

SUCCESS IS ALL ABOUT CULTIVATING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Speech given Prof. Abdulai at the launching of the Master's of Business Leadership Programme in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Sheraton Hotel, Addis Ababa, 6th of November 2008.

The programme director, the Deputy Ambassador of South Africa to Ethiopia, honourable guest, ladies and gentlemen.

It is always a great pleasure to be in this great city and country of yours. A country that has played a greater role in the socio-political development of Africa from the era of the OAU to the AU, which has brought this continent so far to witness these exciting times we are living in. On the 4th of November 2008, Barack Obama, a son of Africa with direct roots in Kenya was elected the first black president of America. A couple of days before that, Lewis Hamilton, a British citizen was the first black and indeed the youngest to win the Formula One Championship in the Brazilian Gran Prix.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Africa's day in the sun has come. Our generation of Africans is the Joshua generation. We can either embrace these opportunities presented us with hope or with anxiety. We must always have as our watchword that nobody likes Africa more than Africans. Consequently, nobody is going to develop Africa for Africans. You and I are therefore tasked to play our part, because the altitude we seek to reach in building a united, strong and prosperous Africa depends on our attitudes. My friends, there is overwhelming evidence that serves to support the premise that success results more from certain mental traits and characteristics known as attitudes and our attitudes are the result of the choices we make. My own life story and many like mine are examples of what cultivating the right attitude can produce. In my formative years, I arrived in New York in the dead of the winter without winter clothes, with only forty U.S. Dollars in my pocket. I ended-up graduating from some of the top universities in America due to my cultivation of the right attitude. Clearly then achievers are not born, they are made.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

You who are enrolled in our MBL, DBL, and Executive Development Programmes are already achievers. You have the right attitude and you will get to your altitude of success. Your challenge and the challenge to all of us, is to use this knowledge to uplift Ethiopia and indeed Africa from the "mat to the mattress." This clarion call is urgent, and there is no time to waste. This call was amplified during another time when Africa was witnessing the exciting times of a wave of independence; by one of Ethiopia's illustrious sons, Emperor Haile Selassie. He said,

"we stand today on the stage of world affairs, before the audience of world opinion... Even as we stand here, we move from the past into the future. The task on which we have embarked... will not wait. We must act to shape and mould the future and leave our imprint on events as they slip past into history."

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let us act today to shape and mould Ethiopia's future, indeed Africa's future and leave our imprint on events as they slip past into history. Haile Selassie has the last word, "throughout history, it has been the inaction of those who should have known better; the silence of the voice of justice when it mattered most; that has made it possible for evil to triumph."

Thank you very much.

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