



STATEMENT

2023-2024 DIPLOMATIC NEW YEAR

1. **Prof. Robert DUSSEY**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Togolese Abroad, chaired, this Monday, September 11, 2023 in Lomé, the 2023-2024 diplomatic new year marked by a public conference on the theme **"Democratic transitions in Africa between dreams and realities"**.
2. The ceremony was attended by personalities from the diplomatic and consular world, political figures, academics, stakeholders from the world of justice, civil society and diplomatic staff from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, regional integration and Togolese abroad.
3. In his speech for the occasion, **Prof. Robert DUSSEY** outlined the objectives of this annual meeting and recalled the strategic orientations of Togolese diplomacy defined by the President of the Republic, **H.E.Mr. Faure Essozimna GNASSINGBÉ**, relating, among other things, to the commitment to serving a peaceful West African community, an Africa less vulnerable to shocks, stable, strong and audible on the international scene and for a more just and equitable world. He noted that Africa's return to the international scene will only benefit the continent if Africa is master of its own agendas.
4. The ceremony was also an opportunity for Minister **DUSSEY** to recall the main events which will be on Togo's diplomatic agenda during the diplomatic year 2023-2024, in particular the holding, on October 21 and 22, of the first edition of **"Lomé Peace and Security Forum"** and the organization of the 9th Pan-African Congress in the second half of 2024.
5. According to **Prof. Robert DUSSEY**, Togo cannot abandon brother countries which are in crisis, at war and in political transition which constitute moments of major uncertainties and mediation and facilitation efforts at the scale of the region and the continent will be strengthened throughout the year. Togolese diplomacy values African expertise in the search for solutions to African problems and this is the best way for Africa to limit external interference which has contributed in recent years to fueling sources of tension and putting the continent in difficulty.
6. In the inaugural conference of this diplomatic new year, the speaker, the former transitional Prime Minister in Togo (1991-1994), **Mr. Joseph Kokou KOFFIGOH**, presented his vision of democratic transitions in Africa which are both occasions of hope, uncertainty and sometimes despair. The reality of political transitions, argued **Mr. Joseph Kokou KOFFIGOH**, is that they are not always easy occasions where hopes become realities.

7. The great merit of the democratic transitions of the nineties in Africa, in addition to the liberalization of the political landscape and the advances in human rights, is that everyone has converted to the idea of democracy, which is definitively anchored in habits. Democratic transitions have thus made pluralist democracy the political regime accepted by all.
8. The speaker, drawing on past experiences, made relevant recommendations for the conduct of political transitions that must be inclusive, peaceful and oriented towards the restoration of constitutional order through free and transparent elections.
9. The eminent speaker stressed that the conduct and support of political transitions require more realism, pragmatism and contextualized approaches adapted to the practical situation of each political transition process. He invited regional organizations, the African Union and the international community to think outside the box and purely normative positions in order to better support the political transitions underway on the continent, particularly in West Africa. These institutions and the international community must favour diplomatic channels and mechanisms in their relations with transitional regimes to the detriment of belligerent approaches.
10. The conference ended with an interactive session to deepen the theme through questions and answers.
11. The diplomatic new year ceremony was an opportunity for the head of Togolese diplomacy to invite all the diplomatic staff of our country, at headquarters or outside, to greater boldness, initiatives, efficiency and performance to take Togolese diplomacy even further in accordance with the vision of the President of the Republic, **H.E.Mr. Faure Essozimna GNASSINGBÉ**.

Lomé, September 11, 2023

