

INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT – SUMMIT 2018

MARRIOTT HOTEL, GEORGETOWN

OPENING CEREMONY – MARCH 8, 2018 (09:00 HRS)

CLOSING REMARKS – CHAIRPERSON OF THE IDPAD SUMMIT COMMITTEE

DR. MELISSA VARSWYK

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- Honorable Acting President of the Republic of Guyana, Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Carl Greenidge
- Minister of Tele Communication, Hon. Catherine Hughes,
- Minister of Business, Hon. Dominic Gaskins
- Former Prime Minister, Samuel Hinds
- Members of the Diplomatic Core,
- Members of the head table,
- Distinguished brothers and sisters

I am honored to give the closing remarks at this historic opening ceremony of the International Decade for people of African Descent Summit 2018.

Permit me to begin by expressing my committee's sincere appreciation for you joining us over the next 4 days to Audit Where we are, Where we ought to be and how do we get there, by 2024 and beyond.

Brothers and Sisters, let's not make this a talk shop! People of African Descent, all over the world are faced with challenges that needs to be addressed NOW! You bring with

you today your scholarship, experience and wisdom to create innovative solutions to the African plight.

Among the questions we have to address are how do we improve the ways we do business, promote financial literacy? How do we educate our children to remain competitive in this technological era and to create their own Wauconda dimensions? How do we improve the health status of our women and children? How do we bring back the African values and rituals that once made us dynamic people?

Some may say we are being too ambitious with our agenda, but being students of the late Marcus Garvey, whose son will be in our presence today, we are taught “There is nothing in the world common to man, that man cannot do!”

Over the next 4 days, our experts will be articulating Where we are, Where we ought to be, and How do we get there. In addition, the roundtable discourse will give birth to Institutes which we hope will develop the innovative programs we create over the next 4 days.

Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen, the time for us to act is NOW! The future of our children, and our children’s children is in our hands!

The IDPAD Summit Committee is happy that we can provide the platform to formulate a way forward.

At this time I will like to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Guyana for their support of the International Decade for People of African Descent. To our Minister Greenidge, now Acting President of the Republic of Guyana, and his team, namely Ambassador Lucas, Ambassador Torrington, Ronald Williams and Ms. Abigail Welch, we thank you for your endless support over the past year, without you this would not have been possible!

To Minister Catherine Hughes and team, your vision for developing Guyana's Information and Communications Technology platform is evident in efforts made to meaningfully engage with our ICT Experts.

A special thanks to our sponsors Digicel Guyana, HBTV Channel 9, Lykens, Georgetown American University, and Copa Airlines for your generous support.

To my team, you choose not only to be involved, but committed towards this noble cause, for this I am forever grateful to have gain from your wisdom and look forward to working with you again on our many task ahead.