

REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE
NATIONAL DECLARATION
U.S. AFRICA LEADERS SUMMIT
SUBMITTED BY H.E. DANIEL KABLAN DUNCAN, PRIME MINISTER,
ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, H.E ALASSANE OUATTARA
AUGUST 4, 5, 6, 2014
Washington, D.C.

EXCELLENCY BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Heads of State and Government,
Honorable guests,

Mister President, we are very pleased with the organization of the very first U.S. Africa Leaders' Summit on August 4, 5 and 6, 2014, in Washington, D.C. This Summit, to which you invited 48 African Heads of State and Government, as well as the Chairwoman of the African Union Commission, gives me the agreeable opportunity to express on behalf of the **President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, H.E. Alassane Ouattara**, and in my own name, my very sincere and warm congratulations along with my heartfelt thanks for this kind invitation.

These congratulations and thanks are conveyed as well to your senior Administration officials and to the Members of Congress, whose unfailing support was crucial in our joint efforts to end the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire.

In this regard, Mister President, our grateful Government remembers and will always remember your important message addressed to the Ivorian people on March 25, 2011, which was a decisive factor in the resolution of the post-electoral crisis. The lesson learned from this crisis is that never again can the losing candidate in an election declare himself the victor and remain in power.

Mister President, African Leaders, in their quest to raise relations between Africa and the United States to the level of privileged partners; have long and urgently called for an event like this U.S-Africa Summit.

In fact, the longstanding historical, social and cultural ties between the United States and Africa, argue firmly in favor of a solid and fruitful partnership between the two parties that should be strengthened through our common ideals of peace, stability and shared prosperity.

The U.S. Africa Leaders' Summit, which should define the outlines of a more engaged, diverse and mutually beneficial cooperation, is a real sign of hope for the continent.

For its part, the Ivorian Government fully supports the Summit's central theme, namely Investing in the Next Generation, as well as the various other topics which are: **Investing in Africa's Future, Peace and Regional Security, Governing for the Next Generation**. We acknowledge the significance of these themes and the comprehensive agenda.

It is certain that in analyzing these themes in light of the many challenges facing the African continent, that the Leaders' Summit will examine the priority issues for the Continent's development such as **Peace and Security, Good Governance and Democratic Institutions, Economic Growth and Trade, Energy**, as well as **Development issues**.

Regarding **Peace and Security**, my country, Côte d'Ivoire, which enjoyed nearly four decades of peace and stability, followed unfortunately by ten long years of crisis with disastrous consequences, knows how much importance and interest must be attached to such issues.

That is why, in Côte d'Ivoire, we are focusing on consolidating Peace and Security, strengthening the Process of Reconciliation and National Cohesion, all of which are the preconditions for the third major element of our policy, Reconstruction and Economic Recovery in order to promote inclusive development as well as the well-being of our people.

Given the importance of Peace and Security and of their impact on our continent's development, we must, at the national level, detect and prevent conflictual situations at an early stage so they can be remedied before they degenerate into open conflict.

In a similar vein, local or regional crises must not continue to be perceived as specific to a particular region, because they can directly or indirectly impact international security and therefore also represent a threat to the security of the United States.

That is why it is necessary to strengthen our cooperation with the United States at the national, regional and continental levels with logistic and financial support, training programs and capacity building as well as with exchange of information, in order to increase our capacity to manage with our own resources conflicts which, sadly, are still too many on the continent. In this regard, we welcome the support of the United States for the African Union's African Architecture of Peace and Security (AAPS) for the prevention and fight against conflict.

With regard to our region, West Africa, caught between terrorist groups in the North and maritime piracy, drug trafficking and various illegal activities in the South, notably in the Gulf of Guinea, I acknowledge and welcome the assistance and support of the United States of our efforts in the fight against such threats.

I would also very much like to see an increase in such support because of the magnitude of the challenges before us, challenges that require the strengthening of regional and inter-regional cooperation.

With regard to Good Governance and Democratic Institutions, the Ivorian people, who suffered so much during the post-electoral crisis, acknowledge that the strengthening of democratic institutions for an efficient management of political change, as well as the proper management of public affairs, are the guarantees of lasting peace and stability, necessary prerequisites for development.

As a consequence, Côte d'Ivoire has created various mechanisms to reinforce the rule of law, good governance, transparent management of public affairs, and the fight against corruption, such as the High Authority for Good Governance, in addition to the Code of Ethics signed by the members of the Government when they take office.

My country is working to promote a democratic and free society and welcomes the fact that such fundamental issues are included in the Summit Agenda.

American Institutions and Structures, notably the National Democratic Institute (NDI), support Côte d'Ivoire's efforts towards the organization of transparent, credible and peaceful elections in 2015.

In the area of economic policy, Côte d'Ivoire undertook deep structural reforms in order to improve the climate for private investment, to boost public-private sector partnerships and to reinforce competitiveness. In this context, Côte d'Ivoire performed remarkably well and the economic growth rate went from -4.7% in 2011 (year of the post-electoral post) to 9.8% in 2012 and 9.1% in 2013, with a double-digit projected rate of 10% in 2014.

This economic performance provides real opportunities for the American private sector to invest in Côte d'Ivoire within the context of a win-win partnership. We welcome the notable participation of the American private sector (80 entrepreneurs) in the **Investing in Côte d'Ivoire Forum, ICI 2014**, in January-February 2014, where we registered more than 3,000 participants from about a hundred nations.

At the level of commercial exchange with the United States, Côte d'Ivoire, like a number of other African countries, strongly recommends the renewal of AGOA for a fifteen-year period.

Côte d'Ivoire considers its return to AGOA after a seven-year-exclusion, as a reward for democracy and the rule of law, and for its efforts to put the economy back on the track, and also as an incentive to pursue such efforts. We would also like to see capacity building for African companies, the granting of credit facilities and appropriate information, in order to increase the access of eligible countries to the vast American market.

Similarly, Côte d'Ivoire believes that developing inter-state infrastructures and the easing of tariff and non-tariff barriers would promote the increase of inter-state trade, the strengthening of African economies as well as their ability to better benefit from AGOA.

In this regard, ECOWAS, our West-African market of more than 300 million consumers, of which the Ivorian Head of State was Chairman from February 2012 to March 2014, is accelerating its process of integration and development of infrastructure in order to better benefit from this enormous potential.

With regard to Energy, I am grateful for the announcement of your energy program "Power Africa" which aroused much interest from African countries, given the impact of electricity on our countries' development, and given that the low rate of access to electricity is a real obstacle to their development.

We hope that the discussions at the Summit on this issue will pave the way for the expansion of "Power Africa" to other countries, where the shortage of electricity represents a major obstacle to development.

Côte d'Ivoire an electricity supplier and the leader of a regional project of energy interconnection, which covers eight countries, would like to benefit from the support of "Power Africa", to be able to advance its project, which strives towards integration.

Additionally, we consider that regional power pools should also benefit from "Power Africa," in order to accelerate and increase the impact of this innovative program on African countries.

In fifty years' time, Africa will have one quarter of the world's population, mostly young. Faced with this demographic challenge, the African Union adopted the "2063 Agenda, which aims to "build an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, an Africa driven and managed by its own citizen and representing a dynamic force in the international arena". In other words, the development of our countries should enable us to define the ways and means to inject a new dynamic into the relationship between our continent and the United States for a more enhanced contribution to the development of Africa.

The future of Africa will depend on the quality of its leaders. Thus, development issues, tied to the sectors of **Education, Health and Social Security (Universal Health Coverage)**, (Communication and Information New Technology) and Housing (Low cost housing projects) **modernization** of Agriculture and Food Security (60% revenue to the cocoa producers) are at the heart of our development policies and deserve support. In this regard, Côte d'Ivoire **mainly** associated itself with the G-8 Initiative "Scaling-up Nutrition" in order to fight against malnutrition and food insecurity. Côte d'Ivoire supports as well the "**Young African Leaders Initiative**" (YALI), **whose** impact could be increased by the creation of "train the trainer" centers in Africa.

Africa contains one quarter of the globe's natural resources (mining, minerals, as well as arable land), resources that should finance more of the continent's economic and social development, especially through investments in infrastructure for future generations.

With a high performing human capital and the adding of value to its vast natural resources, Africa can consolidate its current position as the "**new frontier of development**" and lay the foundation for the emergence of the continent. Nevertheless, important challenges remain, including implementation of regional integration, eradication of persistent conflicts, and respect for the rule of law. The solution to these challenges in an interconnected world requires the strengthening of cooperation between Africa and its partners. In this regard, the US/Africa Leaders' Summit provides an opportunity to deepen our diverse cooperation and permit Africa to play the role it deserves.

For my part, Mister President, I would like to reiterate our heartfelt thanks for the relevance of your initiative, which marks the starting point of a new era for the relations between the United States and Africa.

Already convinced that the outcomes of the Summit will be significant, I would like to offer my deeply felt best wishes for the brilliant success of the work of this historic event.

I thank you for your kind attention.

