

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO-ADDO AT THE
CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE FRANCOPHONIE FESTIVAL IN GHANA ON 24TH
MARCH 2018 AT ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE**

Her Excellency, the First Lady Madam Rebecca,

Honourable Minister of Education,

Your Excellencies, Members of the Council of Francophone Ambassadors in Ghana,

The Director of Alliance Française,

Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Dear friends,

Good evening,

It is with great pleasure that we are celebrating the Francophonie festival in Ghana. This year, the celebrations have been of significant importance because for the first time in the history of our nation, the closing ceremony is being chaired by a Ghanaian Head of State who is also a Francophile and is committed to the teaching of French in Ghana.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in my capacity as Minister of Foreign affairs, I signed the treaty in Bucharest in 2006 which made Ghana a Member State of La Francophonie. I initiated a process which shall in the long run render all Ghanaians familiar with the French Language. As a people, it is important for us to have the ability to express ourselves in French as well as English given that Ghana is a country bordered by three Francophone countries.

In fact ladies and gentlemen, we find ourselves in a global climate where the study of languages is becoming more and more significant because the global village demands that we are able to communicate with our counterparts and colleagues who live outside our daily culture. This is one of the reasons why my government has decided to pay particular attention to the study of French in all our educational systems including primary and secondary schools.

In November 2017, the French Head of State, His Excellency Emmanuel MACRON made a historic visit to Ghana. I was honoured by the fact that this visit took place during my tenure as the President of Ghana. Nevertheless, this was a visit which showed the positive developments which characterise not only our relations with France but also an improvement in the relations between Ghana and the francophone world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I hope these relations will contribute to the continental and sub-regional integration process. Furthermore, I hope that they will also develop the cultural and trade exchanges between Ghana and francophone countries. I will therefore take this great opportunity to invite the authorities of academic institutions in France and member states of La Francophonie to create more opportunities for Ghanaian youth in order to improve their level in French and their appreciation of the Francophone culture. We must never forget that knowledge of languages is also a powerful tool which allows us to fight ignorance and xenophobia. This dovetails the process of creating friendship and fraternity ties between us and the rest of the world. It is for this essential reason that Ghana hopes to strengthen her relations with the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF) by signing a linguistic pact which will change Ghana's status within the francophone community.

I therefore invite institutions such as Alliance Française to extend partnerships to Government institutions to train civil servants in French Language studies.

I also hope that Ghanaian athletes would one day take part in events such as “les Jeux de La Francophonie” (La Francophonie games) such as the opening ceremony of the previous one which I attended in Abidjan and was warmly welcomed by His Excellency President Alassane Ouattara .

Ladies and gentlemen,

My Government is ever ready to work closely with the Council of Francophone Ambassadors in Ghana in order achieve all the goals that have been framed for Ghana and La Francophonie. I am sure that these two weeks Celebration will mark

the beginning of an economic and cultural growth between Ghana and the International Organisation of la Francophonie (OIF).

Long live French,

Long live Ghana,

Long live the relations between Ghana and La Francophonie.

Thank you.