

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY H.E. MR. ADAMA
BARROW, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF THE GAMBIA FOR THE 2024 AFRICAN
PEACE AWARD**

9-11 JANUARY 2024

NOUAKCHOTT, MAURITANIA

Your Excellency, the President of Mauritania,

Esteemed leaders,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel greatly honoured to address this esteemed assembly to express my sincere thanks for the Peace Award bestowed upon me. In appreciation of this, I extend heartfelt gratitude to His Excellency, Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, the President of Mauritania, for generously hosting this event.

The occasion is symbolic of our shared dedication to peace and unity across the diverse and vibrant African continent. From this viewpoint, His Excellency's leadership and hospitality reflect the spirit of African brotherhood and cooperation that we so deeply value and continually strive to strengthen.

I must confess that I have accepted the 2024 **African Prize For Peace** with humility and a deep sense of gratitude. The award may be in recognition of my humble efforts but, certainly, it also signifies the resilience and commitment of Gambians and our African brothers and sisters to peace promotion, stability, and human dignity.

Regardless of the conflicts and suffering across the globe, Africa continues to rise and develop. This resilience demonstrates our unyielding resolve to pursue a durable path to harmony and mutual understanding.

Although our history is loaded with challenges, the natural African spirit in us, driven by the ideals of unity and cooperation, remains our guiding light. Consequently, this prestigious peace award is not a mere recognition of efforts but a reminder that the quest for peace is a never-ending venture. It is a journey begun with the sacrifices of our ancestors and sustained by us to ensure a prosperous future for all generations.

Excellencies,

For our survival and progress, cultivating a culture of peace is essentially accorded special prominence on our global agenda. Peace in this context goes beyond the absence of conflict; it also embodies the process of fostering understanding, mutual respect, and collaboration among communities and nations.

My leadership experience has revealed to me the profound impact of sustained peace on a nation. Peace stands out clearly as the bedrock upon which society can heal, economies can thrive, and individuals can access opportunities and enjoy their rights to live happily. Put differently, peace is the cornerstone for a world that upholds human dignity, celebrates diversity, and empowers people to realise their full potential.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates, the pursuit of a culture of peace is both a collective and an individual endeavour. It requires policies that directly tackle the root causes of conflict, and these include poverty, inequality, and injustice. This realisation makes it necessary to free all those whose voices are suppressed, especially the advocates of human rights and human dignity.

In Africa, peacebuilding calls for addressing emerging threats, such as election-related violence, unregulated migration, abuse of new technologies, and systemic corruption. To succeed, as we engage in constructive dialogue and collaboration, we must remember that it is only through collective action that a truly peaceful world order can be established.

Fittingly, therefore, every policy discussion and every act of diplomacy, kindness, and understanding should contribute towards creating a more peaceful, just, and equitable world.

In pursuing our transformation and development agenda in The Gambia, a major focus of our 2018-2021 National Development Plan was to restore and sustain peace and stability through suitable institutional building and people-centred development approaches.

Furthermore, establishing a Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparation Commission and implementing its recommendations to heal the nation, reforming our Security Sector, and liberating public space for responsible media participation and freedom of expression are important aspects of our peacebuilding story.

Constituting a National Human Rights Commission to monitor threats to human rights and addressing them through dialogue, as well as respect for the rule of law and independence of the Judiciary amply demonstrate my government's commitment to peace, security, and justice.

Excellencies, Distinguished Personalities,

Inter-linked with the narratives of other African nations, The Gambia's story remains one of hope and relentless efforts. From nurturing democracy to advocating human rights and fostering economic cooperation, our strides towards peace are steps towards a greater and more united Africa.

It is conclusive that the African Peace Award is a call to action for all of us. It reminds us that our work is far from over. Thus, in the spirit of African unity, let us recommit ourselves to the principles of the African Union and strive not only to end all conflicts but also to guarantee and sustain development, peace, and prosperity.

Moving forward, our vision must be clear and our determination steadfast sufficiently enough for us to leverage all the strength and courage we can gather, engage the youth and women, and empower every citizen.

Together, we can develop a continent where peace prevails, nations wherein every child grows peacefully, and communities within which each citizen can contribute meaningfully to public life and progress. The road ahead may be rough but if we stand united, our collective resolve will lead to global peace, security, and happiness.

I submit that we leave this assembly, not as leaders of diverse nations but as members of a family committed to a brighter future of peace, dignity, and justice for humankind.

In conclusion, my sincere thanks go to the African Conference for Peace for conferring this huge honour on me. I am also extremely grateful to my fellow Gambians and, by extension, all Africans, whose hopes and dreams I am honoured to represent and promote. Jointly, let us forge ahead for a peaceful, prosperous, and united Africa.

Long live African solidarity! Long live global peace!