resources vested in the continent. We need long-term investments that create equal economic benefits to the people and social wealth. I truly believe that popularizing the co-operative business model will help solve Africa's most intractable development problems.

Looking at the markets, we need to integrate the five regions of Africa to create an intercontinental market where there will be free movement of people, money and information. This has been the dream of the Alliance Africa and we are optimistic that we are heading there.

Distinguished Guests

Synchronizing investments in co-operatives and enhancing one's bargaining power is imperative for the attainment of inclusive growth. This must be done while protecting the rights of people and supporting co-operatives across the region. Bringing different cultures together and embrace the co-operative culture will not only spur development but also assist in achieving inclusive growth in the continent.

Looking at the future of work, we must endeavour as co-operators to ensure that the young generation get the required capital to make investments to help them face the future boldly. Regular trainings, mentorships, interesting youths in agriculture, and exposing them to the different financing mechanism available through co-operatives will help foster inclusion.

Ladies and Gentlemen

To sum up my remarks let me note that inclusion is ensuring that we partner, and each one of us becomes a key stakeholder in the implementation of the sustainable development goals. Our coordinated approach towards responsible and responsive leadership is all vested in the concern for humankind. The Alliance has established with an online platform called 'Coops for 2030' (www.coopsfor2030.coop), where all co-operatives are urged to make pledges of their contribution towards implementation of the SDGs.

Please let us all pledge to meet the global goals.

With these few remarks, I thank you and wish you all fruitful International Day of Co-operatives.

Most sincerely,

STANLEY C. MUCHIRI

PRESIDENT, ALLIANCE AFRICA