

**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY PAUL KAGAME, PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA, AT THE CLOSING OF THE
COMESA SUMMIT**

Kigali, Hotel Intercontinental, June 3rd 2005

Your Majesty King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Swaziland;

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government;

Madam First Ladies;

The President of the Senate;

The President of the Chamber of Deputies;

Right Honourable Prime Minister;

The President of the Supreme Court;

Honourable Ministers;

The Secretary General of COMESA;

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Special Representatives to COMESA;

Your Excellencies Heads of Delegations; Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am honoured to make a statement at the conclusion of the Tenth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

First of all, I would like to express our gratitude to all of you for having come to Kigali for this Summit.

The Summit has cemented our brotherly and sisterly spirit of cooperation, progress, peace and stability, and a common view of a just world order.

Your Majesty;

Your Excellencies;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

During this Summit we have had extensive deliberations on the way forward for COMESA.

The Summit declaration is another milestone in the history of our Organisation. We have reaffirmed our commitment to strengthen our strategic partnership based on the realities of our Region.

Our Ministers have adopted a plan of action designed to bring the rest of COMESA's membership into the Free Trade Area, and to move all COMESA countries towards the adoption of a common external tariff and a customs union.

We emphasised further cooperation and concerted action to implement programmes in industry, trade, finance, agriculture, telecommunication, transport, energy, gender, and the multilateral trading system.

At the Business Summit, the role of the private sector as partners of government in promoting economic development was emphasized.

And the number of delegations from the private sector, as well as from civil society demonstrates the value of partnership in COMESA.

All in all, it is my view that we have taken a step to move forward in confronting the challenges of a global economic order which is transforming the global social and political landscape.

It is a step that aims to fight poverty and to narrow the widening gap between rich and poor countries.

Your Majesty;
Your Excellencies;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

We in Rwanda trade with our neighbours and we are eager to expand our trade with all the countries of COMESA.

The balance of trade is not currently in our favour, and that is why we are pleased to invite the COMESA business community to invest in Rwanda, so that they benefit from our untapped natural resources.

We encourage solid partnership with businesses from the Region and elsewhere

I can assure potential investors that we are committed to good political and corporate governance, and we are determined to create an environment that is conducive to investment and the provision of opportunities to all our citizens.

I hope that our brothers and sisters in COMESA will take up our call, which is at the same time a call to enhance our integration process.

Your Majesty;
Your Excellencies;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The opportunities ahead invite us to set the stage for the future generations to whom we are answerable and to whom good intentions will not be enough.

We must therefore do everything in our power to ensure that our efforts at regional cooperation succeed, which will in turn bring about the socio-economic development we so badly need.

In closing, let me once again thank Your Majesty and Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government for the honour and trust you have placed in me as your Chairman.

I pledge to keep alive the spirit of cooperation, which we have reaffirmed in Kigali.

Allow me also to express our profound gratitude to sister countries from the continent, our development partners, in particular the European Union and USAID, and all other partners and friends of COMESA for their unflinching support to our integration agenda.

I thank you all for your best wishes for Rwanda and the people of Rwanda.

And with a sense of satisfaction that we have accomplished so much in the last two days, I declare the Kigali 2005 Summit closed.

Long Live COMESA!

Long Live our continent Africa!