

The Brother Leader of the Revolution Presents to African Intellectuals His Strategic Vision of an African Cultural Revolution to Preserve the African Identity, its Historical Roots and Age-old Cultural Heritage

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Greetings to my dear brother Abdullah Wad and the members of his government present in this hall. I salute the Senegalese people, one by one, men and women, and the African nation, on this day, through sister Senegal

Thank you Mr. President, dear brother for your kind words in opening this meeting, and the kind words you have just said now. I also salute our brother, President Alpha Konare Chairman of the African Union Commission, and would like to thank him for the words he addressed to me in his opening statement the other day. I would also like to thank all the African leaders, who attended the opening session, although they are not present today. Finally, I would like to salute my brothers the African intellectuals, and thank them most warmly.

I am very happy and proud that they are present and have responded to the invitation addressed to them by our brother Abdullah Wad, who is indeed a teacher, and intellectual, a revolutionary and leader of the popular opposition, which assumed power in the Senegal. He understands intellectuals, their mission and their role; hence, I thank him for proposing this idea, which has now been put into effect.

I had supported him in Lome when he proposed it, because I knew it was a useful idea proposed by President Abdullah Wad, someone who is committed to Africa, a scholar of history and an intellectual. I say this, because culture is the problem of the third world. It is uncultured rulers who are the main cause of the lagging development, advancement, progress, democracy and stability in the third world; culture is very important for leadership.

In fact I am extremely impressed with this idea, this presence and this attendance. At the same time , I appreciate this gathering all the more as those in attendance have come from the remote corners of the earth, , which makes me ever so proud of the African intellectual. This is evidence of the patriotism of these Diaspora intellectuals, who are scattered over all the continents of the world outside the motherland, Africa, yet they are connected to the motherland, and are here today for its sake. They are seeking to unite their continent and motherland, and help it move forward in this age, as it has lagged a lot because of external

factors. This gives me the confidence that the African, no matter how far removed from his country, is always attached to it.

I am sorry I was not able to attend for reasons well known to my brother, President Abdullah Wad, although I would have liked to be with you. However, through this intervention, I would like I want to present some brief theses without going into the details. I would like to propose them to you for inclusion in your program. Of course, I welcome you in your country, Libya, at any time and in any capacity, whether through your representatives or by your own attendance.

I feel that Africa is getting united now, and seeking its place under the sun among the nations. It is a well known tragedy that it was demeaned, enslaved, and treated brutally by the racist, white westerners. First, we face the problem while building the African Union. I would like the intellectuals to solve the problem of language in Africa now, which is a serious, difficult and basic problem. We use two languages; an official language and popular language.

The official language is that of colonialism; English, French and Portuguese, and the popular language is the unofficial language we speak, which comprises all the African dialects that amount to 800 to 1000 dialects. The official language we speak is written and has an alphabet, while the authentic, popular African language is not written. One of the dilemmas we are facing is that the popular African language, the language of the ancestors, is not written and lacks an alphabet. This is a problem that we have to solve, but not by using the Latin alphabet and incorporating it into the African language, for it will corrupt it, and must be ruled out as of now.

All the non-Latin languages which have used the Latin alphabet have corrupted both it and the language, as the language was no longer capable and could not conform to that alphabet as we have seen in the Turkish language and some of the states that adopted the Latin alphabet, such as Russia and other countries. However, the Chinese, Japanese and Arabic characters fully conform to the meaning of the language.

If we were to write Arabic using the Latin alphabet, the meaning would be utterly lost, which is why we must rule out the Latin alphabet completely. However, we must think of our mother-tongue, which is the responsibility of African intellectuals at home and abroad, in the Diaspora and in the motherland.

On the one hand, how do we make African languages written languages, and how do we unite them on the other hand? We cannot speak eight hundred or a thousand languages? How can we teach them to our children? I believe that you should solve this problem by choosing three or four dominant languages to be taught in

all African schools, and be mandatory, even for states themselves. This is what Africans want, and, in this way, no ruler or government can shirk this decision. Language is important, because we can only relate to our African religions, culture, heritage, arts, music and folklore through the languages of the ancestors.

If we lose these languages, we lose our link with our past, our history and our roots. I hope you will be able to solve this dilemma. Naturally, there are proposals from some leaders who advocate the adoption of Swahili, Arabic, Hausa and Amharic, i.e. three or four languages, and making them mandatory in Africa, while continuing to teach the spoken languages, so that they can be spoken in the family and on the popular level. It is imperative that this dilemma be solved, and I hope that you will accord it your full attention, because otherwise we will lose our past and be suspended in the air without roots.

The second thing is the African religion. It is a shame that it is said that Africa only got to know God after Western colonialism, after adopting Christianity. This is shameful and a major historical fallacy and you as intellectuals know this. How can it be that Africa only got to know God after the Berlin Conference in 1885? Africa had known God before Berlin was even built, and before Europe was inhabited. Africa knew God. I did a study of African theology and African religions, and found out that African religions, contrary to what is said about them, are not pagan.

These are monotheistic religions like the religion of Abraham, peace be upon him, with whom religion began, and was concluded with Muhammad, the last of the prophets. African religions are monotheistic religion I drew a comparison between the Koran and African religions, and discovered that they are monotheistic religions and are consistent with Islam to a great extent. I found the glorious names God cited in the Koran in African religions. In Islam, among the glorious names of God are The One, The Lord of Majesty, The Dependable, The Creator, The Bestower, The Possessor, The Lord of Heavens, The Supreme, The Immemorial and The Originator.

These are among the glorious names of God cited in the Koran, which I found completely consistent with ancient African religions. When, in the language of the Uruba in Nigeria in West Africa, they speak of “Old Maary”, it means ‘The One, The Lord of Majesty, The Eternal and The Dependable.’

These words ‘The One, The Lord of Majesty, The Eternal and The Dependable’ are cited in the Koran as attributes of God. ‘Aris’ in Uruba means the sole source of existence, which is the same meaning as the First Creator, and ‘Jobi’ in Timbuca in Malawi means “The Bestower” as in the Koran. When they say “Kajenjo” in Uganda, it means the Lord of the Universe as God is referred to

in the Koran. “Roshobura fouz” in Burundi means “The Lord” as in the Koranic verse” Lord of the Day of Judgment, it is you whom we worship and ask for succor” Also, when the Lou tribes in Kenya say” Nyakalaga” it means “The Immemorial”, “Wak” in Ethiopia means “The Lord of Heaven”, “Sousa” in Zala , in Ethiopia, means “The Lord of the Universe, and “Laifi” in Mindi in Sierra Leone means “The Supreme Creator”. We will not review all the 99 Glorious Names of God, All of which are to be found in the African religions. This insofar as language is concerned

As far as the African religion is concerned, we must go back to our African religion. Now they say, “It is the religion of the jungle” So is it. We are also in need of a cultural revolution that restores our languages and these monotheistic religions.

I know whereof I speak; I am a believer and a Moslem, and I know that the return to the African religions is a return to the pure religion which is free of idolatry. It is a shame that they are telling us now, “You only got to know God after Western colonialism....It was us who introduced you to God, Christianity and religion.” Now, having addressed African language and religion, we come to other things that are not comparable morally, but are nevertheless important.

We come to the African habitat, the African cottage. I wish that intellectuals and architects would develop a program to prevent the disappearance of the African cottage. The African cottage must not be allowed to die out, and be replaced by cement, concrete and buildings that are suitable for Scandinavia, the Eskimos, Iceland, Greenland and Alaska.

We should not bring these to Africa, because they are not suitable for us. It is the African cottage that is suitable for the African environment, the African climate and the African customs. It is inexpensive since it is built with readily available local materials, and the family builds its own cottage by itself. We have lived in cottages for centuries without experiencing any harm; on the contrary, we are very healthy. The cottage is sanitary and needs no air-conditioners that we have to buy from Europe or gas that is injected into the air-conditioners. Also it does not need any artificial ventilation, because it is naturally ventilated.

I hope that the African cottage will be preserved, and that studies would be undertaken in regard to the environment and the heritage, because that would help preserve the African cottage. The reason is that I have visited by land many African regions in West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa. I traveled by car, and I would see the cottages, visit the villages, check out their inhabitants and sit with them. I found out that each member of the family has his own cottage; there was a kitchen cottage, living quarter’s cottage and a cottage for

the animals elsewhere. When I jokingly told an African,” We could give you a fancy car, like a Cadillac, a Mercedes or a Rolls Royce,” he said,” I have no need for a car. I am settled here and I have everything.”

Then I said, “Fine, what if we build you a paved road?” He said, “What would I do with a road? Leave the land as it is. I have fruit trees, I grow grains and I have some animals that live under the trees. When I need water, the river is nearby.” If we were to build him a paved road, provide him with a car and build him a house of concrete, we would probably destroy him, and introduce him to the inferno of concrete. Please preserve the African cottage!

I hope that your historic gathering will result in something regarding language, religion, the cottage and African dress. I hope that we will not replace African dress with European dress, because European climate is different from ours, their buildings are different from ours, we walk on foot and ride beasts of burden, while they board satellites and trains.

When we have an African astronaut, he will be dressed like an astronaut, but now our children, our women, our elders and our kin must insist on African dress, which was designed to suit the African atmosphere and the African environment. Please, do not westernize it one day, because we will be deformed. Our religion was deformed, our language was deformed, our habitat may be deformed, and then our dress will probably be deformed, after which they will change our food, beverage and cuisine.

Our African cuisine and our African food must stay the same, and we should not be dazzled by America and Europe. We go to their restaurants there and see those eating roaches and frogs and prepare all kinds of dishes, which suit them and do not suit us. There is food in Europe which if we, in Africa, were to eat, we would possibly die.

I was once in Britain in 1966 attending a course as a lieutenant , and I heard people in England telling their children: “Don’t eat pork in the months which lack an ‘r’, which are May, June, July and August,” because these four months are the summer months, which means that pork will be harmful. When we, in a hot climate, eat pork, it could cause us great harm, as can be proven medically. African cuisine and African food suit us and suit our nature and our environment. Our animals whose meat we eat, and whose milk we drink, our land, our soil and the plants that grow therein, are different from theirs. So I hope that they will not strip us of our dress and our food and that they will not come into our kitchen, our homes, our religion and our language and strip us of all of these constituents of our identity.

I would like Africa to have a frame of reference and stability, and I have written about that. I have a website, Algathafi Speaks. Its address is www.algathafi.org which you can access in Arabic, English and French. I always write my thoughts in that site for the world. I have written about authority and stability in Africa, and I hope that you will read it...

Africa needs authority and stability. As you know, Africa, after colonialism, experienced a phase of liberation at the hands of great leaders like Nkrumah, Bin Bella, Nasser, Nyrere, Lumumba, Modibo Keita and Kaunda, etc. Those leaders were the founding fathers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), however, colonialism conspired against this class of leaders and decided to oust them and replace them with its own lackeys. Indeed, Kwami Nkrumah was overthrown, Lumumba was physically liquidated. Modibo Keita was overthrown. Sixty attempts were made against Nasser and forty against Ahmad Sekou Toure. I do not want to mention every one of them since there may be some sensitivity. The point is that Africa, under those leaders experienced its golden age. They founded the OAU, and evinced the will for liberation and displayed the determination to unite

Africa and advance it, but colonialism conspired against them and overthrew them.

Following this stage, Africa entered the phase of military coups d'etat. Thus the rulers of Africa became military personnel who only knew military science; some of them were non-commissioned officers who had been promoted into the officer ranks. Sometimes, it was the non-commissioned officers themselves who staged the coup. African leaderships became very weak, because this class has no knowledge of politics, economics, society, technocracy, management and science. So Africa experienced the farce of military coups, and I myself was a witness.

Every African state experienced three or four coups, and the only result that these coups yielded was a succession of officers and a period of instability. This was followed by the third phase, the phase of pluralism and elections. Coups are like elections. In Arabic, the two words rhyme, but I do not know about English and French.

This only led to more instability, with one president following other every four years. Also, some constitutions limit the president to two terms. Assuming that the president is good, then why should the will of the people be reined in after two terms? If the people want him he must be given the chance. I feel that African constitutions must take that into account so as not to impose conditions on the people's will. If a people want to elect a president once twice or ten times, the constitution should allow them to do so.

Why the people should be deprived of an effective president who has a program that he wants to carry out. However, he is not able to do that, and is forced to give up his post in favor of someone else that may be his complete opposite and may even abort his original program. Elections bring us no stability, and no benefits, and pluralism is a mere formality which is a fulfillment of the instruction of the World Bank, the WTO, the IMF, the EU and the US. They all demand the establishment of pluralism as a condition for the provision of aid and loans.

America itself has no pluralism, nor does Britain, Spain or Italy... They are all governed by one party; America is ruled by a president and one party. In essence, there are two parties, but they are mere platforms and not real parties. Then what about Africa? We in Africa do not know parties; we are tribes and are closer to the popular Jamahiriyy system, and to the popular congresses and the popular committees which suit us more than parties. Our peoples do not know parties and do not even know elections.

Egypt, for instance has long been independent, yet when elections were held in Upper Egypt, a citizen was asked: "Who are you voting for?" He said: "Sa'ad Zaghloul" The said Sa'ad Zaghloul died in 1920, but was still on the mind of the people. In a nearby African country, they distributed pictures of the candidates, so that people can identify them when they see their pictures on the box. People took the pictures home and hung them in their houses. When they were asked why they did not vote, they said: "We thought that we were supposed to take the person's picture and hang it at home. We did not know! Even referendums are not known to our people; these things do not suit us.

The truth of the matter is that we have embarked on another phase of instability, which is the phase of elections and pluralism. Once this was proven to be a failure, we embarked on another phase, that of rebellions. An elected president faces a rebellion before his term of office is over, and the examples are there for us to see. In Ivory Coast, an elected president is facing a rebellion, and an elected president was overthrown by a rebellion in Liberia. The same thing took place in Guinea Bissau and in Sao Tome and Principe, where the president was reinstated by ECOWAS, and in Central Africa... There are also rebellions in the Sudan, Chad, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. Therefore elections have not solved the problem.

We need stability, which requires continuity in the political leadership. Power must be controlled by the people through the popular congresses and the popular committee's. It is the masses and the popular congresses and the popular committees which are stable. However, there must be an authority, which is necessary when there is a malfunction as did happen in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Central Africa and Burundi. In some countries in the world , as you know there is

a king or queen who is not part of the executive or legislative branch of government , but is a reserve authority who is the arbiter when these branches disagree.

Such an authority is an imperative, and if it is not embodied in people such as kings or permanent presidents, as was the case in Africa in the initial phase after independence, there must be a legal authority, which is questionable in Africa. European countries and other countries in the world have an authority, either royal or presidential, which has no relationship with the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. But it is available so that its opinion can be solicited. In the countries that are not monarchies, there is a legal authority, such as a supreme court or a constitutional court, whose decisions are binding. We, however, don't have such courts, and cannot establish an impartial, stable court whose decisions are binding; a government would establish a court that owes allegiance to it. Hence, there must be an authority.

Beyond that we should have a link between the African motherland and the states of your Diaspora. There must be a united foreign policy, a united economy and a united defense, which would lead in the final analysis to a united negotiating position. President Abdullah Wad told you the other day that when foreign companies came to attempt oil exploration in the Senegal, they said: "we will explore for oil provided the company gets 85% and Senegal gets 10 or 15%." So he told them: "No, if this is the case, let the oil remain underground for posterity which will be in a better position to negotiate the reverse, so that Senegal would get 80% and the company would get 15 or 20%."

This is a sound correct position. This had been the situation in Libya before the revolution and was reversed afterwards. But the problem is that each African state separately does not have a strong negotiating position.

What is the power of Libya, Senegal, Gambia, Malawi or Burundi, for example , before the American colossus , the European colossus, Japan, China, Spain, the Commonwealth of Independent States that were part of the former Soviet Union or the states of the Pacific Rim. What is our negotiating power before those giants? We will have no prospects except through a strong negotiating position, which can only come about if Africa has one foreign minister, and one minister of foreign trade. This would even unite the customs so that the same tariff is levied on a commodity whether it enters South Africa or Libya...

When there is one foreign ministry, you can be contacted abroad through one tool. Also, a single African defense is a necessity. All of these are interconnected; the economy, the foreign trade, foreign policy and defense. I hope that your conference will adopt measures in support of these ideas, and that you will bring

continuous pressure to bear on the governments of the states members of the African Union until they establish a single African foreign ministry, a single African foreign trade ministry and a single African defense.

Naturally, when the African Union was established I proposed the establishment of an African Congress. This was in fact an extension of the African National Congress. This was the name of the organization created in most African countries during the liberation stage, and, under this rubric many African countries achieved liberation...

From these historical designations, I took the name of the African Congress, so that it would be like the American Congress. It would have the power to promulgate laws, so that the power would revert to the African Nation, the African People, to the ordinary African citizen member of congress. Unfortunately, they established an advisory African Parliament without any powers. I hope it will develop into a real African Congress. Why should we be afraid of the authority of the African Congress?

You in the Diaspora may have good prospects. One or several of you may occupy important positions in the USA, Latin America, Central America or Europe. However, I notice that when a black person attains an important post, he fails to meet our expectations, and exaggerates his embrace of European culture or American culture to the point that he becomes more of a Yankee than the Yankees themselves. In other words, he becomes more royalist than the king.

Why should we curry favor with them? We have before us the example of the Jews in America is very loyal to the state that they unilaterally established in 1948, which they call Israel, and harness all the resources of the state to support that statelet. However, that does not cause them to renounce their American citizenship or their allegiance to America or to resort to terrorism, violence, force or secession.

They exaggerate their American patriotism, but only use it to promote the interest of what they consider the motherland or their Promised Land. Why is it that when a black man occupies an important position in the US or Europe he does not use his citizenship of that country to promote the interests of his motherland, Africa... This mine must be exploded, and we must pass in silence over the truth, but discuss it even in the America. We all become Americans when we go to America.

There is no single American race or nationality. Americans are the Africans, the Indians, the Chinese, the Europeans and everyone who goes to America and becomes an American. The land called America is the land of Red Indians, who are neither Yankees nor white. The Red Indians came from Asia and Africa, emigrated there and were mistakenly called Indians. Those people are America's

indigenous inhabitants and are the owners of the land. As for the others, they have no right to monopolize power or wealth or monopolize America for themselves to the exclusion of others.

We are all equal in America, black, white, yellow and colored. America belongs to us all, because all the peoples made America... Hence, I am not ashamed to claim my right to America, and when I raise my voice in America I am no stranger. I mean you regardless, of the circumstances that brought you to America. You are an American citizen now, so why are you timid, and why do you flatter the whites to keep your post, and gain their approval?

When you are discontented, you pose a threat to them, because you can call for secession and seek vengeance because they took you out of the motherland like an animal, and shipped you on ships like a slave. They transported you across the ocean to dry their swamps and build their railroads It is them who should flatter us, because it was them who visited horrors upon our ancestors, and thought that we would remain silent and content that we are Americans, and that we had forgotten slavery and the time when they used to throw our ancestors in the ocean, when they were sick or when they rebelled. We have not forgotten any of that!

I have a few remaining, very brief remarks. I call on African intellectuals to obtain on this occasion the Green Book. They should study it well and call for its application in Africa, so that we can avoid all the pitfalls while attempting to build the new Africa, We should do so without blind imitation, since our environment is not suitable for social, economic and political imports. I hope that you will read the Green Book and that we will revert to the power of the people.

I hope that, as a result of this conference, brothers President Wad and President Konare, assistance will be extended to our African brothers in Diaspora to help them form an association or an organization that we can contact, so that we will not remain as dispersed individuals in Diaspora. The Jews everywhere, as we have said, although loyal to their homelands in Diaspora use them to serve what they consider is their motherland. We, Africans, must be like that. We, blacks, should owe allegiance to the countries we are in, but we should use that allegiance in the interest of our continent and the motherland.

I hope that you will launch a strong call for the accelerated establishment of the United States of Africa. Therefore, we should not say that African states are too numerous and difficult to unite. On the contrary, our size is equivalent to the size of one state. Beyond that, we are one nation, one color, one race and form one language.

We have one religion and one identity, and do not accept something called racial ethnicity. There are no races in Africa, but a single African race. Even those who came from somewhere else and settled in Africa have become Africans at the end of the day. Even the Arabs who came to North Africa are now Africans in spite of themselves. Some Arabs, who came 5000 years ago, who are the Arab Berbers, and the Arabs ,who came after Islam, 1000 years ago, turned black later and they are Africans , like the peoples who came before them. Many peoples came to Africa, and do not know now that they are of Arab origin. There are Indians and Indonesians, who do not say now:” We are Indians or Indonesians,” but they say:” We are Africans.” You should promote the single African language, the single African foreign ministry, and help accelerate the establishment of the United States of Africa

Moreover, there is the brain drain. We send our children to learn but they never come back. They find the factories and the technology they learned in those countries, but not in Africa. This is a major loss, which means that we teach our children from Kindergarten through College for the benefit of the colonial states. Once they graduate, they go abroad for higher studies, and stay there, and we lose. This is a dilemma that we should reflect upon, and you must connect with those we lose, so that they can join the African Diaspora. You should be his mentors, so that the learning he has acquired will put in the service of the African continent, and his homeland which provided for his education until his graduation...

We see countries like Australia and some other countries in the Americas, where the Africans are the indigenous people, but the whites control these countries as if they were the indigenous population. This situation cannot be allowed to continue. How can we be present in the islands around Africa, in many countries over a wide Diaspora, and still remain as foreigners in the USA, Australia, Britain, the Canaries, Malvinas and Reunion? These are our countries, where we are the indigenous inhabitants who came to these countries and found them empty, and settled there, and they came after us.

I want to recall our glories, our history and our civilization in order to be equipped to face the challenges and have self-confidence. We are not slaves, and knew God before they did. We had civilizations that predate theirs. We recall the Yoruba Empire, the Congo Empire, Dahomey Empire, Mali Empire, and the kingdoms of the Ashanti, the Savana and the Kinara. These show that we are a civilized nation and civilized peoples.

I salute this gathering, and I am proud of you. I reach out to you, and would like to tell you that your sister, Libya is at your service, and is your country. I salute my brother, President Abdullah Wad, that intellectual, dynamic leader, and

Professor Konari, who appreciates intellectuals. Together, the two of them sponsored these activities, while we simply helped them.

I have one final remark. I once asked all African countries to inform me of the homeland of Gabriel, who was executed in 1800 for leading a genuine revolution in America against slavery. He planned for the revolution, and attacked the city of Richmond together with thousands of slaves, with the aim of establishing an independent state for blacks, but he was arrested and executed. I was trying to find his homeland, so that we could build him a monument on the 200th anniversary of his execution, and I have not received an answer so far. I hope that you will research this, and find out the answer; so that we can build him a monument in his homeland, Africa.

I salute you. Peace be upon you. Long live Africa! Long live the United States of Africa!

The struggle continues!