

SPEECH BY THE FIRST LADY MOTHER'S DAY

CELEBRATION WITH MILITARY SPOUSES

Saturday, May 26, 2018

My dear sisters,

My dear daughters,

It's a pleasure for me to be here this morning to celebrate **mother's day with you, my sisters, military wives, wives of gendarmes and police wives.**

First of all, I would like to extend my greetings **to all the members of the Government** attending this ceremony, particularly to **Mr Hamed BAKAYOKO, Minister of State,**

Minister of Defense, who initiated this beautiful ceremony, and his lovely wife.

I also extend my greetings to **Mr Sidiki DIAKITE, Minister of Home Affairs and Security** who is with us this morning with his lovey wife; to **Mrs Mariétou KONE, Minister of Women, Child Protection and Solidarity,** for her contribution to the success of this event.

I acknowledge the presence of my sisters **Mrs Clarisse DUNCAN, wife of the Vice-President,** and **Mrs Assétou GON COULIBALY, wife of the Prime Minister,** as well as all **my sisters wives of Presidents of Institutions and Ministers,** by our side today.

I would like to thank **Ambassadors and their spouses** for being present at the ceremony.

I extend again my greetings to **the senior army officers especially the Army Chief of Staff of Côte d'Ivoire, the Army Chief of Staff of the President of the Republic, the Military Major Commands,** as well as **administrative and political authorities** who have kindly joined us to celebrate mothers.

I would like to extend my special thanks to **my sister Mrs TOURE Ténin, Honorary President of the military wives,** for her personal implication in the success of this beautiful celebration.

I offer my greetings to spouses of **all the high authorities of the defense and security forces of Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the presidents of associations of the armed forces wives.**

My greetings also go to all the distinguished **authorities, to the distinguished members of my delegation** and to **the traditional and religious leaders** present here.

I also greet all the **soldiers, gendarmes and policemen** for their presence to this beautiful ceremony in order to pay tribute to their wives.

Finally, I would like to thank **my dear sisters spouses of military, gendarmes and police officers**, who came from all over the country to mark this special day in a special way.

My dear sisters,

My dear daughters,

I would like to begin by thanking the various speakers for their kind and touching words.

A Few months ago, my godson, Hamed BAKAYOKO, Minister of State, expressed to me his desire to open the Support Fund for Women to military wives. I thought it was a great idea, and I accepted immediately.

I congratulate the Minister of State for his commitment to improve the living conditions of your families. Kindly give him a round of applause !

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may know, **I myself grew up as a daughter of a military officer. I therefore know how the military profession is noble and important for the country.**

The armed forces have the difficult task of protecting their fellow citizens, sometimes even at the risk of their own lives. For this reason, I decided that the FAFCI cheque presentation be made on Mother's Day, because it was important to pay tribute to their wives on this occasion.

I wanted a real moment of sharing and communion, **which is why I did not hesitate to come to Akouedo camp, to live these moments with all my sisters gathered here.**

To this end, I would like to thank my **dear husband, President Alassane OUATTARA**, who welcomed this ceremony and helped me to « pamper » all my sisters here present, on this symbolic day.

He sends greetings to all of you and has asked me to wish you a very happy Mother's Day.

My dear sisters,

You are **4,000 women from all over Côte d'Ivoire**, from different units and camps in Abidjan and other cities of the country, to celebrate together Mother's Day. And I'm happy to see you so many on this special occasion for each of us.

Indeed, you play a vital role alongside your husbands, maintaining the balance of the family, while defending their country and protecting our people.

You help our military officers, gendarmes and our police officers to better accomplish their duty on a daily basis. Your husbands' profession is not without danger and your support gives them the strength they need to fulfill their duty.

I would like to thank you and congratulate you for your commitment and for all the sacrifices you make for the benefit of the Ivorian nation.

My dear sisters,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know, **women's empowerment** has always been an important part of my social work. I have always supported women's initiatives,

through the donations in kind that we make at every opportunity, but also through **the Support Fund for Women of Côte d'Ivoire that I created since 2012.**

This fund, with a capital of 10 billion FCFA, was made available with the support and encouragements of my dear husband, the President of the Republic who heard the cry of our heart. I thank him !

The FAFCI is to finance women's income generating activities, and to date, **more than 135,000 women all over the country had access to it.** It was therefore essential to make it available to the wives of the armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire. I am happy it is done!

My dear sisters,

Because I trust your capacity to carry out businesses, I have decided to put at your disposal **400 million FCFA** through financial partners. The amount is **distributed as follows :**

- **200 million for military spouses,**
- **100 million for the wives of gendarmes,**
- **and 100 million for police wives**

You will be able to use this resource to launch or develop an income-generating activities in the area that suits you best. The trainings you will receive to manage your activity will also allow you to carry out them well, in order to obtain maximum benefit.

The 400 million will be increased if necessary each year, provided that you regularly repay the money, so that others women can also benefit.

Today, some of you have just received the FAFCI cheques. Others will follow as soon as their projects are presented and validated by our financial partners.

I also brought you some gifts that I hope you will like. They have just been listed : **4, 000 loinclothes, hairdressing and sewing equipment, agricultural equipment, coolers, computers,** as well as **food stuff for your families.** I know you will make good use of it!

My dear sisters,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To end, I would like to wish a beautiful Mother's Day **to all the mothers of Côte d'Ivoire.** I hope that every mother will be happy, surrounded by her family and loved ones for this occasion.

Happy Mother's Day to all my sisters.