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Towards a New Africa and a Better World

**Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. Address to Opening Session of Crans Montana
Forum**

Dakhla, Morocco

March 17, 2017



It is an honor and a pleasure to be here, to be home once again.

I've been returning home to Africa, the birthplace of humanity, since 1969.

Since the first of my many homecomings, science has practically erased distance and time. In a world of supersonic air travel, daily mind-blowing advances in technology and real time communications there is no such thing as a foreigner.

We have learned to survive apart. Now we must learn to live together. The future of the planet depends on it. When the wind blows and the earth heats up and the glaciers melt and waters rise, it affects all of us.

None of us can afford to be isolationists, walling ourselves off from our neighbors by race, religion, nationality, or gender in a globally interconnected world.

Leaders who assert global leadership, but have isolationist policies and visions is a contradiction in terms and will not withstand careful analysis.

Some of the world's so-called leaders have not learned this basic fact of life.

There is tremendous imbalance in the world. So few have so much, and so, so many have increasingly less.

We have globalized capital. Now we must globalize human rights, worker's rights, women's rights, children's right and environmental security.

This is a period of intense anxiety and uncertainty around the world – uncertainty in our leaders, in our economies and even in ourselves.

We begin to hate our neighbors, rather than our conditions. It is so easy – and dangerous – to go from anxiety to fear to ignorance to violence.

We build a wall between two seeds of equal strength in the ground. We water both of them with reasonable expectations of the same outcome. But

if you build a wall between them, one will grow taller with multiple of fruits. On the other side of the wall is stunted and barren.

It does not mean bigger is better or smaller is less. It means sunshine was the key factor. Environment matters.

In the last two months across the United States, mosques have been burned, Jewish cemeteries vandalized, immigrants rounded up and deported.

Lies in high places have become the norm.

At a time of so much confusion in the world and so much violence, a conference such as this, a gathering of people talking across the lines of ethnicity and religion and gender is so important.

As I look out into this rainbow audience – this coalition of conscience – I am convinced that our best days are ahead of us and that Africa will help lead the way.

Today, Africa is the world's second fastest growing economy after East Asia. During the past decade, seven of the ten fastest growing economies were from Africa.

The world needs Africa.

Africa is most the endowed continent on earth – rich in uranium and gold and oil, the Indian Ocean on one side, the Atlanta on the other. Its abundance is unlimited.

Nothing the world needs, Africa does not have.

The continent's average growth was projected to increase to 4.5 percent in 2017, according to a report, "Africa Economic Outlook 2016."

The resilience in Africa's growth is partly due to domestic factors including private consumption, public infrastructure development and private investment. More and more countries on the continent continue to increase investment in these vital sectors and sustaining them will be keys

in attracting more foreign investment and thus reduce unemployment and poverty.

Sadly, despite all the good news, three out of every four Africans still live in poor human conditions, compared to one in five people globally. This is unacceptable and more needs to be done to remedy this problem.

Part of the solution is regional partnerships and planning, which are vital to the survival of South-South Cooperation. There must be partnerships and cooperation especially in key industries, trade and investment, knowledge and technology, to advance economic growth, employment, the environment, and effective management of natural resources.

That is happening. Yet, trade between African countries remains below levels seen in other parts of the globe, and that needs to change, too.

The great idea of a common currency and market in Africa is a dream that must not be deferred.

What also must happen across the continent are good neighbor and progressive diplomatic policies.

Bridges not walls must be our future.

BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) have set an example that South-South Cooperation needs to build on. This will send a clear signal to the nations of the West that they can no longer hold you hostage to their destructive policies that continue to try to keep Africa down.

Morocco is another example. I have visited this warm and beautiful country four times in the last five years and after each trip I return home impressed.

Morocco has renewed its commitment to the continent and rejoined the African Union. This was the right thing for Morocco and Africa.

I congratulate King Mohammed VI who has toured Africa more than fifteen times since assuming the throne in 1999; invested in its human

development, education, economy, and security; and developed his own ports, industries, and human networks to serve as an African way-station for American and European parties wishing to invest in Africa.

According to the African Development Bank (ADB), 85 percent of Morocco's foreign direct investment is in Africa.

The Kingdom of Morocco is the third largest exporter in Africa, after South Africa and Egypt.

Morocco rightly believes that achieving a deeper regional integration in all its dimensions will assist to unleash the potential of the continent and offer hope for a better life to its citizens, including its women and children.

As a person of faith I begin with the premise that God created all of us as sacred, special and unique human beings – male and female, black, white, brown, red and yellow, able and disabled, Muslim, Jew, Christian and Hindu.

I also believe that we have different talents and skills, but all of us have equal value in the eyes of God. We are all holy.

But no nation or continent can develop to its fullest capabilities without the contributions and the full participation of all its citizens.

Recent history - throughout the world - suggests that those in power still do not see women as having the same value or on the same level as men.

When I visit a country today I look for and largely judge the spiritual health, moral fabric, political maturity and economic wellbeing of a nation by how it treats its women and children.

Former U.S. presidential candidate Hillary Clinton was right when she spoke in Beijing, China on September 5, 1995 at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women and said, "Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights" - and human rights must be measured by one yardstick.

Too many of us are free but not equal. We must keep on striving to

change that in the new Africa and around the world.

We have never lost a battle we fought and we have never won a battle unless we fought. Deep water does not drown you. You drown when you stop kicking.

We will never stop kicking. We will never surrender. We shall overcome.

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Rainbow PUSH Coalition is a multi-racial, multi-issue, progressive, international organization that was formed in December 1996 by the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. through merging of two organizations he founded Operation PUSH People United to Serve Humanity (estab. 1971) and the Rainbow Coalition (estab. 1984). With headquarters in Chicago and offices in Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New York and Oakland, the organization works to make the American Dream a reality for all citizens while advocating for peace and justice around the world. RPC is dedicated to improving the lives of all people by serving as a voice for the voiceless. Its mission is to protect, defend and gain civil rights by leveling the economic and educational playing fields while promoting peace and justice around the world.

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Keep up with Rev. Jackson and the work of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition at www.rainbowpush.org.

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