

Remarks of HE Mr. Abdelouahab Bellouki, Ambassador of Morocco, Dean of the African Ambassadors, at the dinner to bid farewell to HE Mr. Jean-Pierre Karabaranga, Ambassador of Rwanda, and HE Ms. Sophia Horner-Sam, Ambassador of Ghana

(22-09-2020)

Esteemed Excellencies, dear sisters and brothers, good evening.

Thank you for joining us this evening, in this moving ceremony to bid farewell to two distinguished ambassadors and dear friends. It is not an easy moment. It is a bitter occasion for us to see our respected colleagues and friends departing and about to start, far from us, a new stage in their life.

As someone said in a similar occasion, “We started with a simple hello but ended with a complicated goodbye.”

As precedence dictates, I will start by our brother HE Mr. Jean-Pierre Karabaranga, who presented his credentials to HM the King Willem Alexander on 26 June 2013. He is also side accredited to Bulgaria, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. On 14 August 2020, HE Mr. Paul Kagamé, President of the Republic of Rwanda, nominated him as Ambassador to Senegal.

Our brother holds a master’s degree in the organization and management of sporting events.

Before coming to the Netherlands, he was secretary general of the ministry of youth, sports and culture, from 2004 to 2008. Between 2008 and 2013, he served as permanent secretary in the ministry of culture and sports. Active sportsman, our brother was a great volleyball player in the senior league.

As a dynamic Ambassador, our brother Jean-Pierre accomplished a lot on many fronts and in many countries. He tirelessly enhanced awareness of the tragic genocide against the Tutsi. He organized many commemoration events to say out loud once more, on behalf of Rwanda and its people, “never again.” In moving ceremonies, he constantly showed commitment to honor and remember the innocent victims of the genocide.

He has also been dedicated to enhancing the attractiveness of his country as a destination for investments and business and to showcase the many opportunities available in Rwanda for the Dutch business community. He has been engaging with them since his arrival. He was able to build a trustful relationship with them. He was also active in promoting sustainable trade with the active players in this domain. Thanks to his endeavors, the Rwandan coffee was showcased at the World of Coffee

Exhibition in Amsterdam in 2018. 6000 coffee professionals, from all over the world, attended the event.

Engaging with the Rwandan diaspora is also a priority to Jean-Pierre. He regularly celebrates with them the achievements of Rwanda, as a country in continuous progress. The Kwibohora 25th reception feasting Rwanda liberation day was an auspicious occasion to highlight the diaspora's contribution to Rwandan nation building.

Furthermore, he did not forget international women's day celebration in the Netherlands to pay tribute to women's contribution to development and progress and to stress the necessity to improve their rights for the well-being of society. This is why we can say with confidence that he recognizes the precious contribution of his charming wife Mrs. Viviane Uwicyeza Mizouko to the success of his endeavors. I think she deserves our consideration for her constant support to our brother.

On 9 October 2013, our brother presented his credentials to the OPCW DG as a Permanent representative of Rwanda to the Organization. He actively participated in the Organization's meetings and consultations to make Rwanda's voice heard as he did in other international organizations based in The Hague.

Now, allow me to say a few words regarding our sister HE Ms. Sophia Horner-Sam. For your information, Sophia means wisdom in ancient Greek. She presented her credentials to HM the King on 25 October 2017.

Our sister Sophia was born in Cape Coast, a city of 17000 inhabitants, capital of the Central region of South Ghana. Even the Dutch settled there once in the 16th century. But she spent most of her life in the neighboring Western region in South Ghana. She is a successful politician and devout militant of an important political party in Ghana. From 2001 to 2006, she served as Deputy Minister for the Western region. A region of almost 40000 km² and a population of 3 million where oil dominates the economy. Its capital is Takoradi and there are many high personalities from this region. Among them the great leader Nkwame Nkrumah, the late UNSG Kofi Annan and the mother of the famous actor Idris Elba. This actor, born in London, whose father is from Sierra Leone, married his third wife in Marrakech, Morocco on 26 April 2019. From 2006 to 2008, our sister Sophia was Deputy Minister for ports, harbors, and railways. She has a long experience in both public and private sectors, and as a businesswoman in agriculture and industry.

Our sister Sophia scored high in the field of Ghana Netherlands relationships. She organized many events to give impetus to bilateral cooperation and to strengthen connections with the Ghanaian diaspora in this country. The long-standing relationships between Ghana and the Netherlands date back to the end of the 16th century. In 1598, the Dutch established a trading post in Ghana. Her focus is on

attracting Dutch business and investments to Ghana. She organized many successful events to promote her country. The last one in February 2020, was the annual Netherlands Ghana Business Fair with the presence of many dynamic Ghanaian entrepreneurs.

On 24 November 2017, she presented her credentials to the OPCW DG as Permanent representative of Ghana to the Organization. She did her best to follow closely the activities of the various organizations based in the Netherlands.

She enjoys reading, playing golf, watching tennis and football games. She is a board member of Segondi-Hasaacas Football club in the Western region, founded in 1931, 3rd in division one league in 2019-2020. She is also a strong supporter of the English Football Club Chelsea, where the Ghanaian player Baba Rahman is a star with a good Moroccan player Hakim Zeyyach who lately joined Chelsea from Ajax Amsterdam.

I am sure I forgot many achievements in their Excellencies' respective rich careers.

Dear Excellencies, sisters and brothers,

Our brother and sister will definitely leave behind delightful memories. You have been distinguished, competent and brilliant representatives of your respective countries. You served with distinction and dedication. Anyone who interacted with you cannot help but be generous in compliments

Dear brother and sister, we all cherish your sincere friendship, and we treasure the memorable time we shared.

Goodbyes mean we miss you until we meet again. Good friends are hard to find, harder to leave and impossible to forget. It will be so good to see you again. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

On behalf of the African Ambassadors and Heads of Mission, present and absent, I can say with total confidence that you will be missed a lot, remembered always. Our heartfelt wishes and prayers will always accompany you on your life journey.

We wish you and your esteemed families good luck and full success in your future endeavors. God bless you all.

Thank you for listening.