A PRESENTATION ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF PRESS ATTACHES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION AND POPULARIZATION OF AFRICAN UNION AGENDA 2063

INvolvement of press attaches to the implementation and popularisation of the African Union Agenda 2063

By Ambassador Ismael KOROMA, M.A, B.A (Hons.), FBC-USL
Sierra Leone’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the African Union & the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Bintumani Hotel, Freetown- Sierra Leone
6th and 7th June, 2016
OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Press Attachés & Communication Experts
- African Union Agenda 2063
- The Role of Press Attachés in implementing and popularizing the Agenda 2063
- Conclusion
Introduction

- My objectives

  - Create awareness on Agenda 2063
  - Ensure ownership of Agenda 2063
  - Ensure Mass participation
TO ENSURE THE ABOVE OBJECTIVES:

1. References to scholarly submissions bordering on the conceptual issues relating to the topic in question

2. Examine the focus of the presentation “Involvement of Press Attachés to the Implementation and Popularization of the African Union Agenda 2063.”

3. Conceptual framework of the theme “Engaging the DIC with Press Attachés of AU MS Embassies in a bid to broaden outreach of the AU and expand knowledge about the Union in view of agenda2063”
PRESS ATTACHÉS & COMMUNICATION EXPERTS

To understand who is a Press Attache we must first understand or note the fact that the words Press and Attaches are different terms.

There is a need to understand the words as they stand alone.

- **So what is Press?**
  
  *The press is the news media. Members of the press work to gather facts and then present those facts to the public.*
  
  (ASK.com)

- **Who is an Attache?**

  *In our world of diplomacy, an attaché is a person who is assigned ('attached') to a diplomatic mission to carry out a specialized function.*
Who is a Press Attaché?

When the word press is put in front of attaché, to make it become press attaché, it clearly points to the fact that the attaché in question performs the function of a press officer. In other words, the assigned tasks are nothing but those related to media and communication. In traditional terms, journalism becomes the headword.
Press Attachés & Communication Experts

Functions of a Press Attache

- **Press Officer** – media and communication
- **Journalist** – information collection and dissemination
- **Public Relations** – representative of the mission
PRESS ATTACHÉS & COMMUNICATION EXPERTS

To perform the above assigned tasks would demand a number of things to be done efficiently and effectively. Principal among them is an understanding of the very African Union Agenda 2063. The task becomes a bit simple because literature abounds on the subject matter— including documentations on the work of the African Union.
What is it?

- It is both a Vision and an Action Plan
- It is also a call for action to all segments of African society to work together to build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny.
Why is it necessary

- Strives to enable Africa remain focused and committed to the ideals envisaged in the context of a rapidly changing world.
- The need for the continent to take stock of achievements, successes/ failures and map out a long-term vision as well as set goals and targets.
- Agenda 2063 would be a rolling plan of 25 years, 10 years, 5 years and short term action plans that envisages Africa’s long-term development trajectory.
What it will be bringing, among others?

- **Changing Global Context**
  - Globalization and the information technology revolution have provided unprecedented opportunities for countries and regions with the right policies to make significant advances.

- **Building on the NEPAD experience**
  - National, regional and global efforts made to implement NEPAD, have enabled AU to build institutions (e.g., APRM, etc.), and demonstrate unprecedented commitment to implement agreed agenda, generate valuable lessons that present strong foundation for Agenda 2063.
African Union Agenda 2063 Contnd.

- A more united and strong Africa
  - Africa today is more united a global power to reckon with, capable of rallying support around a common agenda and speaking with one voice with demonstrated strong capacity to negotiate and withstand the influence of forces that would like to see it divided.

- Strong and well functioning regional institutions
  - Regional Economic Communities (CEN-SAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and UMA) are today strong development and political institutions that citizens’ can count on and Agenda 2063 can stand on.
AFRICAN UNION AGENDA 2063 CONTND.

- **New development and investment opportunities**
  - Africa today is faced with a confluence of factors that present a great opportunity for consolidation and rapid progress. These include:
    - Unprecedented positive and sustained growth trajectory of many African countries resulting from sound macro-economic policies and strategies bolstered by high commodity prices.
    - Significant reduction of armed conflicts, improved peace and stability, coupled with advances in democratic governance.
    - A fast rising broad based African entrepreneurial and middle class, coupled with the youth bulge, which can act as catalyst for further growth and technological progress.
    - Changes in the international finance architecture, the rise of the BRICS and improved flows of FDI to Africa beyond commodity producing sectors.
African Union Agenda 2063 Contnd.

Guiding Principals

- Continuity of actions
- Drawing appropriate lessons from the past
- Building upon what has worked in the past;
- Making every effort to do things better.
AFRICAN UNION AGENDA 2063 CONTND.

Thus Agenda 2063 should be seen as a unique opportunity to recreate the African narrative by putting it into perspective to energize the African population and harness citizen’s creativity through a set of clear goals that they participate in setting for unity, peace and development in the 21st century.
The Role of Press Attachés in Implementing and Popularizing the Agenda 2063

- The brilliant ideas suggested in Agenda 2063 would not be implemented in the absence of the availability of trained and experienced communication professionals.

- A well coordinated and robust communication strategy detailing among other things specific messages targeting specific audiences with specific results in mind.
The role of press attaches in implementing and popularizing the AU Agenda 2063 contnd.

- Agenda 2063 must be seen as a part of the African Renaissance which calls for changes in attitudes, mindsets to inculcate the right set of African values, i.e. discipline, focus, honesty, integrity, transparency, hard work and love for Africa and its people.

- To achieve this we must have change of attitudes and mindsets that required thorough understanding of communication processes.
THE ROLE OF PRESS ATTACHES IN IMPLEMENTING AND POPULARIZING THE AU AGENDA 2063 CONTND.

Diffusion Theory

- **Awareness** (the individual needs to have been exposed to the idea)
- **Interest** (The idea has to arouse the individual)
- **Evaluation** (The individual must consider the idea as potentially useful).
- **Trial** (The individual tries out the idea on others)
- **Adoption** (This represents final acceptance of the idea after having successfully passed through the four earlier stages).
EPISODIC VS. THEMATIC NEWS REPORTING

To achieve our goals, I entreat our Press Attachés and Communication Persons to embark on thematic rather than episodic reporting and coverage of the Agenda 2063.

*Episodic News*

As Shanto Iyengar puts it “*Episodic news* parachutes the journalist and the audience into the middle of the already developed situation and puts the focus on the people who are in trouble or in conflict
THE ROLE OF PRESS ATTACHES IN IMPLEMENTING AND POPULARIZING THE AU AGENDA 2063 CONTND.

THEMATIC APPROACH

By contrast, thematic news looks beyond the immediate human drama to explore the origins of the problem and the larger social, economic, or political contexts in which the immediate news story has developed.” Iyengar’s research shows that episodic news leaves people with shallow understanding s of the world around them.
THE ROLE OF PRESS ATTACHES IN IMPLEMENTING AND POPULARIZING THE AU AGENDA 2063 CONTND.

ADVANTAGES OF THEMATIC APPROACH

- Facilitates in the implementation and popularisation of the African Union Agenda 2063
- Enables our Press Attachés and Communication Persons to develop and come up with news and features stories without necessarily waiting for events to be convened by the African Union, Embassies or other similar organisations.

DANGER IN GOING EPISODIC

- The danger in going episodic would mean that news articles would only surface when staged events take place.
CONCLUSION

I must end by stating that this presentation is not a prescription to a problem, but rather an indicator as to how Africans can contribute to actualizing the beautiful dreams of our great continent due to the following:

- Communication Attachés could be effective conveyors of socio-political, economic and even cultural issues
CONCLUSION CONTND.

- They make saleable the ideals of the Union well beyond its border because of the tools they have at their disposal and the reverence that is given to anything that they disseminate back to their respective countries.

- Good Public Relations or Communication experts, the tools of developing a communication strategy with platform like social media – i.e. the use of Embassy’s websites, facebook page and twitter accounts.
CONCLUSION CONTND.

Once more, let me congratulate the organizers of this forum:

- The African Union Commission and its Directorate of Information & Communication

- Our host, the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone (Ministries of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Information and Communication; Embassy of Sierra Leone in Addis Ababa)
I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to my distinguished colleagues Press and Communications Experts from Addis Ababa and my dear audience for your attention.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!!