



Leadership on a Global Stage

Remarks by **Governor Dr. Kevin Greenidge** to the
International Forum on African-Caribbean Leadership
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Good day, esteemed leaders, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honour and a privilege to be here today at the International Forum on African-Caribbean Leadership (IFAL). This forum stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and unity in achieving transformational change. I am deeply grateful to be recognised by this esteemed group and for the opportunity to contribute to our shared vision of a prosperous and integrated future for Africa and the Caribbean.

I humbly accept the Global Leadership Excellence Award in recognition of my contributions to promoting regional integration, cooperation, and the dignity of the Caribbean people. This accolade is not mine alone but shared with all those who have supported and worked alongside me. To them, I say again—thank you.

As we gather on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, we are reminded of the interconnectedness of our global community and the vital role that partnerships play in addressing the challenges we face. The theme of this year's forum, "Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships to Drive Transformation, Sustainability, and Resilience in the Global South," resonates profoundly with the efforts we have undertaken to strengthen ties between Africa and the Caribbean. These partnerships are not just necessary—they are the bedrock upon which we build a future of sustainable development, economic growth, and shared prosperity.

Over the years, the relationship between Africa and the Caribbean has been forged through shared history, cultural ties, and common goals. Together, we stand as proof that history unites us and that together, we can break the chains of poverty, injustice, and any efforts to stymie our collective transformation.

Our collaboration has taken on new dimensions in recent times, particularly through initiatives like the *Bridgetown Initiative*. This initiative represents a significant step toward fortifying the economic and financial bridges that connect our regions. By bringing together governments, international organisations, private sector entities, and civil society, we aim to tackle critical issues like climate change, sustainable development, and economic resilience. Through these collective efforts, the initiative calls for the mobilisation of necessary resources, expertise, and innovative solutions to address shared challenges, driving inclusive growth, and creating opportunities for all.

In this context, our partnership with the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) has been instrumental. The bank has facilitated trade, investment, and economic cooperation, reinforcing the

bonds of friendship and solidarity that have long existed between Africa and the Caribbean. The \$1.5 billion credit facility announced during the opening of the Caribbean office of Afreximbank is a direct example of this cooperation in action. These funds are earmarked to finance infrastructure projects, export development, and import facilitation, directly benefiting Caribbean nations and opening up new avenues for growth.

Moreover, Afreximbank's *Pandemic Trade Impact Mitigation Facility* (PATIMFA), which provided critical liquidity and trade finance support during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowed countries in the Caribbean to stabilise their economies during an unprecedented global crisis. The support helped maintain essential trade flows, demonstrating the tangible benefits of strong, strategic partnerships.

Yet, partnerships like these are about more than economics. They represent our collective journey towards a prosperous future. As the African proverb goes, *"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together"*. Our collaboration must go far, and it must touch every aspect of our societies—from economic resilience to cultural exchange, from innovative financing mechanisms to sustainable development.

One of the critical areas where collaboration is essential is debt management. Many countries in our regions struggle with significant debt burdens that hinder growth and development. Innovative financing mechanisms, like those explored in the *Bridgetown Initiative*, offer hope for relief through debt restructuring, climate financing, and economic diversification. Together, we can build frameworks that lead to meaningful, sustainable outcomes.

Strengthening the bonds between Africa and the Caribbean is also about ensuring that our youth realise their full potential. Marcus Garvey once said, *"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots."* This partnership is about acknowledging our shared history while creating opportunities for future generations. It is through fostering innovation, sharing knowledge, and encouraging collaboration that we will cultivate a new generation of leaders equipped to steer our regions toward a brighter future.

Encouraging investment is another vital aspect of our partnership. Africa and the Caribbean hold immense potential in sectors like agriculture, tourism, renewable energy, and technology. By creating a conducive environment for investment and fostering cross-regional collaboration, we can unlock new opportunities for economic growth and job creation. As former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon once said, *"Sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all."* Let us work together to build a future where African and Caribbean businesses thrive, where our entrepreneurs innovate, and where our economies grow sustainably.

In closing, I want to express my sincere gratitude for being honoured by this distinguished forum. I am inspired by the commitment and vision of the leaders gathered here today, and I am confident that through our collective efforts, we can drive the transformation that our regions so urgently need. Let us continue to build bridges, strengthen partnerships, and work together toward a future where Africa and the Caribbean stand united in their pursuit of prosperity and progress.

In the words of Nelson Mandela, *"Do not look the other way; do not hesitate. Recognise that the world is hungry for action, not words. Act with courage and vision."* The world, indeed, is hungry for action. The

Caribbean and Africa are ready. Let us, through multi-stakeholder partnerships, drive that transformation.

I thank you.