

FIRST LADY DOMINIQUE OUATTARA: "INVESTING IN WOMEN AND GIRLS MEANS
INVESTING IN AFRICA'S FUTURE."

First Lady Dominique Ouattara attended the launch ceremony for the campaign "Building Resilience Among Women and Girls: Climate, Conflict, and Sustainable Development in Angola" on Thursday, July 30, 2026, in Luanda, Angola. We present the full text of her speech from the event.

Your Excellency, Mr. President of the Republic of Angola,
First Ladies,
Mr. First Gentleman of the Republic of Namibia,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to convey the greetings of my dear husband, President Alassane Ouattara, who follows the activities of OAFLAD with great interest. It gives me great joy to take part in this wonderful OAFLAD event being held in the Republic of Angola.

I would now like to acknowledge His Excellency Mr. João Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, and his charming wife, Dr. Ana Afonso Dias Lourenço—First Lady of Angola and Vice-President of OAFLAD—who are hosting us in their beautiful city of Luanda. I wish to thank you for the courtesy you have extended to us since we arrived.

I also extend my warm greetings to the First Ladies and the gentleman present here, and especially to Mrs. Fatima Maada Bio, First Lady of the Republic of Sierra Leone and President of OAFLAD.

It is a pleasure to see you all again on such a special occasion.

I also extend these greetings to all the dignitaries present, as well as to all the partners, philanthropists, and friends of OAFLAD who are working alongside us for the development of our continent.

My dear sisters,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The OAFLAD campaign "Building Resilience for Women and Girls: Climate, Conflict, and Sustainable Development," is a vital initiative for our daughters and sisters as they build their futures.

Indeed, women are often the first victims of climate change and armed conflict, which force them to flee their homes, lose their livelihoods, and face reduced access to education and healthcare. Yet, they are also the first to rebuild their families and communities, and to carry the hope for sustainable development.

Building their resilience therefore means prepared them to withstand shocks, preserve their access to education and healthcare, and participate fully in the economic and social life of their country.

That is why I wish to commend the initiative taken by the OAFLA to launch this continent-wide campaign. I am also delighted that our sister, Mrs. Ana Lourenço, is carrying out this major activity today for the women and girls of Angola.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have always held the conviction that vulnerable women and children in need must be at the heart of our concerns, and we must raise our voices to champion their interests.

It was in response to this need that I established the Children of Africa Foundation in 1998. Through this organization, we carry out structured initiatives in Cote d'Ivoire in the field of education, health, and social welfare. Our primary goal is to contribute to the well-being of our children, as well as to the protection and empowerment of our sisters, fostering greater social balance.

In the education area, for instance, we have built and equipped numerous schools across the country. These include the School of Excellence in Kong, northern Cote d'Ivoire—which now serves over 2,000 students—and the Children of Africa school group in Abobo, where 700 underprivileged children receive good education and full support.

In the health area, the Foundation's flagship project was the construction of the Bingerville Mother and Child Hospital. Equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, the hospital provides free care to one-quarter of its underprivileged patients.

Furthermore, regarding social protection, the Foundation has been safeguarding orphaned and vulnerable children since 1998 by providing care at the *Case des Enfants* (Children's House) and at three centers dedicated to the social reintegration of at-risk children in the country's interior.

To foster the well-being and empowerment of women, we built and equipped the "Safe Home" Women's Center in Adiake, which provides shelter and support to female victims of violence as they reintegrate into society. Our commitment is also demonstrated through the Support Fund for Women of Cote d'Ivoire, which has enabled more than two million people to escape poverty.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These actions—like those each of you carries out with conviction in your own country—serve as the building blocks that patiently construct the resilience of our populations.

Yet, it is when they come together within an organization like OPDAD that these individual initiatives truly gain impact. That is the very essence of our collective action: uniting our voices and experiences to exert greater influence on the decisions shaping the future of our population.

My dear sisters,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This same spirit of mobilization will bring us together again tomorrow for the gala dinner that will launch the fundraising campaign for our organization's Silver Jubilee, which we will celebrate together in 2027.

For twenty-five years, OAFLAD has tirelessly championed the voices of the women, children, and youth of our continent.

Twenty-five years of advocacy and tangible action that have consistently transformed the daily lives of millions of our fellow citizens.

My vision for the next twenty-five years is that of a stronger, more powerful organization—whose impact is firmly established on the international stage and whose partnerships are both diversified and enduring.

I hope that our shared commitment can rest on a sustainable financial foundation, so that we may empower more women and save more children's lives.

It is in this spirit that Cote d'Ivoire reaffirms its full support for the OAFLAD and for the success of the fundraising event taking place tomorrow'. I would like to thank the generous donors who are supporting us in this endeavor.

Before I end, allow me to hope that the next twenty-five years will see an Africa where every woman and every child can live in dignity and hope.

Thank you.