

## INAUGURAL FLAGSHIP LECTURE



# How to Make Democracy Work for Africa

Keynote Speech presented by  
**Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**  
*President, The Republic of Ghana*

A Publication of  
THE KUKAH CENTRE

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WORK FOR AFRICA*

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V I R T U A L  
I N S I G N I A

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## *Introduction*

# **HOW TO MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK FOR AFRICA**

*The Kukah Centre, 15th February, 2018*

Over the past few decades, the democratic climate in Africa has been unstable with political violence, threats of terrorism, institutional corruption, climate induced conflict and economic decline. The increasing rates of unemployment across the continent, the growing insecurity as well as the debilitating levels of poverty and the failure of African governments to swiftly tackle these issues have contributed immensely to the tragedy of youth migration to Europe.

As such, most Africans have an opinion about politics and politicians; politics is dirty and politicians are incompetent. The narrative has created a sense of apathy among Africans, murdered the dreams of young people and poured scorn on their aspirations. Doubts have also been expressed across different sectors on whether Democracy can work for Africa. There is an increasing trust deficit in democracy, politics and politicians. The question is, how can democratic governance help address the socio-economic challenges in Africa? How can hope be restored among thousands of Africans, and democracy be made to work for all and not just for a select few?

The Kukah Centre treats political leadership as a collaborative exercise that requires multiple governance structures at various levels – individuals, households, small businesses, the organized private sector, NGOs and government. Consequently, it aspires to contribute towards the attainment of a more humane, democratic and free society where citizens can live in real and true freedom unencumbered by any structures of exclusion on the basis of ethnic, religious, social status, economic or gender differences.

For this reason, The Centre was set up to promote citizen engagement, support interfaith dialogue and provide evidence-based research that will inform public policy formulation. It has designed various platforms such as Annual Lecture Series, The Podium, Leadership Mentoring and Public Policy Research to contribute to democratic ideals and development.

This Year's Annual Lecture: **How to Make Democracy Work for Africa** is one of the key events of The Kukah Centre. It is in line with the objective of the Center to debate and provide policy recommendations to stakeholders and key policy makers. The One Day Public Lecture on Democracy was delivered by the President of Ghana, His Excellency, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, on Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018, at the Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja.

# How to Make Democracy Work for Africa

**Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo,**  
*President, The Republic of Ghana*

Keynote Speech presented at  
The Inaugural Flagship Lecture  
Organized by The Kukah Centre

On Thursday, 15th February, 2018,  
at The Yar'adua Conference Centre, Abuja – Nigeria.

I must, at the outset, express my sincere gratitude to Most Rev. Dr. Matthew Hassan Kukah, Catholic Bishop of Sokoto, Father Kukah to me, for the honour of this invitation to be the keynote speaker at this public lecture on “How to make democracy work for Africa”. It is being sponsored by the Kukah Centre, a platform created by this extraordinary man to contribute to the evolution of public policy in Africa. The invitation is highly appreciated by me, especially as I have the honour to give its inaugural lecture. It is, furthermore, always a delight to come to Nigeria, a country I describe as my second home, and which is, in fact, the maternal origin of two of my five daughters. I am also delighted that the proceedings are occurring in a place that is dedicated to the memory of an outstanding Nigerian and African, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, and which has become famous as a centre for promoting important discussions on African matters. We should also all be grateful that Vice President Osibanjo was able to take time off a busy day to come and share his insightful views with us.

I have known Father Kukah for several years, and, any time I had the opportunity of meeting him, his views on matters affecting our respective countries and the continent were strong and enlightening. He also spared no effort in trying to deepen my faith in God. Indeed, when I was appointed Attorney General in 2001, some 17 years ago, by that outstanding Ghanaian statesman, the former President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency John Agyekum Kufuor, I enlisted the support of Father Kukah for the establishment of the National Reconciliation Commission, which sought to heal the wounds of our troubled past of authoritarian rule, with its history of multiple violations of human rights. He was present at its inauguration, and was a strong supporter of the work of the Commission, for which I will always be grateful. The Commission ensured that, however gruesome and painful the accounts from the sittings of the Commission were, they did not trigger off an orgy of retribution. Father Kukah had a lot to do with that. Father Kukah, as we say in Ghana, ayekoo!!

Let me also congratulate Father Kukah on his deserved elevation to the important office of Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto. I know no one better suited to handle that office. In the foreseeable future, surely, there must be an African Pope, and should his hat be thrown in the ring, and should there be no hat from Ghana, he will definitely be my choice.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, Africa has certainly come a long way, but we should not take it for granted that everybody has accepted democracy as the preferred mode of governance. There are those who would rather have authoritarian rule, because they claim Africa is underdeveloped and democracy is cumbersome, and we need to get things done in

a hurry. We still have some work to do to convince such people that we are all safer under democracies.

The man who is regarded as the doyen of Ghanaian politics, and who led the first political party to fight for Ghanaian independence, Joseph Boakye Danquah, of most blessed memory, articulated clearly, over fifty years ago, at the height of the Cold War, the policy which continues to guide us. And I quote: “Our policy is to liberate the energies of the people for the growth of a property-owning democracy in this land, with right to life, freedom and justice, as the principles to which the Government and laws of the land should be dedicated in order specifically to enrich life, property and liberty of each and every citizen.”

It has taken us this long for a consensus to emerge in Ghana that the democratic form of governance is preferable, and that rapid growth of the private sector in an open market is the better route to prosperity of our nation.

There was a time in Africa when most countries were one-party states, and everybody had to belong to that party. Some decades ago, all the radio and television stations, and newspapers were exclusively owned by the government. If you wanted to hear any voice in opposition, you would probably have to tune in to a foreign radio station, like the BBC. Most of our youth are unaware that a culture of silence used to reign in most parts of the continent.

We are not quite there yet, but there is far more self-confidence among Africans today, than there has been since the very early days of self-government. Freedom and the principles of democratic accountability are strengthening the determination of Africans to build a new



Africa, that is neither pawn nor victim of the world order.

When I started thinking about the subject matter of our gathering, it struck me how interesting it was that the words Africa and Africans appear to have more resonance outside the continent than inside.

When we are home here on our continent, it seems very important to assert that we are Ghanaians, Kenyans, Zambians, Swazis, Senegalese, South Africans and, of course, that we are Nigerians. We do not want anyone to forget that there are 54 sovereign nations on the continent, with different cultures, languages and rates of development.

We would admit to some regional cohesion, and ascribe certain characteristics to these regional groupings. The East Africans would insist, for example, that the West Africans are loud, and the West Africans would say that the Central Africans are violent.

Some people claim they can tell where someone comes from, simply by the shape of a forehead.

Then, there are the divisions that are linked to our colonial experiences. The Anglophones claim an affinity between each other, no matter how distant their countries might be, that they cannot find with their Francophone neighbours.

But, then, we might be both Anglophone and West African, but we know, do we not, that Ghana is, and Ghanaians are, very different from Nigeria, and Nigerians.

Then we find ourselves outside the continent, and we discover that to the outside world, we

are simply Africans. There, we find that an American President would use the same colourful adjective to describe all 54 countries on the continent.

The lesson is clear: our destinies are intricately linked with each other, and it is not only those of us on the continent, but this would include the Africans in the diaspora as well.

Ladies and gentlemen, so what is this Africa, and who are we, what defines us and who defines us? Ours is a continent that is home to some of the most spectacular scenes that nature bestowed on this planet.

Our continent has every mineral that mankind desires, and whichever one that is required to run a modern economy. Paradoxically, Africa also happens to be the poorest continent.

Africa has been called many names throughout the ages: dark, beleaguered, a scar on the conscience of the world, hapless, and hopeless are some of the more frequent and colourful ones that can be repeated in decent company, until the recent dramatic intervention of US President Donald J. Trump.

Our continent also has the youngest population, and our youth who bear the brunt of the suffering now resort to desperate measures to get out. They brave the Sahara desert on foot, and, those who survive the ravages of the desert, risk being sold in slave markets in Libya, or risk journeys across the Mediterranean sea on rickety boats, all in the forlorn hope of a better life in Europe, in countries and amongst people where they are obviously not welcome.

To the outside world, therefore, we are defined as that modern entity called an illegal migrant.

Those, who are giving this definition, appear to have temporary amnesia, for they appear to have conveniently forgotten that 19<sup>th</sup> century European history was marked, largely, by the large flow of European migrants, particularly Irish and Italian, into the Eldorado of America's green pastures, at a time when the political economies of Ireland and Italy were in dire straits. Significant improvements in their economies have put an end to the emigration of their nationals.

Anyone, everybody, in a position of leadership in Africa today has his work cut out. I do not suggest that we lock up our young people to prevent them embarking on these hazardous journeys.

The urgent responsibility we face is to make our countries, our continent attractive for our youth to see as places of opportunities. It means we must provide education, education and education. It means our young people must acquire the skills that run modern economies.

There will always be those amongst our young people, who would want to try their luck in foreign countries. When they are skilled, they would not have to risk drowning in the Mediterranean sea, they would be head hunted and treated with dignity.

A few weeks ago I was in Dakar, Senegal, to attend a special conference called to raise monies to fund education in Africa. I said it there, and it bears repeating here, there is enough money in Africa to be enable us pay for educating and training our young people, and making them ready to face the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Where is this money? As a start, I refer to the report of the panel, chaired by the highly

respected former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, on the illicit flow of funds (IFFs) from Africa, which has raised the lid on what many had always suspected, but did not have the figures to support.

According to the report, Africa is losing, annually, more than \$50 billion through illicit financial outflows. The report revealed further that, between 2000 and 2008, \$252 billion, representing 56.2%, of the illicit flow of funds from the continent was from the extractive industries, including mining. The shocking and dispiriting part of the story, of course, is the fact that we, Africans, have some responsibility for taking these monies out of our countries, and into western countries.

But a lot of it is spirited out by those who come, claiming to do business with us. It is clear that we are not well equipped to cope with those, who come to conduct business in our countries, with the aim of making extraordinary returns through unorthodox and illegal means.

It is for this reason that, in September 2017, I launched the Free Senior High School policy in Ghana, which will ensure that all Ghanaian children attain a minimum of senior high school education. This is the only way we can create an educated workforce to accelerate the process of development.

I hesitate to prescribe policy initiatives for other countries, but, on the matter of education, I have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending that all African countries adopt the policy of free compulsory education from kindergarten to senior high school. This is one of the most important things we have to do, if we are to make the transformation from our current state of poverty to prosperity.

Ladies and gentlemen, it should not require emphasising that no one is going to sort out matters for Africa, except Africans themselves. We must match those who come to do business with us, in all the skills they possess. We must have our own set of bright and sharp lawyers, our own set of bright and sharp accountants, to keep us abreast with the sharp and bright lawyers and accountants that our trade partners have. In much the same way, we need to have our own bright and sharp technologists to keep us abreast with our competitors.

I do not need to spell out that, even when we think we are dealing in an area with a level playing field, like trade, Africa invariably gets a bad deal. Investors find innovative ways to avoid paying the taxes that they should in the African countries, in which they operate.

It is in these areas that it becomes obvious that there is great advantage in African countries operating together as a block, rather than as individual countries. As our elders say there is strength in unity.

We, in Africa, have a great battle to fight and win, and that is the battle to provide our people with a good quality of life. The structure of economies bequeathed to us by the colonialists was aimed at servicing our colonial masters, essentially raw material producing and exporting economies. The time is long overdue for us to take a deep look at these structures, and transform our economies to serve better our own needs. The era of Africa's industrialisation has dawned, so that we can also trade in the world economy, not on the basis of exports of raw materials, but on the basis of things we make.







It has been shown that countries or groups of countries with the largest share of world trade are located within regions with the highest share of intra-regional trade. Trade between African regions remains low compared to other parts of the world.

In 2000, intra-regional trade accounted for 10% of Africa's total trade, and increased marginally to 11% in 2015. Trading amongst members of the European Union, for example, amounted to 70% in 2015. I believe it is extremely important for the welfare of the 1.2 billion people of the continent that we, the leaders, demonstrate strong political will to make the African Union an economic and political success, and to make the project of integration real.

With Africa's population set to reach some 2 billion people in 20 years time, an African Common Market presents immense opportunities to bring prosperity to our continent with hard work, enterprise and creativity. It is evident that the time for African integration should be now. Hence, the importance of the success of the Continental Free Trade Area. A working, common continental market has to be a very fundamental objective of all peoples and governments on the continent. The decision the AU is about to take in Kigali, capital of Rwanda, on 21<sup>st</sup> March, at its Extraordinary Summit, for Member States to sign and launch the treaty for the establishment of the Continental Free Trade Area is one of the most important decisions the AU will ever take. It is vital that the treaty works, and that the Continental Free Trade Area becomes an immediate reality.



For this market to be viable, there must be peace and stability on the continent. Nothing undermines the prospects of our continent more than being known as unstable, and, unfortunately, our politics has been the main source of the spark for instability. We all have to work hard to establish peace across the continent, and put the spectre of instability, finally, to rest. The concerted efforts that are being made to tackle the scourge of terrorism, represented by Al-Shabab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and the Jihadists in Mali and the Sahel Region, are beginning to yield positive results, as we witness the systematic degradation of their capabilities. The news, however, of the continuing and deepening crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is leading to the massive displacement of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, is very depressing. It brings into sharp relief the urgent necessity for the continental body, the AU, to rise to the occasion, and find immediately a lasting solution to the perennial problems of that tragic country. That solution has to address the twin issues of the unity and stability of the Congolese state, and the establishment of democracy, that will allow the Congolese people the opportunity, in free and fair elections, to choose their leaders. It is a test of the effectiveness of the AU, which it cannot and must not fail.

I hesitate to preach to anyone on this particular subject. I would only say that we, in Ghana, having tried everything else, have finally reached a consensus that a multi-party system of governance works best for us. Our 4<sup>th</sup> Republic has lasted for twenty-five years under a multi-party Constitution. Indeed, we celebrated its Silver Jubilee on 7<sup>th</sup> January. We are stable, and there have been three peaceful

changes of government from a ruling party to an opposition party during the 4<sup>th</sup> Republic.

We must also encourage African Union (AU) member countries to demonstrate a commitment to strengthening and protecting the institutions and culture of democratic governance; respecting human rights, religious freedom, the empowerment of women, and the rights of the individual and minorities; building strong market economies and facilitating the free movements of people, knowledge, goods and services across member states. Africa's small countries will continue to struggle if they go it alone, but the accelerated economic integration of committed nations will breathe new life into the AU, and deliver the benefits of African integration to the doorsteps of the African peoples.

The time has now come for us in Africa to move on even further to deepen our democracy. It is time to make sure that we have genuine separation of powers between the various arms of government. Our Parliaments, the legislative arms of government, must grow into their proper roles as effective machineries for accountability and oversight of their Executives. Our Judiciaries must also inspire confidence in the citizens, so we can all see the courts as ultimate, impartial arbiters when disputes arise, as they would.

It is only when our public institutions are working as they should, that we would be able to confront and deal effectively with the canker of corruption, which has been the bane of our development. The systematic targeting of corruption, a central feature of the administration of His Excellency Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, deserves the support of all well-

meaning Nigerians and Africans. And, indeed, it is appropriate that this year's AU theme, "Winning the Fight against Corruption – A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation", should have President Muhammadu Buhari as its champion. He is providing leadership, which we should all emulate.

It is early days yet, but our institutions are growing, and the self-confidence of our people is become manifest. I dare say that we are even beginning to accept that a political party can lose an election with grace, and serve with honour in opposition.

The greatest challenge for us in Ghana, and for the entire continent, remains the creation of sustainable jobs. Our young people must see and feel the dividends of the democratic system of governance. In the one year that I have had the privilege of leading my country, I have tried to be honest with the people of Ghana. We are nowhere near where we should be, and where we all want to be, but there is a feeling we are all in this together, and we shall get out and prosper together.

It is important that we make an honest assessment of ourselves and our situation on the continent. I wonder, whatever happened to the peer review mechanism?

There might be 54 countries, and we might resent being lumped together for the wrong reasons, but there are ties that bind us together as Africans.

We have good reasons to be proud of who we are, and the beautiful continent that is ours. Today, the People's Republic of China calls itself, and is regarded as a world power. Over thirty years ago, Princeton University, one of America's most prestigious Ivy League

Universities, offered a course in Mandarin, which, for years, had virtually no takers. Today, there is standing room only. And it is not because the course is any easier, it is because the position of China has changed. Thirty years ago, twenty years ago, China was nowhere near where it is today. China does not ask anyone for respect now, she does not need to.

If we work at it, if we stop being beggars, govern ourselves intelligently and honestly in freedom, and spend Africa's monies inside the continent, Africa would not need to ask for respect from anyone. We would get the respect we deserve.

We have a responsibility to take care of our environment. We have the most spectacular natural surroundings, grandest rivers and mountains, we have minerals that the world would kill for. We have a dynamic and young population. We bring humanity alive. Let us make this continent the prosperous and joyful place it should be.

Friends, we do not have to look far back into history to see that stable period of constitutional government and intelligent management of the economy leads to prosperity. Brazil has shown us that these are not theoretical arguments. In the last two and half decades, Brazil has transformed her economy and the lives of her people, lifting some thirty million people out of poverty during the last decade alone. We, in Africa, can identify with Brazil, and we can learn lessons from them.

I believe in Africa's immense potential for greatness. I believe that stable democracies in Africa can help unleash energies to drive the transformation of the continent. There is a lot of talk that this will be the Asian century, the

Chinese century - but take it from me: the 21<sup>st</sup> century holds excellent prospects for Africa. This can be Africa's century. We can claim it, if we believe in ourselves.

I thank you very much for your attention, and may God bless the peoples of Nigeria and Ghana, and Mother Africa herself, and make her great and strong.



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**  
**Nana Addo Dankwa AKUFO-ADDO**  
President, Republic of Ghana



**SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR**  
**Professor Yemi OSINBAJO, SAN, GCON**  
Vice President, Federal Republic of Nigeria.



**CHAIRMAN**  
**General Yakubu GOWON, GCFR**  
Former Head of State, Federal Republic of Nigeria



HOST  
**Matthew Hassan KUKAH**  
Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Sokoto  
/Founder, The Kukah Centre



*Rev. Fr. Athanasius BARKINDO Ph.D*  
Director, The Kukah Centre



**Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu**  
Governor, Kebbi State, Nigeria





**Senator Monsurat Sunmonu**

Senator, Federal Republic of Nigeria



**Bishop Godfrey Onah**

Intervention: Faith and Democracy



**Dipo Salimonu**

Intervention: The Role of Think-Tanks  
in Strengthening Democracy





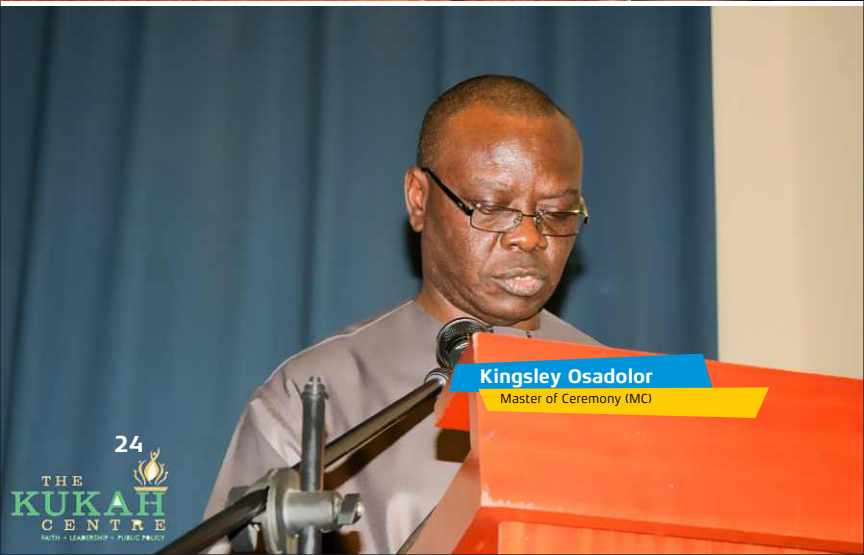
**Ndi Kato**

Intervention: Youth and Democracy



**Chioma Akwuegbo**

Intervention: Social Media and Democracy.



**Kingsley Osador**

Master of Ceremony (MC)









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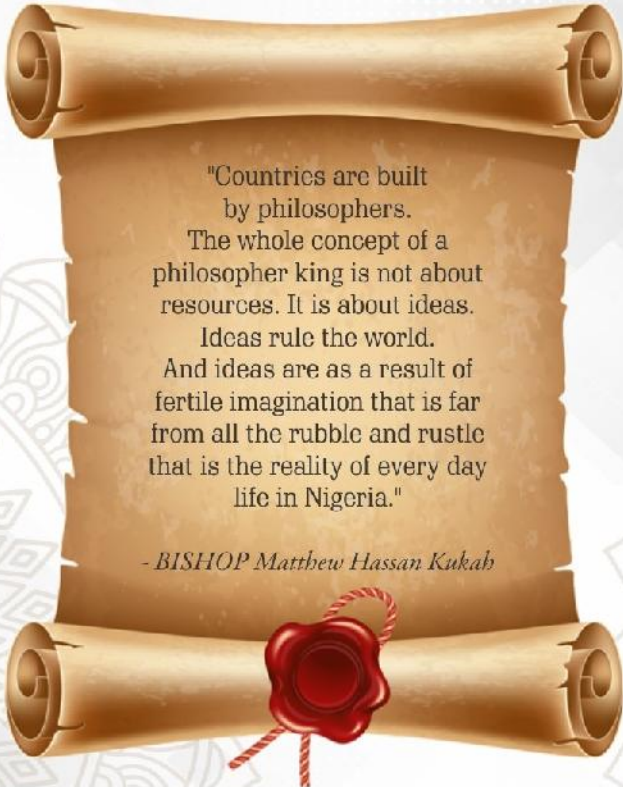








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"Countries are built  
by philosophers.  
The whole concept of a  
philosopher king is not about  
resources. It is about ideas.  
Ideas rule the world.  
And ideas are as a result of  
fertile imagination that is far  
from all the rubble and rustle  
that is the reality of every day  
life in Nigeria."

- *BISHOP Matthew Hassan Kukah*

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