

**SPEECH BY THE FIRST LADY DOMINIQUE OUATTARA, PRESIDENT OF THE  
CHILDREN OF AFRICA FOUNDATION, DURING THE 17TH EDITION OF THE  
DOMINIQUE OUATTARA CUP**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Dear Guests,**

It is with renewed pleasure that I welcome you today to the headquarters of the Children of Africa Foundation for the launch of the 17th edition of the Dominique Ouattara Cup.

Before anything else, I would like to convey the warm greetings of my dear husband, President Alassane Ouattara, who asked me to give his children his warmest regards.

I would now like to greet Mr. Adama Bictogo, Member of Parliament and Mayor of Yopougon, who has honored us with his presence this afternoon.

I would also like to extend my warmest greetings to Mrs. Anne Désirée Ouloto Lamizana, Minister of State, Minister of Public Service and Modernization of Public Administration, who is representing the Minister of Sports for this occasion. I am happy to see you again, dear Anne.

I also extend my greetings to Mr. Amadou Koné, Minister of Transport and Maritime Affairs, Mayor of Bouaké, and President of UVICOCI, who is today the spokesperson for the beneficiaries. Thank you, dear Amadou, for your kind words.

I extend my greetings, along with him, to all the members of the Government who are with us today. Thank you for your much-appreciated presence.

I also greet Mr. Malick Tohé, First Vice-President of the Ivorian Football Federation, and the delegation accompanying him. Dear Malick, thank you for being here, despite all your other commitments during this crucial World Cup period.

My greetings also go to all the local officials, Members of Parliament, Mayors, and Regional Advisors, as well as all the dignitaries who have come to represent the municipalities and towns hosting this new edition of the tournament. Ladies and Gentlemen, elected officials, you have all turned out in great numbers for this event, and I am deeply touched. Your commitment to the Foundation is invaluable, and I sincerely thank you for it.

I also commend our legends and champions of Ivorian football who have accepted our invitation. Dear champions, you are a tremendous source of pride for your country, and your presence here is a wonderful gift for our children.

I also extend my greetings to all our guests, partners, and friends from the media, who faithfully support this event every year.

Finally, I would like to greet my dear children who have come to brighten this ceremony with their enthusiasm. I am so happy to see you. Well done to each and every one of you!

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This year, the Children of Africa Foundation football tournament takes on a very special significance, with Côte d'Ivoire qualified for the 2026 World Cup.

Last Sunday, our Elephants plated an incredible match against Ecuador, culminating in a resounding victory. They made us happy and proud, and we can all give them a big round of applause.

It is in this exceptional context, and with hearts full of hope for our national team, that we are launching this new edition of the cup that bears my name. What a wonderful symbol to be able to offer this sporting competition to our children, at a time when their heroes are shining on the world stage!

I am very happy about this, as this event also brings hope and joy to all those who participate.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you know, football in Côte d'Ivoire is not just a sport. It's a shared passion, a common language that transcends generations and unites all communities.

It is in this same spirit that, since 2008, the Children of Africa Foundation has been organizing this competition with a simple objective: to allow our children to have happy, enriching, and fulfilling holidays.

This year again, thousands of young girls and boys aged 7 to 15 will participate in this tournament, in 80 locations across our country.

For many of them, this is a highly anticipated part of their school holidays, a time for fun and games.

Through this friendly competition, we want to transmit essential values for social development, such as teamwork, respect for others, discipline, and social cohesion. These fundamental values shape responsible citizens who contribute to their country.

And it is with this conviction that we organize this football tournament year after year in different departments.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At this point in my remarks, I would like to express my sincere gratitude:

To our generous donors and partners, without whom this event could not take place.

To the Mayors and municipal teams, for their involvement on the ground.

To our football legends who embody for our children the proof that dreams can come true; I would like to mention and thank them:

Gadji Céli

Aka Kouamé Basile

Didier Otokoré

Oumar Ben Salah

Issouf Fofana

Beugré Yago

Siaka Tiéné

Eboué Emmanuel

Bony Wilfrid

Zokora Didier

I also thank the entire team at the Children of Africa Foundation, whose dedication makes each edition better than the last. Thank you all.

I would now like to turn to my dear children.

This tournament is yours; it is organized for you. We are doing it because we want you to have a wonderful holiday. I encourage you to enjoy every moment and make new friends.

And if one day you dream of wearing the Elephants' jersey, remember that it all starts with you, so believe in your dreams.

As every year, the winning teams will receive the "Dominique Ouattara" trophy, an envelope containing 410,000 FCFA each, a complete set of jerseys and balls, for a total budget of 150 million FCFA. Gifts will also be given to all the finalists. I will have the pleasure of presenting these prizes to the various communities starting today.

Before I en, I would like to wish all the participating teams a very successful competition.

I hope that this 2026 edition will leave our children with an unforgettable memory.

Have a great tournament and happy holidays everyone!

**Thank you.**