

Africa Day: Reimagining African renaissance

I have watched a viral video in which French President Emmanuel Macron demanded silence from a loud audience of African students during a culture and youth session at Nairobi University, Kenya, during the recent Africa Forward Summit.

However, despite Macron's viral videos in Nairobi, what caught my attention was the French President's statement claiming to be a true pan-African.

"We are the true pan-Africanists. We believe that Africa is a continent and that this continent has an enormous amount to build; it is the youngest in the world and, therefore, has an extraordinary demographic dividend. It is the one with the greatest growth in the world," he said.

The statement must be a big concern to all African leaders, pan-African scholars, and media as we celebrate Africa Day 2026 on Monday, May 25.

Africa Day is an opportunity to deeply reflect and take action."



Robert Kigongo
Africa Day

In my viewpoint, such statements not only undermine Africa but also serve as an opportunity to reimagine the concept of African renaissance as the world restructures into the new world order.

Opportunity to reflect

We, as Africans, must also reflect on why Africa is still undermined, despite its rich history, demographic dividends, natural resources and geographical positioning. Africa Day is an opportunity to deeply reflect and take action.

Realistically, Africa Day has come at a time when the continent is plagued by a fresh Ebola outbreak in DR Congo (DRC) and Uganda, civil unrest in South Africa, DRC and Sudan, and rising fuel prices, among other issues.

Fortunately, the day comes at a time when some parts of Africa are reducing

their foreign dependency while others are embracing economic integration programmes, improving bilateral and multilateral relations.

Macron's statement notwithstanding, the major issues affecting Africa that must be resolved urgently are: (I) the debt crisis, (II) the negative image and (III) permanent inclusion in the United Nations Security Council.

African countries are collectively borrowing hundreds of billions of dollars, and total sovereign commercial debt stands in the trillions of dollars; as a result, most nations spend large sums of internal revenue collections on debt servicing.

Moving forward, Africa must utilise its G20 position to negotiate a reduction of the borrowing rate at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Africa can also leverage its renewable energy capacity in solar and geothermal, and cobalt, uranium, lithium and manganese mineral resources to negotiate equitable terms on the global stage in the new world order.

Africa must shift from being the world's largest raw materials exporter to a manufacturer of high-quality products in order to build its economic muscles that will position it as a stakeholder rather than a liability in the structuring of the global order.

Also, on its tainted image, African media must effectively and efficiently counter the narrative control by Western media in misreporting about Africa.

Africa must continue to claim a permanent seat at the UN Security Council to advance the continent's perspectives on peace building, finance and global economic architectures and security.

As African nations join the new world multi-polar orders such as BRICS, South-South Cooperation and US' Board of Peace, the African leaders must front a unified voice and interests.

Among other efforts, Africa needs to upgrade from organising colourful summits like the just concluded France-Africa summit in Kenya and Africa CEO forum in Rwanda to delivering solutions; henceforth, the continent will become a major architect of global governance.

As we celebrate Africa Day, it's time to practically reimagine Cheikh Anta Diop's African renaissance concept as the world restructures into a new world order.