

WELCOME STATEMENT BY MAKMID KAMARA, DIRECTOR OF ATJLF:

H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana
Representative of the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace & Security
Ministers here present

Senior government officials

Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps

Presiding Officer of AU ECOSOCC

The Executive Secretary of ECOSOCC

UN SPECIAL MANDATE HOLDER AND EXPERT MEMBER OF THE WORKING GROUP OF EXPERTS ON PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Senior Leadership of MacArthur Foundations, Open Society Foundation, and Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.

Heads of Commissions

Heads Movement and Networks

Members of the Media

Members of Civil Society

I bring you warm greetings from the Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund (ATJLF) and a warm akwaaba to Ghana. Welcome to Accra.

We are delighted to be your host over the next five days in this beautiful country. We are pleased to welcome you to a country generally regarded as the pioneers of Pan-Africanism under the dynamic leadership of its founding President, Kwame Nkrumah. A country whose people have spearheaded multiple battles in the struggle for the liberation of the African continent from colonialism, imperialism and racism. Welcome to Ghana.

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you all, on behalf of the Executive Council of the ATJLF, the Planning Committee of this summit and on my personal behalf. As I welcome you all to Ghana, let me utilise this opportunity to tell you briefly about the ATJLF. We are a small but mighty team. And I am very proud to lead this organisation at this historic moment. The ATJLF was established as a project in late 2018. In 2020, we became a registered public charity in Ghana and a 501(c)(3) organization with the ultimate aim of rebuilding communities and promoting survivor agency in transitional societies. We have two major programmes, and we engage primarily in sub-granting in Africa. Our goal is to rebuild communities and (re) activate survivor agency in transitional and reparative justice processes in Africa. We are a proud and grateful recipient of the time-bound Equitable Recovery grant under the Racial Justice Field.



We are co-hosting this grand summit as part of the time-specific grant to advance, among other things, reparative justice and racial healing through a transcontinental approach. This is in alignment with the aspirations for a united and bold agenda for racial justice, for truth and accountability and for healing. Ladies and gentlemen, I therefore need not overstate the enormous task that lies ahead of us in the coming days.

In the next few days, we will engage in cross-continental dialogues with the hopes of co-creating a shared vision and collective capacity for reparative justice and racial healing for Africans and all people of African Descent. As the Honourable Marcus Mosiah Garvey said, we are here as One People, One Nation with One Destiny. The future and success of this work is hinged on partnerships and bridge building. We believe that singular voices could be loud but may not necessarily be heard. We believe that we need to get organized and to be able to compel others to listen to our demands and respect our calls.

At the ATJLF, we see this summit as a continuum of the various initiatives and discussions taking place around the world on reparations for the Transatlantic Slave Trade, slavery and the enduring consequences of colonialism. We strongly believe that this gathering of activists, advocates, academics and campaigners, will serve as a chance to leverage on existing initiatives, amplify the work being done, and illuminate opportunities to harness various interests and aspirations. I would therefore like to use this platform to inform you all that the ATJLF is committed and ready to lead this conversation from the continent. This is because we believe, as Marcus Garvey said, that: “no race, no people, no nation has ever been freed through cowardice, through cringing, through bowing and scraping, but all that has been achieved to the glory of mankind, to the glory and honour of races and nations was through the determination and effort of those who lead and those who led.”

Distinguished delegates, let me remind you all that we are at the edge of making history. Let us commit to ensuring that at the end of this summit, we have created something profound and momentous. Let us utilize our lived experiences as Black People and People of African Descent, to co-develop and co-produce the Accra Declaration on Reparations and Racial Healing. We are also not oblivious of the task ahead.

But as Ghana’s foremost Pan-Africanist and the forebear of modern Pan-Africanism, Kwame Nkrumah once said: “the task ahead is great indeed, and heavy is the responsibility; and yet it is a noble and glorious challenge – a challenge which calls for the courage to dream, the courage to believe, the courage to dare, the courage to do, the courage to envision, the courage to fight, the courage to work, the courage to achieve – to achieve the highest excellencies and the fullest greatness of man. Dare we ask for more in life?”

Let me end by thanking every one of you for coming to Ghana to continue this conversation. I know this is not a vote of thanks. But I will be remiss in my duties if I don’t thank to my colleagues at the ATJLF; thank you Nana Sarpong of Keys and Kredo for helping put this summit together, to our principal partners, the AU (Dept of Pol Affairs, Peace and Security & ECOSOCC) to all members of the Global Circle cohort, to my senior comrade and elder brother Brian Kagoro. Special thanks to the entire Macfound team. Thank you all and welcome once again to the summit!

