

# **Haiti Joins the African Union: Speech of Prime Minister Lamothe**

As a part of its participation in the 22nd Ordinary Session of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Haiti, Laurent Lamothe delivered a solemn speech at the opening ceremony of the Public Meeting.

**"President of the African Union,  
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,  
Madam President of the Commission,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

This is both a great time and a great pleasure to be here on the ancestral land here in Addis Ababa and be the first head of the Haitian Government to address me before this illustrious assembly.

What an honor! What Privilege!

What pride for Haiti to have been chosen as guest of honor!

This is a historic opportunity for me to present, on behalf of President Michel Martelly and the Haitian people, my fraternal greetings to all the men and women of Africa.

I extend my warmest congratulations to the President of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government and the President of the Commission for the new dynamic they have managed to imbue this institution.

Let me also extend my thanks to all members of the African Union who have contributed in one way or another, to the restoration and strengthening of democracy in HAITI.

My comments are also directed to States and brotherly peoples of Africa who have shown their active solidarity with the Haitian people during the devastating earthquake of January 12.

**Madam Speaker,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Since its accession to the highest office of the State, there is nearly three years, the President of the Republic, made the merger between Haiti with Africa and South / South cooperation, the two major pillars of its foreign policy.

In one of his speeches, he clearly stated that 'geographical distance does not represent an insurmountable handicap to strengthen ties between the Haitian people and the peoples of Africa'

Although located in America, HAITI always loudly proclaimed his African belonging. We are Africans in our souls, in our hearts and in our manners.

There is not a Haitian who does not feel at home in Africa, as there is not an African who is not found itself in HAITI.

And let me say that all the heroes who prepared the revolution of 1804 were of African descent. I mean Boukman, Toussaint Louverture, Dessalines, Capois La mort, Petion and the 500,000 slaves, men and women who valiantly fought against the most powerful army of the time to give us the first black republic. My country has been the scene of this battle against slavery, oppression and degradation of the human being.

Aimé Césaire wrote 'Haiti, country where negritude stood up for the first time and said it believed in its humanity'

A century and a half later, the torch lit, spread throughout the African continent.

**Madam Speaker,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I stand before this distinguished Assembly this morning to carry a message from the President of the Republic, Michel Martelly.

After two hundred and ten (210) of life of independent people in America, our belonging to Africa remains intact and indelible. Haiti is Africa in the Caribbean.

If we exist today is because our ancestors came from former regions that today constitute Benin, Senegal, Ghana, Congo, Liberia, and many other countries have been able break their chains, by drawing on the traditions, the resources necessary for their release.

The ties that bind us to Africa transcend all boundaries and all walls. Defying the scourge of colonialism and slavery, Haiti has long been the pride of the black race. At the time of decolonization of Africa, Haiti admirably contributed to the intellectual renewal of the continent by rushing in his son by hundreds: teachers, doctors, intellectuals.

I take this opportunity to express the hope that all African peoples can live in peace. In this respect, I congratulate your institution for the efforts being made to bring peace to Central Africa and South Sudan

**Madam Speaker,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Geographical distance does not represent a handicap to strengthen ties between the Haitian people and the peoples of Africa.

Africa today represents an entry door for the 21st century.

Our dearest wish is to see lead the revision process of the constitution of the Union in order to enable Haiti to adhere fully.

**Madam Speaker,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

By making 2014, the Year of the Agriculture and Food Security, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, falls undoubtedly in the context of control of our common destiny.

There is no doubt that agriculture is one of the growth areas of most African economies. This sector deserves special attention since it has the potential to meet the food needs of our people and for our economic and social development.

Haiti gives absolute priority to the struggle for food security. The revival of agricultural production must be rightly central to any development program of our societies.

Thus, 2013 was declared 'Year of agriculture and the environment' in Haiti. This has enabled us to strengthen our food sovereignty and improve the living conditions of the most disadvantaged populations.

Today the continent is an opportunity for Haiti, as Haiti is a beautiful opening for Africa in America. Our country is resolutely and definitively embarked on the path of progress. We started the reconstruction of the country.

90% of people living in tents after the earthquake have been relocated. A program of free education has enabled 1.4 million children attend school. More than 3 million people in extreme poverty have benefited from government social programs. Inflation has stabilized at 4.5%. Economic growth is 4.3%. Public investment increased this year by 20%. The business climate is improving significantly.

Our country takes off towards economic and social progress. Our democracy is healthy.

**Madam Speaker,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have made regional integration a priority to combat instability, the poverty in order to reduce social inequalities that pose a real threat to peace in all parts of the world.

Together making of this institution that is the AFRICAN UNION, the hyphen and the flagship of all African peoples for a better tomorrow.

Vive Afrique, Vive African Union, Long live the solidarity Africa-Haiti.

I thank you"