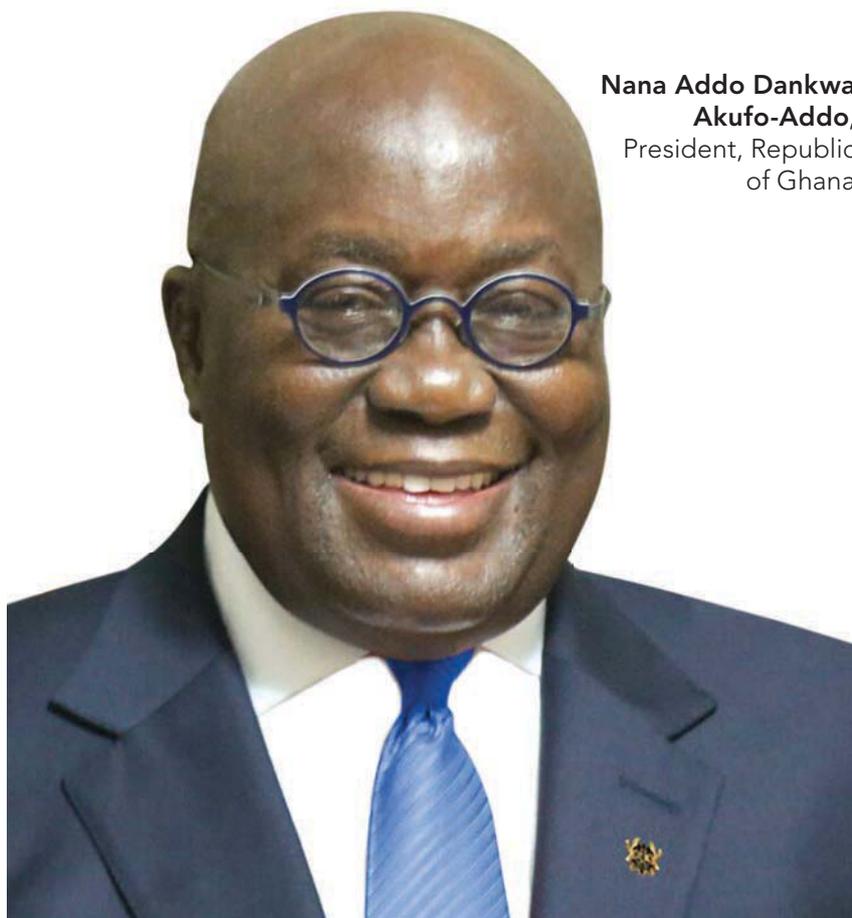


CREATING A PROSPEROUS FUTURE THAT LEAVES NO ONE BEHIND

Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana, highlights the need for collective efforts to create prosperity for all, and expresses his determination to transform Ghana into a prosperous and proud nation that leaves no one behind.



**Nana Addo Dankwa
Akufo-Addo,**
President, Republic
of Ghana

With the high level of co-operation amongst nations in the 21st century, no country remains an island, as we live in a virtually borderless world with shared interests and their attendant challenges. What happens in one part of the world can have as much impact on our lives as the actions of our immediate neighbours.

As members of the Commonwealth family, it is, therefore, important to recognise that the Commonwealth's continuous relevance and survival depends on the safety and wellbeing of all member states and their citizens. The Commonwealth will remain relevant, not only because of our shared values and principles, but also because of our ability to use our collective strengths and resources to meet the aspirations of our citizens; create prosperity to improve living standards, promote the rule of law and respect for human rights; and protect the environment.

The 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) is a unique opportunity to give practical meaning to the objectives of the Commonwealth Charter, which are similar to the UN 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the goals of the African Union's Agenda 2063.

As Co-chair of the Group of Advocates of Eminent Persons of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, it is my strong conviction that the SDGs are a worthwhile set of goals for mankind. The Commonwealth should strive to achieve these goals to make the world a better place, by supporting its members to build capacities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, where no one is left behind in the efforts to create prosperity for all.

The SDGs challenge us, collectively, to adopt inclusive and integrated approaches to development, and to forge viable multi-stakeholder partnerships that can effectively tackle the multi-dimensional problems of our world today. In the midst of the challenging global environment, the success of our efforts will depend on the effective mobilisation of resources for SDG implementation. If the noble goal of the SDGs is to ensure that no one is left behind, we should commit ourselves, amongst others, to building a world where every child has the opportunity to better him or herself, and, by so doing, better the global community.

It is for this reason that my Government, in September 2017, implemented the Free Senior High School programme to ensure that every Ghanaian child, boy or girl, irrespective of the circumstances of their birth, has access to a minimum of Senior High School education. This programme has ensured that 90,000



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more students gained access to Senior High School in 2017, than in 2016.

I hesitate to prescribe policy initiatives for other countries, but, on the matter of education, I have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending that all countries of the Commonwealth, not just in Africa, adopt the policy of free compulsory education from kindergarten to senior high school. This is one of the most important things we have to do if we are to guarantee prosperity for all.

For us, in Africa, we need to end the spectre of the dependence of our economies on the production and export of raw materials. These economies cannot produce wealth and prosperity for the masses on our continent. They drive the determination of African youth to seek much better living standards of living out of Africa, thereby, fuelling the refugee crises and the numerous counts of illegal immigrants. We cannot continue travelling this worn path of limited success of being exporters of raw materials. The only way to ensuring prosperity in Africa is through value addition activities, in a transformed and diversified, modern

economy. In other words, the industrial development of our continent and this can be accelerated and achieved with an educated workforce, taking full advantage of the digital revolution.

We must also encourage each other, in the Commonwealth, to strengthen and protect the institutions and culture of accountable governments; respect human rights, religious freedoms, and the rights of the individual and minorities; and build strong market economies. We do not have to look far into history to see that stable constitutional government and intelligent management of the economy can lead to general prosperity.

For us in Ghana, we want to build a Ghana Beyond Aid because it is time to pursue a path to prosperity and self-respect for our nation. A Ghana Beyond Aid is a prosperous and self-confident Ghana that is in charge of her economic destiny; a transformed Ghana that is prosperous enough to be beyond needing aid, and that engages competitively with the rest of the world through trade and investment.

We are determined to build a new Ghanaian and African civilisation, where the rule of law works, where individual liberties and human rights are respected, and where the principles of democratic accountability are the foundation of public policy. We are determined to forge a new Ghanaian and African, who is neither a victim nor a pawn of the world order, but who will be a dignified member of a successful, thriving, prosperous society. ■

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