

**54<sup>TH</sup> REPUBLIC ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS BY H. E. JOHN DRAMANI  
MAHAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA  
AT A SENIOR CITIZENS LUNCHEON  
[State Banquet Hall- Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014]**

*“We feel that there is much the world can learn from those of us who belong to what we might term the pre-technological societies. These are values, which we must not sacrifice unheedingly in pursuit of material progress. That is why we say that self-government is not an end in itself. We have to work hard to evolve new patterns, new social customs, new attitudes to life, so that while we seek the material, cultural and economic advancement of our country, while we raise their standards of life, we shall not sacrifice their fundamental happiness...”*

*... [W]e can only meet the challenge of our age as a free people. Hence our demand for our freedom, for only free men can shape the destinies of their future.”*

Your Excellency, the Vice-President,  
Right Honourable Speaker of Parliament,  
Your Ladyship, the Chief Justice of Ghana,  
Distinguished Members of the Council of State,  
Honourable Ministers of State, And Presidential Staffers,  
Respected Chiefs and Traditional Leaders,  
Distinguished Senior Citizens,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Brothers and Sisters,

Those words were spoken by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July, 1953 when he addressed the Legislative Assembly to formally claim our right to independence.



On the 6<sup>th</sup> of March, 1957, nearly four years after Dr. Nkrumah delivered that speech, aptly titled “The Motion of Destiny,” we gained our independence. But it was not a full liberation because though we were self-governed, the Queen of England officially remained the Head of State.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, 1960, nearly seven years to the date of that speech, Ghana became a republic and Dr. Nkrumah who had been popularly elected became our first President and Head of State.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to be here with you today to commemorate the anniversary of that milestone. Quite appropriately, Republic Day is also the day on which we pay tribute to the Senior Citizens in our society, those individuals who helped build this great nation of ours and who hold within them the memory of the distance that we as a people have travelled to arrive at this place in our development.

I would like to thank the former Director-General of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, Ambassador David Anaglate for his positive and insightful remarks on behalf of all the Senior Citizens of Ghana.

I concur with Ambassador Anaglate: the “habit of asking for more” is not limited to one generation. Our own history has shown us, as exemplified in that particular speech of Dr. Nkrumah’s, that it is in actuality the “asking”, the “demanding”, which spurs into action that very motion of destiny.

And our Senior Citizens are the heroes of that history, the ones whose labour and values, whose dreams and demands shaped that destiny—and for this alone, we owe them a debt of gratitude. So on behalf of all Ghanaians, I say, “thank you” and “Ayekooo.”

I fully support the suggestion that more of an effort should be made, in all sectors of our society, to utilize the wisdom of their years and experiences. I also strongly echo the appeal to our institutions to prioritize a place for them in queues to receive goods and services.



It is a courtesy that is well-earned and well-deserved, a basic courtesy and respect that should be recognized and observed by all.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would be remiss to stand here on this occasion, the anniversary of our attainment of full independence, and not acknowledge the current state of affairs in our nation.

In this current phase of our development, we have been met with several obstacles and challenges, some of which we have resolved and others of which we are still working to find the ways and means to overcome.

It is not enough for me to say that I share many of the same disappointments and frustrations that have been expressed, though I do. It is not enough for me to say that I have every faith in Government's ability to meet the goals we have set for the country once these difficulties are behind us, though I do.

What I will, however, say is that as a citizen of Ghana, I want the same safety and stability for my children's future that you want for the future of your children.

I want all of our children to have the same opportunities available to them to rise to their highest potential. I want all of our children to feel entitled to the habit of asking for more, and confident in the knowledge that it can be attained.

I envision the same success and prosperity for this nation that you envision. This is our country, our home; and we, all Ghanaians, deserve to have the ability to live, work and raise our families here with dignity and pride.

As President, I am committed to working in the best interests of all citizens. The day I took my oath of office, I officially became the person who had been entrusted with the leadership of this country. On that day, I made a promise to work in partnership with you, the citizens of this country.



I have not forgotten that promise; nor have I forgotten that one of the greatest virtues of leadership is the ability to listen.

My comments today will be brief. The time for talking has passed.

Our people are confident and have never been afraid to make their concerns known.

I want to assure the good citizens of our great nation, the farmers, fishermen, traders, workers, students, security personnel and all **'concerned citizens'** that I am listening and that I will continue to listen.

We all have a stake in the destiny of our nation and irrespective of our ethnic origin, gender or political affiliation, we can work together to make our nation "great and strong."

I want to assure you that we will create change. Together we will build the sort of country that we will be proud to hand down to our children and their children, just as those before us, some of whom are the Senior Citizens we salute today, built a Ghana that they proudly handed down to us.

Together we can, and together we will.

It is the "asking" which spurs into action the very motion of destiny.  
The time for that action is now.

I thank you for your kind attention.

May God bless you.

May God bless our beloved homeland, Ghana.