

**SPEECH BY MRS DOMINIQUE OUATTARA FIRST LADY OF COTE D'IVOIRE**

**INAUGURATION OF HEC PARIS SUBREGIONAL OFFICE IN ABIDJAN**

**Thursday, November 22, 2018**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am particularly pleased to be with you today for the inauguration of the **HEC Paris Subregional office in Abidjan.**

First of all, I would like to welcome the presence of **Mrs Nathalie LUGAGNE, Assistant Director of HEC Paris,** who came over specially for the occasion.

Dear Mrs. LUGAGNE, I am happy to welcome you to **Côte d'Ivoire,** and wish you a wonderful stay in our country.

I extend my greetings to **all the members of the Government** present here, **particularly to Mr. Albert MABRI TOIKEUSSE, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research,** as well as **Ministers Sidi TOURE and Abdourahmane Cissé.**

I also extend my greetings to Mr. **Gilles HUBERSON, Ambassador of France to Côte d'Ivoire.**

I would also like to greet **Mr. Tiémoko Yadé COULIBALY, Honorary President of the HEC Paris Graduates Association of Côte d'Ivoire ;** as well as **Mr. Daouda COULIBALY, President of the Alumni Association of HEC Paris in Côte d'Ivoire.**

And also, **Mr. Alexis AHYEE, Director of the HEC Paris Office for West and Central Africa, based in Abidjan.**

My greetings also **go to Mr. Pierre MAGNE, Vice-President of CGECI, former HEC student,** who is receiving us for the occasion; and whose institution houses the offices of the representation of HEC Paris in Abidjan.

Finally, I extend my greetings to **Corporate Directors** and **Business Leaders,** as well as to **the eminent personalities** present at this official inauguration.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The inauguration of this new HEC office in Abidjan gives me the opportunity to thank the board of this prestigious school, especially its **President Mr. Jean-Paul VERMES**, and **its Managing Director, Peter TODD**, for choosing me as member of the **International Advisory Board of HEC Paris**.

It's my pleasure to join your Advisory Board. As you may know, I myself have created, directed and developed businesses for over thirty years. I am delighted today to be able to share my experience and contribute to developing the skills of a new generation of leaders.

Moreover, as **President of an International Foundation** for Children, and **First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire**, education has always been one of my **priority activities**.

I therefore naturally agreed to attend today's inauguration.

This important event marks a decisive turning point in the **training and transmission of knowledge to the future leaders of our continent**.

Indeed, Africa urgently needs to develop its decision makers network, for its social and economic growth. That is why, I look forward to the opening of this office I believe will help facilitate access to quality education for our young people.

The challenges are many, but our young people have showed their ability to meet leadership, competitiveness and management challenges that will occur. Moreover, the knowledge that our young people will receive will enable them to achieve their goals.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would now like to say a few words about **the HEC alumni, starting with President Yadé Tiémoko COULIBALY, President of Société Générale de Côte d'Ivoire, he was one of the first Ivorians to graduate from HEC Paris**. He is a model of academic and professional success for the new generation, and his contribution to the outreach of this regional office will be a real asset.

I also congratulate **all the other HEC alumni, headed by Mr. Daouda COULIBALY, Director General of SIB** ; for their significant efforts to support our young candidates.

Finally, I would like to congratulate **all the personalities** who contributed to the installation of this office in Abidjan.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The bridge that has been built between our local skills and the HEC Paris training network for two years is an exceptional opportunity for our country.

Now, it will be possible for our men and women to find relevant solutions for the growth and development of our societies in an increasingly competitive global environment.

To end, I would like to wish all the best to all our students who will be entering this internationally renowned school.

**Thank you.**