

SPEECH OF HER EXCELLENCY DR
MARGARET I. AMOAKOHENE AT THE
LAUNCH OF GHANA'S GOLDEN JUBILEE
CELEBRATIONS IN CANADA -19/02/2007

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen. I would like to welcome you all to this short ceremony to launch the Ottawa Mission's program of activities to mark the 50th anniversary of Ghana's Independence from colonial rule. Ghana gained her independence from British colonial rule on March 6 1957 having been administered as a colony and part of the British Colonial Empire for well over 100 years.

Ghana has had the distinction of being the first Sub-Saharan African country to have gained independence. This position has, in the past and even today, placed a lot of responsibility on the country as a trailblazer in the struggle for independence for the emancipation of other African countries.

The Golden Jubilee and preparations towards its celebration have evoked a lot of excitement at both the national and diasporan levels. The anniversary is being marked with a year long programme of activities under the theme "**Ghana: Championing African Excellence**". The theme highlights Ghana's leadership role in Africa's liberation as well as important landmarks in the nation's evolution since independence towards attaining middle income status by 2015.

Ghana's leadership role in Africa can be traced to the enormous support it provided to liberation movements across the continent during the regime of Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first President. Subsequent regimes, including those led by the military, have continued Dr Nkrumah's Pan-Africanist vision with policies aimed at African unity, peace, security and development.

Ghana is an active member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), la Francophonie, and the African Union of whose Peace and Security Council it is also a member. Ghana's mediatory role in Africa has included providing a platform for dialogue among warring factions, and refuge for people fleeing from conflicts and wars in their own countries. Furthermore, Ghana continues to contribute immensely to the maintenance of international peace and security both through its membership of international bodies and also through its contribution to peace-keeping operations.

Important landmarks in Ghana which serve as a beacon for the rest of Africa include the country's stable constitutional democracy with a development-oriented Executive, a dynamic multiparty 230-Member Parliament, and an independent Judiciary. Ghana also shows the way with well-functioning state institutions including an independent Electoral Commission, a Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, a vibrant media system which epitomizes freedom of speech and of expression, and an independent National Media Commission to

insulate the media from state control and ensure the highest journalistic standards.

Ghana, thus, champions African excellence in building democratic structures aimed at improving the lives of its citizenry through good governance and the rule of law. The country continues to pay serious attention to education and training, health care delivery, agriculture, industrial development through various partnerships: private-private, public-private, and human resource development.

In recent times the appointments of Mr. Kofi Annan to serve two complete terms as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ghana's President J. A. Kufuor to the chair of the African Union, Dr Mohammed Ibn Chambas to the presidency of the ECOWAS Commission, and Dr. Ekwow Spio-Garbrah as Chief Executive Officer of the Commonwealth Telecommunication Organization (CTO), among others, testify to Ghana's international recognition.

In view of enormous strides made over the years, Ghanaians, both at home and abroad, are exhorted to join in the celebrations. In this regard, Ghana's Diplomatic Missions abroad have been mandated by government to celebrate the Golden Jubilee in ways that project Ghana's rich culture, traditions, and economic potential. Consequently, the Mission in Ottawa, in collaboration with various Ghanaian-Canadian Communities and Associations, including students throughout Canada, will undertake several activities some of which are outlined below.

Canada Celebrations

On Tuesday, March 6, the Mission will host a dinner at the Museum of Civilization for members of the Diplomatic Corps, relevant Federal, Provincial and Municipal institutions as well as a cross-section of Ghanaians and friends of Ghana. The Mission will also be represented at a number of activities planned and hosted by Ghanaian-Canadian Communities and Associations in various provinces throughout Canada.

Below are some of the activities planned to celebrate Ghana's Golden Jubilee in Canada.

(Please refer to the attached programme of activities in which Mission will participate).

The Ghana Mission in Ottawa counts on your goodwill and support to publicize these activities in celebration of Ghana's Golden Jubilee in Canada.

Let me end by taking the opportunity to thank the Canadian Government for its strong support for Ghana's political and economic development. Relations that have existed between our two countries over the past 50 years have been enviable and I consider my tenure as High Commissioner an opportunity to further deepen these relations. My priorities, as I have indicated elsewhere, would include seeking new partnerships, especially between our two private sectors.

The program of activities marking Ghana's Golden Jubilee in Canada would be posted on our website:
www.ghc-ca.com

I sincerely thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for honoring our invitation today.