

**SPEECH OF THE FIRST LADY PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF THE CNS' 2015-2017
NATIONAL ACTION PLAN**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure I found you today on the occasion of the presentation of the 2015-2017 National Action Plan for the Fight against Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labor. The event gathers us together this afternoon, is part of the actions already taken straight from 2012 to 2014 for the eradication of child labor in Côte d'Ivoire.

The opportunity given to me today to thank each of you, members and partners of the National Oversight Committee and the Inter-ministerial Committee, which have significantly contributed to the implementation of the previous National Action Plan in the Fight against Child Labor. The presence of all of you is a sign of your commitment in our struggle with conviction for more than three years. And I sincerely rejoice for it.

I wish in this respect, to commend Mr. State Minister, Moussa Dosso, Chairman of the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Fight against Child Labor; and with him, Minister Anne OULOTO, Vice-Chairman of that Committee. I would then like to commend Mr. Dramane Haidara, Director of the International Labor Office, the institution which has contributed greatly to the development of the National Action Plan for the Fight against Child Labor and the professional organizations of employers and workers who have also contributed.

Merci enfin, à toutes les personnalités, qui ont répondu présent aujourd'hui, pour nous manifester leur soutien dans cette lutte devenue une priorité nationale.

My greetings also go to Mrs. Massandjé- TOURE LITSE, President of the Cocoa-Coffee Board, who has always fought with us to improve the living conditions of producers and their families.

To these thanks, I associate our private and public partners, whose contribution in this fight is very important, namely the following companies: Nestle, Olam, Mars Cargill; World Cocoa NGOs Foundation, the International

Cocoa Initiative, Save the Children and the Coffee-Cocoa Board; but also UNICEF, the ILO and USDOL, and our many other partners.

I want to commend each of you for your commitment and for the work already achieved in implementing the 2012 – 2014 National Action Plan as well as field workers namely the prefects, the police and the gendarmerie, mayors and regional councilors, social workers and teachers, cooperatives' leaders and journalists among others.

Final thanks you to all the personalities who are present today to bring their support in this fight that has become a national priority.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you all know, Côte d'Ivoire is facing the thorny issue of child labor since several decades. In this context, the national action plan that we launched in 2012, allowed us to work in synergy with some national and international NGOs in order to provide concrete solutions to this scourge.

According to the report we have done to assess its implementation, this national plan has been implemented at more than 90% of registered activities, and required a financial effort of more than 7 billion CFA francs from the State. These efforts have been supported by our partners, who have invested more than 2.4 billion CFA francs for the construction of primary and secondary classrooms in the cocoa growing area.

Also, the National Oversight Committee which I have the honor to chair, welcomes the important results achieved through the combined efforts of all governmental and nongovernmental players. These results led the US State Department, in its annual report on trafficking in persons, to reclassify our country in Tier 2, which corresponds to countries making significant efforts to eradicate the scourge.

However, many challenges lie ahead. Indeed, compulsory education for all children aged 6-16 years, requires more basic infrastructure, such as construction of schools, school canteens and housing for teachers. Therefore, the development and implementation of the new National Action Plan for

2015-2017, will allow us to consolidate the gains and further actions taken to significantly reduce the phenomenon by the end of 2017.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Partners,

We have just presented to you the new National Action Plan against Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labor. It is part of the continuity of actions already undertaken, we wish to perpetuate and deepen, to obtain even more significant advances in this area.

Above all, it is important to remember that according to several studies, two-thirds of the children involved in the phenomenon of child labor, are children of peasants who go to school, and who occasionally accompany their parents in their activities, after school hours. This important clarification has been included in the 2015-2017 National Action Plan, which helped refocus awareness campaigns on parents-farmers. Indeed, for this category of children that makes socializing work and learn the family business, we intend to increase awareness among parents and explain to them what are the hazardous and prohibited work to which they must no longer expose their children.

In this regard, I would like to mention that I plan to go to Geneva at the beginning of the year 2016, to meet with the leaders of the ILO, to redefine the notion of "Child Victims of the Worst Forms of Child Labor". Indeed, I explained during my trip to Washington last June, the distinction that should be made between the peasants' children who go to school and join their parents after school hours, and children victims of trafficking and exploitation.

Furthermore, we intend to strengthen actions against the trafficking of children in areas at risk, with the support of the national forces of the Police and the Gendarmerie, and in close cooperation with Interpol. These repressive actions will be organized in larger scale in the country, in order to send a strong signal to the traffickers.

Another component of the 2015-2017 National Action Plan will be the support to child victims of trafficking and exploitation, in addition to raising

awareness, and repression. Indeed, we plan to build shelters in areas at risk, in order to collect and assist these children. Their balanced development requires the assurance of a healthy living environment, conducive to rehabilitation and education. The first shelter we think about building, will be offered by Children of Africa Foundation and installed in Soubré. Children are the future of Côte d'Ivoire, and their protection is crucial to the balanced development of our society. We must therefore succeed in creating an environment conducive to their development and their balance.

Finally, we intend to extend the SOSTECI (System of Observation and Monitoring of Child Labor in the Côte d'Ivoire), to twenty additional departments to improve the national child labor data referencing basis in the country. These departments will be added to the seven for which we already have reliable quantitative data. This information is important because it allows field teams to effectively target the problem and fight more in a coordinated manner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

By 2017, our goal is to significantly reduce the number of children involved in the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Côte d'Ivoire. That's the reason why I wish more reliable and accurate surveys to be carried out regularly, to better guide our actions.

Regarding the 2015-2017 National Action Plan, its effective implementation depends on its effective ownership by all stakeholders, as a reference document. Also, it is necessary for each organization, involved in the fight against this phenomenon, to operate in both the guidelines and objectives defined therein. We must federate our efforts for the comprehensive eradication of the scourge in Côte d'Ivoire.

I remain convinced that together we will succeed.

Thank you.