

# MOGA AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

BY KINGSLEY MAMABOLO - HIGH COMMISSIONER OF SOUTH  
AFRICA TO THE UK AND NORTH IRELAND

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President of the Foundation for Democracy in Africa, Mr Fred Oladeinde,

Mayor Danielle Cava of Miami Dade

Honourable Oliver Gilbert Chairman

Commissioner Kionne Mcghee

Greetings from a rainy London. I am sorry that I could not be there in person with you in Miami. I hope that you are all well and enjoying the Banquet.

I am delighted, honoured, and above all, humbled by the Foundation for democracy in Africa's recognition of my life's work on diplomacy, Africa's integration, Diaspora engagement and the successful transition of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union and for bestowing me with the Medal of the Glory Award during its 24th Annual AfriCANDO Trade and Investment Conference and Expo.

I wish to congratulate my fellow recipients this evening, including Dr Condoleezza Rice, Former US Secretary of State, The Rev Jesse Jackson Snr and my dear old Friend Ambassador John Kayode Shinkaye. The work and achievements of all these distinguished receipts makes us all immensely proud and I am honoured to be amongst them today to receive this prestigious award.

As a South African, and as an African, I am encouraged by the efforts of our African Diaspora, whose role is integral to our shared prosperity on our beautiful continent. With the myriad of success stories across the length and breadth of Africa, we continue to uplift each other as we tackle some of the toughest challenges facing Africa today. These include climate change, migration, infrastructure development, harnessing human potential, achieving the SDGs, ensuring decent work and sustainable livelihoods so that we raise each other up to live a dignified life.

I am encouraged that the FDA is upfront and declares unambiguously that it is realizing its mission by developing innovative and culturally sensitive strategies and programs that enhance human and institutional capacity, create opportunities that reduce poverty, foster democracy, and good governance, and accelerate development in select sectors of Africa's economy.

It has been my good fortune during my illustrious diplomatic career to serve as South Africa's Ambassador to the Organization of African Unity, amongst other diplomatic postings, during my 25 years in the foreign service. I was there, court side, as they say in basketball, and bore witness to the birth of the African Union, which was launched in Durban, South Africa on 9 July 2002. During my tenure in Addis Ababa,

It was indeed with the birth of the African Union that the drive to forge collaboration with diaspora became prominent, Member states expressed a desire to consider and pass a resolution that would regard the Diaspora as the sixth region of Africa. I recall the engagements Ambassador Shinkaye who was representing Nigeria at the AU in Ethiopia, Mr Amara Essy who was at the time the Chairperson the new emerging AU and yours truly, representing South Africa, had with you Mr President and the FDA. The recognition of the diaspora is prompted by the work that is challenging all Africans in the continent and in the diaspora. It is in recognition of the potential that exists if Africa and the Diaspora should collaborate and work together.

Mr President,

The biggest challenge in the continent is to establish Peace and security, because without peace there can be no security and without security there will be no development.

The AU's initiative to Silence the Guns by 2020 (now revised to 2030) is already showing promise of a brighter, less violent, and more peaceful future. It is only when we lay down our arms and meet each other at the proverbial table that we are will be able to truly set aside our differences and chart our path to peace and prosperity. Diplomacy is there every step of the way, hand in hand with the rule of law and the multilateral infrastructure, with partners both domestic and international, with donors and civil society, all wanting to do their part to ensure a lasting peace.

One of the consequences of instability in the continent is the mass displacement of peoples as they seek refuge and solace abroad. Who can blame them? Their struggle is our struggle. Their emancipation is Africa's emancipation. Their intellectual property helps to raise us up, every remittance is a boon. Earlier this year, African Business estimated that remittances from the African diaspora amount to US \$ 95.6 billion a year. This makes remittances one of the most important sources of foreign currency. As remittances grow, this money can and should also be used to harness Africa's vast potential to support infrastructure development and larger, long-term projects. The African Development Bank is in consultations on how to best harness the financial potential of these remittances by the African diaspora and to leverage varied skills and expertise. As Dr Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank (and a past recipient of the Medal of Glory ) said, "The African diaspora has become the largest financier of Africa! And it is not debt; it is 100% gifts or grants, a new form of concessional financing that is the key for livelihood security for millions of Africans. African countries should securitise remittances to promote investments, especially for infrastructure on the continent."

Let us consider other areas where collaboration is feasible.

- According to the African Development Bank, Africa is considered the second largest mobile phone market in the world and the fastest growing market, with 8 in 10 Africans having a mobile phone.

- With about 30% of the population having access and only 10% of households having a computer, thus opportunities for broadband coverage exist in abundance. Online education is in great demand, with opportunities for remote working, data collection, logistics especially with gaps having been identified during Covid-19 as well as online education.
- The population growth on the Continent according to statistics indicate that youth demographics continue to grow, and it is anticipated that by 2075, 1 out of 3 people of working age will be African.
- The advantage that the Continent has is its relationship with the Diaspora which has not been exploited to its full potential. The cultural bonus and possibilities of Diaspora trade, commerce, sports, fashion, and music are areas where no barriers can hold out inter-connectedness back.
- The key values of Pan-Africanism need to be recalled at whatever opportunity that is provided and will be realised if we:
  1. work in unison and in solidarity to advance development.
  2. create stronger economies that will transform the current conditions of poverty, lack of development, low skills levels, and weak industrial capacity.
  3. share a common heritage, promoting cultural intelligence and African identity and a new African consciousness.
  4. build resilient institutions that will enable the continent to maximise its potential.

- 5. Pursue progressive innovation; 6. Advancing people skills and recognising African Excellence

In this context, the 9<sup>th</sup> Pan African Congress that will be held in Lome, Togo towards the end of 2024 should reinforce our resolve towards Pan Africanism. In South Africa's view, the Congress and its Regional Consultations would greatly benefit from coming up with key outcomes that will address the following:

Promoting Foreign Direct Investment on our own terms.

- Market access and the implementation of the AfCFTA which remains the development blueprint for a stronger African Union, a more democratic and prosperous Africa, and a strong commitment.
- Agriculture and food security.
- Transfer of technology.
- Investment in infrastructure including health infrastructure to address the shortcomings that became evident during the pandemic period,
- Building and strengthening democratic institutions; and
- Human Resource Development, Capacity-building, Education, Training and Skills development.

In closing, I wish to thank you once again for this Medal of Glory Award. I am resolute in my determination to continue to work for a peaceful, more prosperous, and stable Africa for the rest of my life. Your recognition today gives me the impetus to do so.

I thank you.