

**AMBASSADOR S.J.K. PARKER-ALLOTEY'S SPEECH FOR GHANAIAN
COMMUNITY INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION ON
12TH MARCH, 2017, AKOS HALL, TOKYO**

Six decades ago, Ghana became a free nation. Many nationalists fought for independence from the shackles of colonialism. Politicians, Market women, progressive Chiefs, Academics, the youth in the streets, Soldiers and World War veterans all played various roles to gain freedom for Ghana.

Our leader, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, told us to seek first the Political kingdom, and all others would be added unto us. He also exhorted us to prefer independence with all its dangers to servitude in tranquility. We followed the political path until about 3 decades ago, when as a result of the mixed results and fluctuating economic fortunes, we decided that it was time to focus on economic progress. No country in this world has won respect without deploying hard or soft power and becoming economically prosperous. Also, all respected states are able to feed themselves. They grow what they eat, and manufacture their basic needs.

The need to deliver on the economic front, led us to the Akosombo Consensus. Brilliant ideas came forward, but what was lacking was implementation. The government of the day embarked on massive infrastructural development which was one of the outcomes of the Akosombo consultation. However, the results of the recent elections showed that Ghanaians were ready to eat now. Ghanaians want "Dumso" to end now. Ghanaians want jobs now; free education now; health for all now; water for all now; money in our pockets now. These calls were similar to the demands of our Osagyefo when in 1957, he demanded Self-government now. However, he added what I thought was a sad error, when he said Independence would make the Black man capable of managing or mismanaging his own affairs. Some of our leaders appeared to have only heard the "mismanaging" part. Ghanaians are in a hurry, and the youth especially cannot wait for economic progress.

Our new President has started fulfilling some of his electoral promises. He has removed some taxes which were considered "nuisance" taxes. He wants to implement free SHS education from this year. Tax on investments in companies (Dividends) has been removed. Taxes on financial services and spare parts have also been abolished.

However, our leader is being pragmatic. He knows that you cannot share what you have not produced. The Latin phrase “Nemur dat quod non habet” is apposite here. The Akans also have a similar wise saying: “Se kwaterikwa se obe kye wo ntam aa tie ne din”. This is why he wants to focus on producing wealth with the Private Sector in the driving seat.

I would like to quote his words at the 60th Independence Day Anniversary Parade on 6th March, 2017. He said the following: “After 60 years, we have run out of excuses and it is time to set Ghana to rights and get our country to where it should be. The challenge before us, is to build our economy and generate a prosperous, progressive, and dignified life for the mass of our people. Hard work, enterprise, creativity and a consistent fight against corruption in public life, would bring the transformation we seek.”

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo also believes that the over 2 million Ghanaians living outside must have learnt some useful things from the countries in which they reside. Therefore, apart from the Private Sector, he is trying to tap the brains and resources of our Diaspora. He is turning our brain drain into “Brain Gain”. From 5th – 7th July this year, he is organizing the 2nd Home-Coming Summit for Ghanaians living abroad. He wants all of you to go and give him some ideas on how we can now seek the “Economic Kingdom”. Please don’t go and tell us why we are not so wealthy. We know that already. Tell us how we can become rich. What part can you play, what resources you can bring home. Don’t tell us of remittances which you send home to be consumed only by your families, but rather, how you want to invest these resources to help produce more wealth for your families and for other Ghanaians. Such investments will also create employment for the youth.

Tell us of new technologies, management philosophies and techniques which can be “game changers” in Ghana. Tell us of new ways of doing things because we want new and positive results. Tell us how we can mobilize the young, the old, the men, youth and women for national development. Tell us of your Vision for a new Ghana and path to that vision. I encourage Ghanaians in Japan to be strongly represented at the Conference. Don’t focus on what your leaders have done wrong in the past. I know some people have Phd Certificates in identifying mistakes of others. Now give us wisdom and light on how we can change our situation. Let us see a positive response through your

attitude to this conference. After all, your attitude determines your altitude; the heights to which you can fly! I shall now pause for a few interventions from you on how we can make the best out of the Conference, and on issues which you propose to be included in the Agenda. You must focus on what you can do for Ghana individually and collectively. I wish you all a happy Diamond Jubilee Anniversary and God's abundant blessings. We should all be proud to be Ghanaians. I thank you for your attention.