“I am an African... Today it feels good to be African,” a wise man said expressing pride and gratitude of having being born and raised on the bosoms of Mother Africa.

Today is a special day for everyone who calls Africa their home. Fifty two years ago, 32 newly-liberated countries met in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia to express solidarity and form the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the body which later gave birth to the African Union (AU).

Ever since that day 52 years ago at the Horn of Africa, sons and daughters of the continent have marked the day by celebrating what it means to be African... but surprisingly, South Africa, the Rainbow Nation of former President Nelson Mandela, only became part of this ever growing group of liberated countries and a member of the OAU, when we buried Apartheid in 1994. Many more countries have since joined the group after breaking free from the stranglehold of colonisers.

“we must build an Africa that is prosperous, an Africa that is economically integrated, and politically guided by the ideals of Pan Africanism, an Africa that subscribes to democracy, respects human rights, and respects the rule of law. We must have a peaceful and secure Africa, an Africa with its own cultural identity, common heritage and shared values, an Africa whose development is based on the creativity of its people, particularly its youth and women.”

Earlier today, Chairperson of the African Union, Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe called on all Africans to remember where we come from and help build an Africa that all who lives in it would be proud of.

He added that Africans should also pay homage and tribute to the forefathers, “these great visionaries took the historic stride and formed an institution that would be the vanguard of the African people's aspirations for freedom, unity and solidarity. This Day would not have been possible without the sacrifices of the founding fathers and those of the African heroes and heroines who fought to liberate our continent from the vestiges of colonialism, racism and apartheid. Today, we are free because of the sacrifices they made.”

“As a Union, we must build an Africa that is prosperous, an Africa that is economically integrated, and politically guided by the ideals of Pan Africanism, an Africa that subscribes to democracy, respects human rights, and respects the rule of law. We must have a peaceful and secure Africa, an Africa with its own cultural identity, common heritage and shared values, an Africa whose development is based on the creativity of its people, particularly its youth and women.”

His words were echoed by Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma who said: “On this, the fifty-second occasion of us marking the birth of our beloved continental body I have the singular honour to wish all of you a happy and fulfilling Africa Day. This year’s celebration comes at the time when the African Union is celebrating 13 years since its transformation from the Organization of African Unity. We have indeed transformed the organisation from one pursuing the struggle to liberate the continent and safeguard the independence of African States to one that facilitates work for a united, prosperous and peaceful Africa.”
Dlamini-Zuma, who is also South Africa’s former Minister of Health and Home Affairs, added that: “Our Africa Day celebration is therefore facilitating and celebrating African narratives of the past, present and future that will enthuse and energize the African population and use their constructive energy to accelerate a forward looking agenda of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance in the 21st century.”

Dubbed as the “Dark Continent”, Africa has helped bring prosperity to many of the world’s superpowers with much of its natural resources such as gold, diamonds, platinum, crude oil and other natural gases, being the backbone of their economies and global currency. Africans have not only lit the sporting fields and courts on the four corners of the world, the world’s top catwalks ramps are filled with African beauties and the Nobel Prizes bestowed on our brothers and sisters over the years, are a true indication that Africa might be dubbed the dark continent, but it is full of life, imbued with awesome strength to preserve and conquer.

Africa is not for sissies.
Let’s Embrace Being African and sing the Continent’s National Anthem
Let Us All Unite and Celebrate Together
Let us all unite and celebrate together
The victories won for our liberation
Let us dedicate ourselves to rise together
To defend our liberty and unity
O Sons and Daughters of Africa
Flesh of the Sun and Flesh of the Sky
Let us make Africa the Tree of Life
Let us all unite and sing together

Africa…. One people. One Destiny

Thabo Mkhize