

**PAN-AFRICAN LAWYERS UNION “PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION”
PRIZE AWARD CEREMONY**

**ADDRESS BY H.E. PAUL BIYA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC**

Yaounde, 06 June 2014

- **The President of the Pan-African Lawyers Union,**
- **Members of the Pan-African Lawyers Union Executive Committee,**
- **President THABO MBEKI and dear brother,**
- **Excellencies,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am particularly pleased to take the floor on this solemn ceremony of the award of your organization's "Peaceful Conflict Resolution" Prize.

On this occasion, I wish to heartily thank you for choosing Cameroon to host the Triennial Assembly of the Pan-African Lawyers Union.

Permit me also to acknowledge the presence in our midst of Mr THABO MBEKI, our brother, former President of the Republic of South Africa, whom I would like to welcome.

- **Excellencies,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In the world today, many armed conflicts undermine the stability of States or peace among nations. Unfortunately, Africa illustrates this fact, as epitomized by the tragic situation presently faced by the Central African Republic.

The causes of conflict in Africa are many and varied. It would be tedious to review them. I would limit myself to pointing out the threat posed to peace by border and land disputes.

For example, I would like to dwell briefly on the efforts made by Nigeria and Cameroon to find a peaceful solution to the land dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula.

I dare say that on both sides, all the resources of diplomacy and international justice were used and that such efforts helped to bring about an honourable outcome for both parties.

It was thus demonstrated that the use of force poses more problems than it resolves. This fact is stipulated in the United Nations Charter which prohibits the use of force and calls for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

It is therefore possible to achieve peace on the basis of law; provided, however, that force gives way to law; provided also that States recognize the supremacy of international law and the pre-eminent role of the United Nations.

Moreover, world peace can only be assured if the International Community upholds solidarity as one of the fundamental values in relations between nations. We can only rejoice in the ever-growing awareness of this obligation by a majority of States.

In this respect also, the role of the United Nations is crucial.

On the other hand, conflicts, whether internal or between State entities, affect the economic take-off of African States and their development in general. In this regard, I am pleased to congratulate the Pan-African Lawyers Union for its outstanding work by proposing solutions to our States within the scope of its missions.

Until international law finally prevails over the use of force, I remain convinced that it should be guided by law, notably in the case of self-defence.

It is in this spirit that we have taken measures to defend ourselves against the terrorist actions of Boko Haram in Nigeria.

At this juncture, I would like to underscore the relevance of the theme of your General Assembly, namely "Illicit Financial Flows from Africa". In fact, it has been established that the resources derived from organized crime are used to finance terrorism and arms trafficking.

- **The President of the Pan-African Lawyers Union,**
- **Excellencies,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

A prestigious award like the one dedicated to the peaceful resolution of conflicts fills the person receiving it with a feeling of joy and pride.

Permit me to share the honour bestowed on me with all those who worked for the peaceful settlement of the border dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon.

I am thinking particularly of:

- the International Court of Justice;
- my brother, President OLUSEGUN OBASANJO and the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr KOFI ANNAN;
- my successive Nigerian counterparts;
- witness States, namely Germany, the United States of America, France and the United Kingdom; as well as
- the current Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr BAN KI MOON.

Lastly, permit me to express my profound gratitude to you for the prize that your Organization, in agreement with the African Union, has kindly awarded me.

To conclude, I cannot say it any better than quoting an extract from the UNESCO Constitution, I quote: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

This is a programme, an entire programme, which is more topical than ever. A great programme that is a challenge to all of us.

Thank you.