



## **“Africa must take ownership of its institutions” says Mo Ibrahim and other participants at the 2013 Ibrahim Forum**

Addis Ababa, 12 November 2013 –

African governments must take full ownership of the continent’s institutions to drive greater integration and unity, according to Mo Ibrahim and several other high-level participants at the 2013 Ibrahim Forum this weekend.

Speaking at the conclusion of the event, which was held in Addis Ababa, Mo Ibrahim strongly urged Africa’s leaders to give greater support, including financial resources, to the African Union in order to realise Africa's true potential.

Convened by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Forum brought together over 200 participants to discuss the major opportunities and challenges the continent faces during the next half century.

The Ibrahim Forum was a frank and open debate between [high-level panellists](#), and an audience of media, business leaders, civil society and government, held at the African Union’s headquarters, around the 50th anniversary of African unity.

The Forum was structured as an ‘African Conversation’, with participants discussing opportunities and challenges around the four categories of the [Ibrahim Index of African Governance](#) (IIAG): Safety & Rule of Law, Participation & Human Rights, Sustainable Economic Opportunity and Human Development.

There was consensus that African ownership of its institutions; greater cooperation between states; and good governance and leadership will be key determinants of Africa’s success in the future:

- H.E. Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, opened the debate by saying: “The narrative should be about tomorrow. It must be our narrative. We mustn’t hide anything; we mustn’t exaggerate anything. But we must tell our own story. It is in our hands to transform Africa into an integrated and prosperous continent.”
- H.E. Ato Hailemariam Dessalegn, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, also told participants that Africa “had begun to turn the corner”, certain in its conviction that a better future lies ahead.
- Pascal Lamy, former Director-General of the World Trade Organization, observed that Africa is disunited on trade integration within Africa, but it is good at defending African trade interests as a bloc.
- While Dr Siphso Moyo, Africa Director at ONE, was one of several panellists to highlight the need for governments to listen more to their growing youth population: “Young people want participation. They want to know that their voice is used in shaping and implementing policy.”
- Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, Former Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity, reminded the audience of the continent’s vast wealth which juxtaposes against extreme poverty in some countries: “Africa is not a poor continent but the people are poor; and that's because of the mistakes of our leaders.”



- While on the issue of Safety & Rule of Law, Robtel Pailey, Mo Ibrahim Foundation SOAS Scholar, contended that the African Union must assert itself much more strongly to make itself heard. She said that Africa must show that it has responsibility and not wait for the position of the West.
- Speaking on the same panel as Miss Pailey, Jean Ping, Former Chairperson of the African Union Commission, also said that Africa's autonomy is reduced when it is unable to fund its own institutions. He said: "when we receive money from Europe, it comes with conditions."
- Maria Ramos, Chief Executive of Absa Group and Barclays Africa, stressed that Africa cannot talk about integration and unity without talking about mobility: "We should ideally be able to have movement on the continent without visas."
- Indeed, during the closing session, the BBC's Komla Dumor asked Panellists: "If you could make one decision to transform Africa, what would be?" Mo Ibrahim responded: "I'd get rid of all borders."

To coincide with the Forum, the Foundation published the latest Facts and Figure report 'Africa Ahead – The Next 50 Years', providing analysis of Africa's potential assets and key policy areas to be addressed through exceptional leadership and governance. The document can be downloaded [here](#).

The 2013 Ibrahim Forum was the culmination of a series of events organised by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation in Addis Ababa this weekend. They kicked off on Friday with a football match between Ethiopian Bunna and TP Mazembe from Democratic Republic of Congo. On Friday evening, the Foundation hosted a special concert with performances from Angelique Kidjo, Youssou N'Dour and Jah Lude and the Mehari Brothers. On Saturday, the Foundation hosted its annual Leadership Ceremony, a celebration of Africa featuring speeches, music and film.

At the conclusion of the Forum, Mo Ibrahim was presented with a special award from the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) Network. The 'Male Champion Award' recognises Dr. Ibrahim's "leadership, innovation and bold thinking to advance the status of African women".

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#### **Notes to editors**

Photos of the event are available for use and free for media to use. Please download them from Flickr here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/moibrahimfoundation/>

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation was established in 2006 with a focus on the critical importance of leadership and governance in Africa. By providing tools to support advancements in leadership and governance, the Foundation aims to bring about meaningful change on the continent.

The Foundation, which is a non-grant making organisation, helps to define, assess and enhance governance and leadership in Africa using the following tools:

- Ibrahim Index of African Governance



## Mo Ibrahim FOUNDATION

- Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership
- Ibrahim Forum
- Ibrahim Fellowships and Scholarships

### The Ibrahim Forum

Established in 2010, the Ibrahim Forum is an annual high-level discussion forum tackling issues of critical importance to Africa. Bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders, the Forum identifies specific policy challenges and priorities for action. Previous Forums have dealt with: African Youth (2012), African Agriculture (2011) and African Regional Economic Integration (2010). Data and research on Forum issues are compiled by the Foundation as the basis for informed and constructive debate.

### Contact

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- Suggested hashtag to comment on the events: **#MIFAddis**
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