



Address by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dacic on the occasion of celebration of Africa Day:

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear friends,

It is my great honour to attend today's ceremony celebrating Africa Day.

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the generous hospitality extended over the past years during my visits to African countries, to say that I will keep up with this wonderful tradition and that I will do my best to also pay a visit to the countries I have not yet had the chance to visit. It is always a great pleasure for me to welcome the Heads of African countries, my fellow Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other representatives from your continent to the Republic of Serbia.

{youtube}PecjYYtS154{/youtube}

There is a long-standing tradition in Serbia of celebrating Africa Day – also celebrated by our African friends as their national holiday, and since 2017 we officially mark 25th of May as the Day of Friendship with the Peoples of Africa.

For my country this day is a symbol of our genuine wish to foster and carefully build our relations with Africa, which is why we now celebrate this day as one of the most important days in our calendar.

The Republic of Serbia takes pride in its cooperation with the African countries, dating back to the formative years of the Non-Aligned Movement, for our relations have always been based on the solid grounds of unity, mutual understanding and support, cooperation and solidarity. On account of diverse historical ties between our countries and peoples, we can build upon not only closer cooperation and an even greater understanding, but also strategic partnership based on a peaceful and balanced foreign policy, respect for international law and for the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

For all these reasons, our relations do have a promising future, because the Republic of Serbia is strongly committed to developing all-encompassing cooperation with African countries and, in accordance with its capacities, it has been dedicated to further strengthening political and economic ties, as well as those of culture, education, sport and other areas of joint interest.

We have been following closely the activity of the African Union as well, an African umbrella organization where the Republic of Serbia is an observer state, supporting its efforts towards its strategic goals such as securing a peaceful and safe future, poverty and disease eradication, cultural identity preservation and strengthening as well as African political, economic and cultural integration.

I would like to underline that insofar the African continent Serbia welcomes every success and progress made in the region. The establishment of a united and strong continent, to be a global factor and partner, is something that Africa and its peoples deserve without any doubt whatsoever. The close cooperation carried out among the African Union Member States has demonstrated a policy supported by the Republic of Serbia, too, one implying that the problems pertaining to the African continent need to be resolved in Africa.

On the other hand, we are concerned about mutual misunderstandings and differences emerging among our friends, and in Africa we have nothing but friends, and Serbia in this context supports the initiatives launched by the United Nations, the African Union and regional communities in support of peace on the continent. In this regard, the Republic of Serbia is willing to make its own contribution to the resolution of problems. Wishing that they become less needed in the future, I take this opportunity to announce that Serbia will continue its participation in peace support missions on the continent as well as in the humanitarian and development efforts, including the provision of stipends for African students attending universities in the Republic of Serbia.

As we cooperate with all of the African states and organizations, it is our wish to build a better future.

Long live Serbia, long live Africa!

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