



STATEMENT BY

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CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**DELIVERED BY
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**AT THE SECOND AFRICAN UNION REFLECTION FORUM ON
UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE OF GOVERNMENTS (UCGS) IN
AFRICA**

**ACCRA, GHANA
18 MARCH 2024**

PROTOCOL

Your Excellency, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana and our Special Guest of Honour

Ministers here present, and members of parliament

Esteemed members of the AU PSC and ambassadors

Vice President of ECOWAS

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the African Union

UN Assistant Secretary-General for Africa

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria

Esteemed delegates

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen!

CONTEXTUALIZING ACCRA II

This Accra Forum II on unconstitutional changes of government is a defining moment to reflect on democracy in Africa. It is a multi-stakeholder platform of significance and immense admiration and esteem. We are here in Accra to address a stormy season in Africa's democratic evolution. The ship of democracy is passing through very stormy and troubled waters and we have to find practical means to ensure that the ship of state democracy is steered safely.

Despite this untoward trend, Africa must unite to challenge this state of democratic retrogression, given that, it is a regression of dire consequences. This democratic backsliding has resulted in the suspension of six (6) member states from the African Union over the period of only 3 years. Since Accra I - we had four (4) member states on suspension from the AU. Today, two (2) additional member states - namely Gabon and Niger - have joined this unfortunate trend of undemocratic change of government.

Have we reached a tipping point? I will say yes! As the AU renews zero tolerance for UCG, we must work collectively to restore constitutional order in the six (6) suspended African countries.

The African continent must return to being an axis of progressive democracy, a continuum of peace, stability and sustainable development. Accra II should inspire the African base of stakeholders in order to energize national, regional and continental actors to guard and uphold democracy as both preventative and institution resilience building approaches.

AU SALUTATIONS OF HOST

Your Excellency,

Given this overall context - I bring you very warm and fraternal greetings from the chairperson of the AUC, Moussa Faki Mahamat and the AU in its entirety. As you recall, Sir, the Chairperson recently joined you in Accra to flag off the 13th All Africa Games and another big congratulations to Ghana for hosting this iconic sporting event. African unity and solidarity, symbolized by the power of the youth, remain our greatest asset for transforming the continent. There are a lot of lessons to be learned from the ongoing games as a backdrop for our meeting. Rules-based sports teach us to promote rules-based engagement and governance. Sports also teach us to compete in a spirit of fair play and cooperation. Similarly, it mentors us on peaceful coexistence.

Your Excellency, President Nana Dankwa Akufo-Addo, the AU salutes your bold, astute and resourceful leadership as an avid democrat and a committed defender of Pan-Africanism, as you serve the union in multiple capacities, including as champion of gender equality and women empowerment.

THE ACCRA II OPPORTUNITY

Excellencies,

In Accra 2, we are in a favorable conjuncture of circumstances. We are presented with a mammoth opportunity for 2 main reasons. Firstly, to frontally address the structural root causes driving the exponential growth of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. Secondly, it serves as a moonshot for all actors, including women, youth, professional groups on our beautiful continent, to relive the spirit of Pan-Africanism by promoting the aspirations for true democracy as enshrined in Agenda 2063.

We are on a mission towards monumental success if we all commonly rally against military dictatorships. Our badly bruised historical experience of dictatorship cannot be replicated in the 21st century again because these emerging anti-constitutional norms negate our commitment to inclusive democracy.

ACCRA AS KNOWLEDGE HUB FOR DEMOCRACY

Excellencies,

Accra should become the knowledge hub and takeoff point for this democratic renewal.

INTERFACE BETWEEN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

So we desire that this forum continues to serve as a multidimensional, multilayered, multilevel and multidisciplinary engagement platform to build the solid foundations of fundamental freedoms, constitutionalism, the rule of law and, most notably to yield the dividends of peace and democracy. It is self-evident and our firm conviction that peace dividends are founded on the interconnections of the first generation political and civil rights as well as the economic, social and cultural rights. To this effect, we must collectively strive to champion the right to development as an intrinsic, inalienable right of every African!

MULTIPLICITY OF SECURITY THREATS

Excellencies,

Accra II marks the expressed readiness of all African stakeholders to promote and defend democracy. As we address the multiplicity of security threats facing Africa today, especially terrorism and violent extremism. We must embrace stable democratic dispensations that will respond adequately to the will and voice of the African people and by this, we can foster good and effective governance.

GRATITUDE TO STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Excellency, President of the Republic Of Ghana

Permit me to convey special appreciation to key players who have made Accra II possible.

First, I highly commend our admirable host, the Government and the good people of Ghana for truly living to be the springboard of African unity.

Second, we convey profound gratitude to the Chairperson and esteemed AU Peace and Security Council members for conceptualizing this reflection forum and providing political support to this

second edition. The PSC will mark the 20th Anniversary of its founding in May 2024. Thus, we applaud the Council for its consistent leading voice on Africa's collective security.

Thirdly, we highly commend AU strategic partners for supporting us in attaining The Africa We Want. The roll call of strategic partners that have rendered support to Accra II is very impressive:

1. ECOWAS as co-organizer will turn 50 years next year and is one of the most formidable political cooperation vehicles to promote regional peace, and integration.

2. UNDP from Accra I to Accra II remains a strong, resilient institution and the UN we need!

3. AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).

4. Institute for Security Studies (ISS).

5. GIZ Nigeria.

6. International IDEA.

7. Training for Peace.

8. EISA and

9. Plan International.

1) ACCRA AGENDA FOR ACTION

Excellencies,
My Fellow Africans,
Friends Of Africa,

The agenda before us for the next 2 days is compelling and so we will reflect on:

The state of democracy in Africa, take stock of measures to implement Accra and Malabo declarations on UCG and terrorism, expect to consider the structural drivers of reignited military rule, examine new strategies and tools to safeguard democracy, engage on people-centred focus on guardian-ship and custodian-ship of democracy, then review the overriding variable of

building coherence and coordination by experience sharing and lessons learning at the national, regional and continental levels to make democracy work better.

CONCLUSIONS

Excellency Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen

As I conclude, I respectfully invite you all to watch this short documentary film on AU election observation missions - the pathway to strengthening the culture of peace and democracy. The documentary shows AU contributions to credible, transparent, and peaceful elections. Election observation is the AU practice of supporting member states in their democracy trajectory and is a testimony to building democratic resilience. The new frontiers of democracy in Africa must expand for the people and cannot / should not be redefined by military adventurists.

As our African leaders affirmed at the 16th Extraordinary Summit in Malabo in May 2022, I reaffirm here and now that robust response, deepening democracy and collective security must consistently be our goal, our watchword and our banner of dedication. We underscore that Accra II is the viable medium to expand our horizon of democracy through self-contemplation, self-questioning and self-scrutiny on the future of Africa's democratic governance.

I thank you all.