



**ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE 2016
AFRICA: BRIDGING THE GULF**

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Speech by

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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Your Excellency Dr. Diarra, Dr. Frazer, Esteemed Ambassadors, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I take great pleasure in welcoming all of you to Dubai and the United Arab Emirates. I am especially pleased to infer that you all must share a common interest in investing and undertaking business in Africa. I and many other UAE citizens share that interest as well. This conference will strengthen our common interest.

Led by the extraordinary visionary Dr. Diarra, the staff at the Africa Legal Network has arranged a challenging program that confronts vital issues of importance. An incredibly strong faculty of sixty-five talented and experienced experts will speak over the next two days. All participants in this conference will become well-prepared to deal with all matters that might affect investing and undertaking business in Africa. The speakers will surely earn the deep gratitude of all participants.

In May of this year, representatives of African nations celebrated Africa Day in Abu Dhabi. I had the privilege of participating in that celebration. Because the United Arab Emirates is a global crossroads, it is not surprising that all of Africa is represented in our country. People from all over Africa live and work in the United Arab Emirates in safety, enjoying respect and prosperity, and enriching our country's global culture.

The talent and inventiveness of Africa is on display in the UAE. The citizens of Africa have educated us about that wonderful continent. We have come to appreciate the vast human richness of Africa. Africa's extraordinary human capital is strengthening the continent. I understand that the African Union has designated 2016 as the African Year of Human Rights and is concentrating on human rights for women. We understand that concern. His Highness the President, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, has said that the UAE is committed to be a nation that (and I quote), "does justice, delivers security and empowers citizens—men and women alike—to participate in the leadership of the [UAE]." Such an objective requires that women enjoy the same human rights as men. I commend all African nations in their dedication to that just and necessary principle.

And I especially congratulate the African states and the African people in recognizing the benefits of working together on matters that affect everyone across the continent—matters such as human rights, climate change, conservation, education, wealth distribution, trade, infrastructure, public health, safety, corruption, and armed conflict. Africans are modeling the cooperation so essential to peace and prosperity in the twenty-first century. The whole world admires their wisdom and resolve. Those attributes attract investors, entrepreneurs, and businesses and corporations eager to expand.

Ladies and Gentlemen, My Dear Friends:

You have come together in this conference under the banner "Africa: Bridging the Gulf." That highlights the importance of promoting trade and investments between Africa and the Gulf Region. It also recognizes that building and strengthening such an important relationship requires persistence and hard work. Success also requires an environment characterized by creativity, mutual understanding, transparency, and competitive attitudes, accompanied by wider individual and institutional participation in all economic activities.

Your challenge in this conference is to ask the right questions and focus on the important issues. It is now clear that investment and large capital flows between Africa and the Gulf require new thinking and major structural changes, especially in the areas of trade and private investments.

I am confident your conference will inspire thoughtful analysis and creative approaches to these challenges. I look forward to your discussions about how to attain more integration between Africa and the Gulf. In particular:

- How to build a stronger business and economic links between the two regions?
- How to promote trade and investment?
- How to share in the benefits of modern technologies?
- How to take advantage of the emerging and growing special place of both Africa and the Gulf region in the world economy?
- How to build and strengthen the institutions that make business and economic cooperation possible?
- How to strengthen the role of the private sector and increase its participation in these activities?
- And how to develop and support the networks of business leaders needed to strengthen business and economic relations between Africa and the Gulf?

The value of your Conference lies in the attention you give to all these important issues and in your ability to develop a common understanding of various challenges and opportunities.

Thank you all for your dedication to progress and development in Africa—the world’s second largest continent with the world’s second largest continental population. In this conference, I am reminded of a Nigerian proverb that declares this: “In the moment of crisis, the wise build bridges and the foolish build dams.” You may not feel a threat of crisis today and tomorrow, but I hope that you heed the proverb nevertheless. Dams will not help us bridge the gulf. Best wishes for successful and wise bridge-building.

I wish for you an enjoyable and productive Conference.

Thank you.