

# Afri Diplomat

## H.E. MR. **DARKEY AFRICA**

Navigating The Complex World of  
Diplomacy Gracefully

**Sport Diplomacy  
According To Laliga**

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## Blessed Are The Diplomats...

My Yoruba people say that the head of a baby will always be well placed for comfort, while he or she is backed by his or her mother, as long as there is an elder around, to call the mother's attention to how the baby's head needs to be adjusted. I guess diplomats are the figurative elder in that proverb. I have always been fascinated by the temperament and ability of a set of individuals to step into a matter that is in a total state of chaos and strife, and provide grounds for mutual understanding and compromise. A diplomat is who we all need to be, for a better world.

I believe that – like Matthew 5:9 states – they have a special place in the heart of God and every human who delights in having peace engulf the mortal world. I have always wanted to do something to show how much I adore these crop of individuals. So, myself and my partner – Tolulope Adesemowo – started International Diplomacy Stableford Golf Tournament in 2019, in Ikoyi Club 1938, with the objective of celebrating diplomats, diplomacy, human migration, travel and tourism. On the 25th of June, 2022, at IBB International Golf & Country Club Abuja, the 3rd edition will hold, with diplomats and embassy attache of about 20 countries – including Britain, America, South Africa, Austria, France, Zimbabwe, European Union and China – participating.

I am reminded of how, many years ago, I won an online poetry contest and was named an Ambassador of Poetry Society of America. In all honesty, I had no means to confirm the authenticity of the organizers of this poetry competition, but I was more than excited to share with everyone that I was made an ambassador. My church home fellowship members – back then – would call me ambassador and so remains the name saved against my phone number on their phones, till date. Five years shy of 20 after. So, this is me reminding the Architect of The Universe that it is my desire to be a diplomat, someday soonest. May I live to see the dream come to pass, as I look forward to basking in the euphoria, spiced with gratitude to God.

The content of this publication will always be about Africa, her diaspora, the rest of the world who operates within her shores and in whose space nations of Africa operate, viz-a-viz international relations. You would be seeing Afri Diplomat Magazine in electronic and print format, for months and years to come. Kindly join us on this journey.

*Diplomatic Regards.*

Prince Deji Ajomale-McWord.  
Editor-In-Chief

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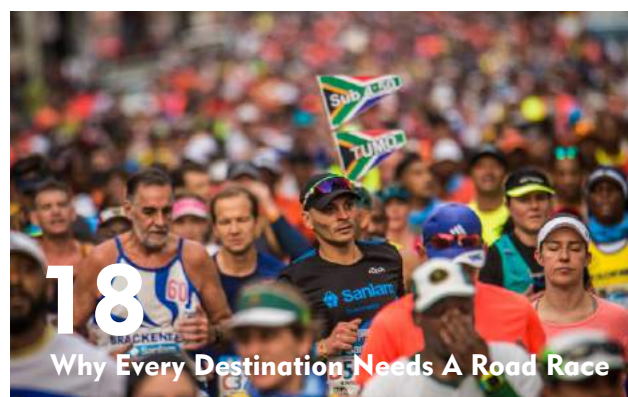
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## GENESIS 37, ONE-MAN DIASPORA AND AFRICA'S FUTURE

**G**enesis Chapter 37, in a way, foretold the future of Africa. You probably have read about Joseph and how his brothers came to hate him because their father openly showed how he preferred Joseph to them. They conspired, stripped him off his coat of many colors – a symbol of how beloved he was among the nations that came out of Jacob's loins – and sold him into slavery, just like Africans were involuntarily shipped to Europe and America. Although, the spirit

that made him beloved above all followed him to where he was eventually sold to, by the Medianite; he still had to taste the a portion of the horror of slavery – just like Africa.

The years passed by and destiny relocated him to the *White House* of the most powerful nation of his time, where he served as the executive head of Kermet. And then a great famine happened, so bad that the *nation* of Israel had to travel miles to Egypt, in search

of food. Fortunately for the house of Jacob, their one-man diaspora had been well positioned as a knight in shining armor, capacitated to save them.

Jamaica, an Africa's diaspora nation is one of the most successful nations in sport. Carribean countries are some of the world's choicest destinations. They are mostly populated by people of African ancestry. Nigerian-Americans are the most educated immigrants in the US.







**//**  
**Africa must understand that, though, she didn't technically sell her diaspora into slavery – like Joseph's brothers did – her diaspora have their disappointments in her. Therefore, there will be need for reconciliation and a show of seriousness in conduct and transparency.**  
**//**

Bukom in Greater Accra Region has exported more boxers to America, than any one. NBA's talent pool is black. The current World's Richest Man is a South African. People of African descent are scattered across chief positions in world's biggest corporate entities. LinkedIn exposed me to this fact. According to Guardian Newspaper, Nigerians abroad already sent N7.9trn to Nigeria, when the year is yet to be fully halved. The country's budget for 2022 is only N17.126trn, just to give an idea of how heavy Africa's

diaspora is. This should give you an idea of where I am going. Africa's diaspora has a lot it has acquired over decades and centuries, to pass down to Africa, in form of remittances and/or exchanges, and it is about time Africa wore her best and strategically approach her diaspora for a mutually fulfilling reunion.

Africa must understand that, though, she didn't technically sell her diaspora into slavery – like Joseph's brothers did – her diaspora

have their disappointments in her. Therefore, there will be need for reconciliation and a show of seriousness in conduct and transparency. If not, the house of Jacob will return home with insufficient supplies from her diaspora.

The long and short of this penned thoughts is that Africa needs her diaspora as much as her diaspora needs her.

**H.E. MR.**

# **DARKEY AFRICA**

**The Consul General of South Africa in Lagos, Nigeria**





### **AD: Kindly Take Us Through Your Journey Into The World of Diplomacy. How Did It All Start?**

DA: Let me just say that I have been in the provincial government of South Africa from 1994 till around 2009. For about 15 years, I served as an emissary, which is the equivalence of what is known as commissioner in Nigeria. I oversaw aspects of governance in various capacities such as finance, tourism, housing, local government etc.

After I had left government, I served as chairman of the planning commission. That was followed by my invitation to join the department of international relations, in 2015. I was posted to Nigeria as Consul General of South Africa in Lagos.

It is noteworthy that I studied international relations at the University of Free State.

### **AD: Who Is A Career Diplomat and Do You Consider Yourself as one?**

DA: I do not believe that there is such a thing as career diplomat. Of course there are great diplomats like Madeleine Albright, Henry Kissinger and others, who considered themselves career diplomats. Diplomats are trained for the job. And given the right training, exposure and opportunity, anyone can be a diplomat.

### **AD: Kindly Explain The Job Description of a Diplomat to A Layman.**

To put it simply, a diplomat is a bridge builder. You represent your country with the chief objective of building relations and advancing

your national interests, while promoting trade between your country and the one you have been posted to. You promote cultural, sport and economic diplomacy. It is your job to identify areas where your country and your host country can collaborate. A diplomat is someone who creates environment and possibilities for conducive and mutually beneficial relations between two countries.

### **AD: I Would Like You To Specially Touch That Sport Diplomacy. What Does It Mean?**

DA: Well, diplomacy is about negotiation and building relations. So, in my view, any activity with the potential to build relations and understanding amongst people, is a form of diplomacy.

You would remember that our former and late president — President Nelson Mandela — spoke about sport as a catalyst for social relations and cohesion. And that's why when The Springboks won the Rugby World Cup in 1995, he adorned the shirt of the captain. This was something no one thought could be done as at that time, but he used sport to build understanding amongst the people of South Africa, given the history of the country.

That's how we came to recognize sport as a form of diplomacy.

You use the skills and abilities of individuals to build common understanding, deploying the rules, conduct and how sportmen are required to view one another — on and off field.

### **AD: Twice, You Have Been Invited To International**

### **Diplomacy Stableford Golf Tournament. Do You Play Golf?**

DA: I was exposed to golf when I was a young boy. That was at a time when the legends of today, like Gary Player would play around the country and they came to the town where I was born and raised. So there was this tournament I attended. I didn't know it's against the ethics of the game to talk while the play is underway. I tried to talk to someone and a man hit me in the head with a golf club. So, I told myself that I'd never play golf. I love the game and have nothing against it.

I attended Nedbank Golf Challenge in Sun City, when I was in government back home. That's why I honored your invitation when you invited me to International Diplomacy Stableford Golf Tournament. But I was angry at the man who hit me in the head with a golf club. He made me stay aloof to the game at a time I probably would have to favored playing it. My Father-In-Law is a regarded professional golfer in the township. I don't know why my wife and her siblings never picked interest in the game.

My interest was more in martial arts, though. I went to the golf course because my friends are golfers. We grew up hitting plastic balls with sticks, around the neighborhood. That was the farthest I went with playing golf.

### **AD: From Your Encounters with Golf, Do You Think There Are Similarities Between The Game and Diplomacy?**

DA: Any activity or engagement with rules that must be obeyed and





respected is an important avenue for understanding. Golf brings people together and set rules for interaction, therefore it carries the property of diplomacy. So, golf surely shares similarities with golf.

#### **What's Your Thoughts on Having A Tournament that Celebrates Diplomats, Diplomacy, Human Migration, Travel & Tourism?**

You know, golf brings people together for interactions and banter. It is generally believed that deals are made and sealed on the golf course. Therefore, bringing diplomats of different countries together on the golf course is something worthy of encouragement, because it builds solidarity, brotherhood and understanding.

When a tv station interviewed me at the tournament last year, I mentioned that golf is a form of

sport that makes people walk around with patience and determination, as they play the game. And as they do, they converse and come to knowledge and understanding of one another, and the realization of possible areas of collaboration. To them, it really doesn't matter if they win or lose.

Golf, to me, is a form of communication. It communicates resilience, patience and accuracy. All those constitute the basis for understanding amongst people.

**//**  
**Diplomacy is about negotiation and building relations. So, in my view, any activity with the capacity to build relations and understanding amongst people, is a form of diplomacy.**  
**//**

#### **AD: Tell Me About The Most Challenging Moment of Your Career As A Diplomat.**

Well, every moment is challenging, because every moment requires you to advance and articulate a particular issue. Therefore, diplomacy is a challenging, but enjoyable job. You get to go to many places, meet many people and build solidarity cum understanding around issues.

#### **AD: Especially For Young People Hoping To Become Diplomats Someday; What Are The Top 3 Attributes A Diplomat Must Possess?**

Well, a diplomat — first and foremost— must possess the ability to build understanding between nations and amongst people. The young must understand the need to get education.







**//**

**We should work towards a world with less strife and conflict, because we can only combat issues like poverty and underdevelopment when we have a stable world. We can achieve this through diplomacy because it creates conducive environment for global understanding and development.**

**//**

The renowned professionals in international relations are educated people. It is equally important for an intending diplomat to get interested in global issues. They must be interested in what's going on around them, the world, the implications of the issues and how they can contribute to the global harmony and peace, to the benefit of humanity. Having such knowledge will help you understand the role of international relations or diplomacy in building a better world.

#### **What's A World Without Diplomacy?**

Total chaos. It's conflict and war. No one wants to listen to anyone, in order to arrive at common understanding. Such world is unimaginable, because conflict and development are word and opposite. We should work towards a world with less strife and conflict, because we can only combat issues like poverty and underdevelopment when we have a stable world. We can achieve this through diplomacy, because it creates conducive environment for global understanding and development.

Therefore, diplomacy is central In making people see the need to solve problems through dialogue and negotiations, which we did in South Africa. I wish everyone adopts same approach, by resolving conflicts deploying dialogue and patience.

There will always be divergence of views and differences, but there are possibilities of common understanding when we dialogue.

**President Nelson Mandela is Globally Known And Revered As Bridge Builder and Someone Who's Quite Keen On Inclusiveness & Cohesion. How Would You Describe Him In The Parlance of Diplomacy?**

Well, you've already captured it succinctly. He's a bridge builder, peacemaker and a highly ethical leader. He wanted to see the world prosper. He wanted an Africa free of war, conflicts and strife. He saw to it that South Africa avoided bloodshed. He engaged the oppressors at the time, and both parties were able to come to certain understanding.

Today, we are called the rainbow nation precisely because — under his leadership — we came to the realization that our diversity shouldn't be a source of conflict, but a source of strength and understanding.

#### **AD: You've Been In Nigeria For How Long?**

This is my 5th year.

#### **AD: How Would You Describe Nigeria As a Nation?**

Nigeria is a great place to be. It has a lot of potentials to get better.

#### **How's Lagos Treating You?**

Lagos is Lagos. Other than the stress from traffic, it's a wonderful place to be.

#### **What Does South Africa Have To Offer The World?**

South Africa is everything the world wants to see, all in one place. If you want to see the Big 5, South Africa is your destination. If you want to see the only place where the Indian & Atlantic Ocean meet, South Africa is your destination. If you want to see the monuments of our great warriors showing strength and resilience against colonial



**The flight from Nigeria to South Africa is only 6 hours. It's not same as traveling to New York. So, you can suit up and go get business done and catch the next flight back.**



perpetuation, we've got it. South Africa has lots of products to offer tourists — from game reserves to culture and history. South Africa is home to some of the best golf courses in the world. That's why the Nedbank Golf Challenge annually pools golf aficionados from around the world. We have got the infrastructure to deliver.

There's a lot you are missing by not visiting South Africa. The flight from Nigeria to South Africa is only 6 hours. It's not same as traveling to New York. So, you can suit up and go get business done and catch the next flight back.

I must mention that there's a need for

improvement in the airlift between the two countries. This will greatly improve exchange through tourism, trade and investment.

**I Have Heard Travel Practitioners Complain About The Visa Regime of South Africa. What Exactly Is The Problem?**

I must say that, sometimes, people invent problems where are none, just to push the perception they want everyone to have about South Africa and her visa regime. There are challenges, yes, but it isn't as bad as it constituting crisis. Like every other country, South Africa has rules and regulations that you must comply with when applying for visas. It's







an internationally accepted practice. Once you comply with the requirements, you'd get it. Now, the system has significantly improved, albeit with a few challenges here and there.

We now have e-visa arrangement. From the comfort of your home, you can apply.

We have helped a lot of people who wanted to go to South Africa for business and we do not hear any complains. The other time, 200 people from Lagos Polo Club and Access Bank applied to go and play and watch polo in South Africa and not a single one of them was denied. I've observed that most of the concerns we've picked up are from journalists and we've tried improving on things. As a matter of fact, we created Consular Migration Forum between Nigeria and South Africa. At the forum we engage stakeholders, discuss and address issues bordering on migration and visa. We had the first meeting in January and there's been others.

**It Is Believed By A Lot of People Out There, That South Africa Has Three Capitals. What's The Idea Behind That?**

//  
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divergence of views  
and differences, but  
there are possibilities of  
common understanding  
when we dialogue.**  
//

There are no 3 capitals. They are functional cities relating to how we implement the obligations of our constitution. For instance, Pretoria is the administrative capital. That's where the union Building is. The legislative capital is Cape Town. Bloemfontein is the judicial capital. It's home to the appeal court. This is to distinctively show how we exercise our democracy.

South Africa has only one capital and its Pretoria.



# INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY STABLEFORD GOLF TOURNAMENT

...fairway to global harmony

International Diplomacy Stableford Golf Tournament was conceptualized out of the need to celebrate diplomats, diplomacy, human migration, travel and tourism. It made its debut in 2019, in Ikoyi Club 1938. The tournament bears in its name the favored format of play called stableford. Stableford was chosen because it's scoring points and the goal of the tournament is to have humanity keep scoring points against prejudice, strife and anything that militate against the advancement of our world.

## 2022 EDITION



JUNE 25TH



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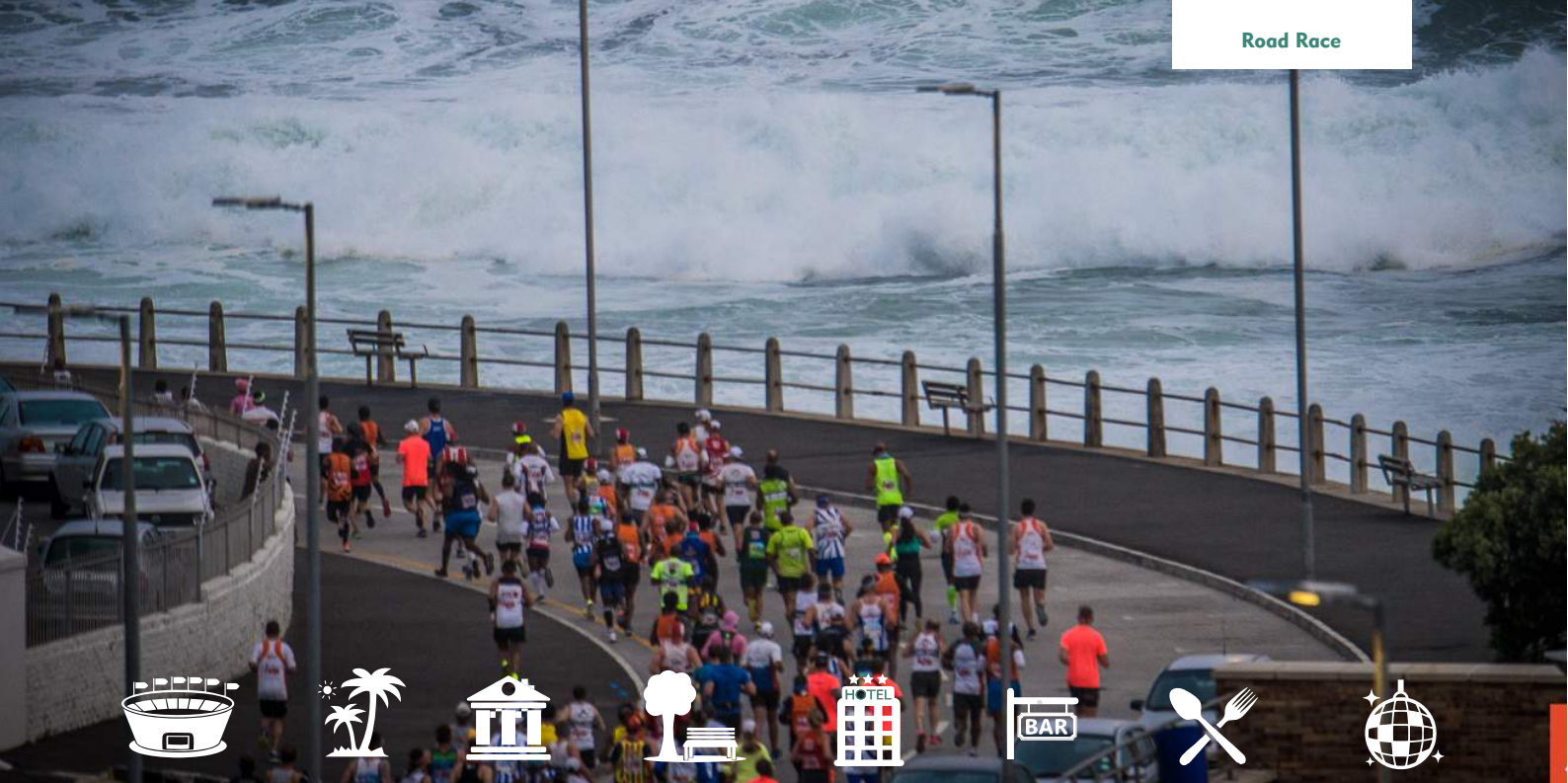
...cheers to common flight



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## Why Every Destination Needs A Road Race

By Prince Deji Ajomale-McWord

**It is worthy for destinations to note that, as much as elite runners (professional athletes) are the centre of attraction, they are only a bait to lure social runners, especially the foreign ones, because they arrive the host destinations earlier and leave later than their professional counterparts. This means that they consume more of everything – room nights, taxi services, tours, cuisines, drinks and other hospitality offerings. They also spend more.**

**R**oad races reputes as some of the world's most popular sporting events, after FIFA World Cup and the Olympics. These road races include marathons, ultra races, trail racing, triathlons, fun races etc. New York Marathon, Berlin, Cape Town Marathon, 2 Ocean Races, Lagos City Marathon, Lewa Safari Marathon, Marathon des Sables are some of the most popular of road race events.

But what's so special about road races? Why should every destination own at least one?

### No Need for Fresh Investment.

Whether a road race is planned to be held on the streets/highways of a city, town or village, or its routes include paths in a safari, mountain or desert; it doesn't require construction of a new stadium or arena. The existing infrastructure or natural terrain would suffice just fine.

### Mass Participation & Significant Arrivals

Most marathons give room for both elite runners a.k.a professional athletes and social runners. Just like spectators are usually in multiple volume — compared to athletes — at sporting events like FIFA World Cup; social runners are often in greater number than their elite counterparts. This is because they aren't just traveling to the host destination to watch someone do their thing. They can also participate.

Because these social runners can return home with at least medals and souvenirs, which often hold sentimental value before them; their excuse for travel wears an extra topping.

This benefits the destination a great deal. It's a known fact that professional athletes do not explore host destinations like spectators and social participants. While the athletes' purpose for the sports travel is to ply their trade and move on to the next thing, or return to their places of abode to start preparation for the next engagement — almost immediately they are





knocked out of the competition or the event comes to an end — the spectators or social participants already factored holiday into their travel plans. And if the handlers of the destination are discerning enough to design engaging and exciting experiences for them to buy; these travelers do not get to engage in the unprofitable (for the destination) routine of leaving their hotel rooms for the stadia and vice versa—without exploring the destination—until their favorite team gets knocked out of the competition or they get too bored for further stay.

#### **Promotes Healthy Lifestyle**

Every time a marathon holds, it's a major reminder to dwellers of the host city, town or village — especially — prioritize healthy lifestyle.

#### **Perfect For Promotion of Noble Causes**

Most road races are tagged with themes extracted from a message or cause that the organizers seek to use the event in driving.

#### **Can Be Used in Spotlighting Attractions in Host Destination**

The uniqueness of road races lies in the fact that they do not hold in confined facilities. They are run through the streets/highways, safaris and deserts that house the destination's attractions. This makes road races mini sightseeing sessions that culminate in craving for proper tour — later.

This also makes the attractions inescapable to local and international lenses. This means that the destination is able to showcase its attractions to those who are able to attend/participate in the event, while whetting the appetites of the thousands and/or millions of non-attendants that

will consume the contents covered by the lenses.

I am particularly fascinated by the possibilities for a destination to kill multiple birds with one stone that a road race provides.

#### **Adaptable To Different Terrains**

Does your destination prefer streets/highways or the paths of a safari, mountain or desert? A road race is adaptable to any of them.







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## WHEN LAGOS PLAYS POLO...

**A**in't no party like Lagos party". This was a line from the lyrics of Banky W's Lagos Party track released in 2009. You can import that into the debate on who does polo best in Nigeria and you would be on track, because when Lagos plays polo, it's usually a spectacle of glitz and glamour. After all, what is Eko without show?

Not only was polo first played in Nigeria in 1904, on an airstrip shared by Ikoyi Club and Lagos Polo Club; Lagos has always been self-asserting in positioning itself as the favorite destination for the game of kings, in the whole of West Africa. If you desire adrenaline rush, fine dinning and sheer display of brilliance at the game, Lagos serves it and sizzling.

This probably forms the whys and wherefores Lagos Polo Club has played host to some of the biggest names in all of global equestrian community, including HRH Prince Charles, Alphonso Pieres, Gonzalo Pieres, Alan Kent, Alan and Julian Hipwood, Santiago Bottaro, Santiago Chavanne, Simon Koseyo, Daniel Fernandez among others.

NPA Lagos International Polo Tournament, the 2-week event which has – in different forms and names – held for 116years, serves a variety of purposes. Brands and individuals seeking a pool of high networth individuals to market to and network with, get their money's worth and



more. Enthusiasts of the adrenaline the game provides for spectators, get served from a fresh brew. Fashion trend hunters get something, too. LIPT never lacks the assembly of beautiful people with impeccable fashion sense.

On the travel business front, the event brings together – like no other – grooms, officials,

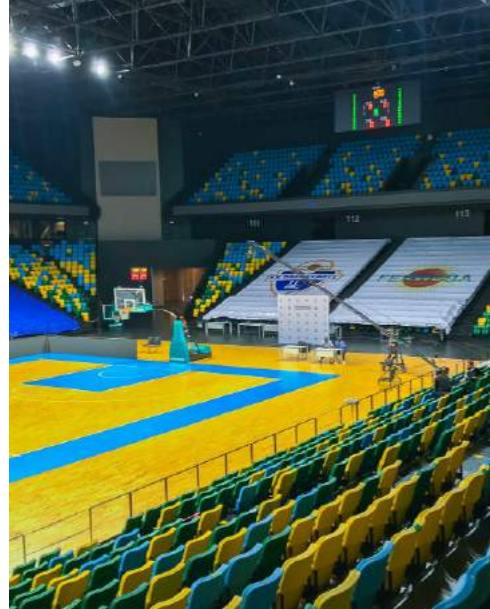
spectators and players from different regions of the country and beyond, including Europe and America, thereby enabling sports tourism. Players, grooms, umpires and enthusiasts of the game travel down to Lagos; consuming hotel room nights and other services within the travel value chain.











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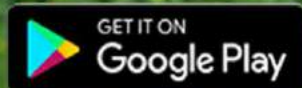






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# Nigeria Tourism Awards



## Faces of Winners at 5th Edition of Nigeria Tourism Awards

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**BEST TOURISM JOURNALIST** - TAIYE OLAYEMI (NAN)  
**BEST TOURISM PHOTOGRAPHY** - IRENE BECKER  
**BEST TOURISM VIDEO** - TOBBINATOR  
**INDUSTRY ICON** - MRSABIOLA ADELANA (TOURISM, STERLING BANK)  
**INDUSTRY ICON** - MRSABIOLA OGUNBIYI (MD, SJ TOURS)  
**INDUSTRY ICON** - MRADEMOLA SANYA (PRESIDENT, SKAL LAGOS)  
**INDUSTRY ICON** - CHUMA MGBOJKWE (FORMER GM, TRANSCORP CALABAR)  
**INDUSTRY ICON** - NANNA YAKUBU (NC ZONAL COORDINATOR, NTDC)  
**INDUSTRY ICON** - HON. QUADRI ADU KEHINDE (P&PIC, AFRICAN UNION)  
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**INDUSTRY ICON** - CHIEF AYO OLUMOKO (CHAIRMAN SW, ITPN)  
**INDUSTRY ICON** - HON. FIDELIA SALAMI (CHAIRMAN, DELTA TOURISM BOARD)  
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**INDUSTRY ICON** - HON. SOLOMON BONU (SA TO LAGOS GOVERNOR ON TOURISM)  
**INDUSTRY ICON** - AMB. WALE OJO-LANRE (SSA TO EKITI GOVERNOR ON TOURISM)  
**INDUSTRY ICON** - MRYINKA FOLAMI (VP LAGOS ZONE, NANTA)  
**SPECIAL RECOGNITION TOURISM INVESTMENT** - CHIEF MICHAEL ADEOJO  
**BEST TOURISM GOVERNOR** - LAGOS GOVERNOR - MR BABAJIDE SANWO-OLU  
**TOURISM PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR** - CHIEF ABIODUN ODUSANWO  
**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** - MR TOPE OGBENIAWE









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**Desmond Chiji**  
LaLiga Global Network Delegate  
to Nigeria & Ghana

# Sport Diplomacy: Laliga Style

Desmond Chiji is the Laliga Global Network Delegate to Nigeria & Ghana. In this interview, he takes us through Laliga's mission in Africa

## What's The Mission Behind The LaLiga Global Network, Especially in Africa?

The mission behind LaLiga Global Network is development, which is the core of our brand. In 2013 and 2016, LaLiga had to rebrand and come up with something better. In 2017, our President Alvaro Tevez and LaLiga clubs decided that we needed to develop a global network programme. And this programme is a way to be closer to the fans for brand activations and of course engagements with broadcasters, international sponsors and other stakeholders. It's also for institutional alliances, greater knowledge of the local market, geo-targeted strategies. We understood the fact that not all LaLiga fans would be able to come and watch matches in Spain, so the best way for us was to go to them for strategic alignment. With this global network Programme, we have about 44 delegates with 11 offices, one of which our Lagos office is. We develop the right marketing mix for each market and we ensure we speak the local language, while seeing to talent development everywhere we find ourselves.

We believe that this programme is one in a million and it's helping us reach our audience all over Africa.

## So Far, Is The Mission Being Achieved?

So far so good, we can say the

mission is going really well. The idea isn't to be satisfied with where we are, but to keep evolving every single day, develop new strategies, improve on existing ones, so that we keep giving our partners and stakeholders the best of LaLiga per time.

We are growing and growing relationships and talents. Last year, we accumulated 2.9 billion in audience base. LaLiga is currently valued as the 12th most important brand in Spain. It generates almost 185,000 direct and indirect jobs. We are the first to come up with a league for the intellectually disabled people.

We are certainly going in the right direction. There's more to be done, but we are ever ready to put in the work, through our delegates.

## How Is LaLiga Deploying Sport Diplomacy in Creating Common Understanding Between Spain And Countries of The World?

As you know, sport diplomacy has to do with culture, the people, stakeholders. This is more reason why we have the global delegates

who take up various initiatives in different countries, with the objectives of enhancing talent pool in the communities, while speaking local language.

Sport being a universal language that everyone understands, we - in collaborative efforts with Spanish Consulate and embassy in Nigeria - create common understanding between Nigeria and Spain

When The Word LaLiga is Mentioned, What Readily Comes To Mind is Spanish Football, But LaLiga's Tagline is "It's Not Football. It's LaLiga". What Does That Mean?

Yes. When the word LaLiga is mentioned, we mean strategy, teamwork, transparency, gender equality, dedication, commitment to our partners/broadcasters and growth. We believe in teaching and learning from people. That's we say LaLiga is more than football.

Had we reduced LaLiga to just what happens on the pitch, we won't be where we are today. We factored everything and everyone in, and that's why we were able to gross 2.9 billion fans, with about 800 million from Africa alone. We have about 200 million followership on social media. And we are grateful to the opportunities that the people of Africa are giving us.

## As a Spanish - Nigerian How Has Your Nigerian Root Helped You On Your Mission As a Delegate?

**//**  
**We are growing and growing relationships and talents. Last year, we accumulated 2.9 billion in audience base. LaLiga is currently valued as the 12th most important brand in Spain.**  
**//**





My Nigerian root has really helped me in delivering on my job, being a part of two different cultures - Nigeria and Spain. I am of Igbo extract. Having family all around me has helped to be more grounded and more focused on the set objectives. The most important thing for LaLiga is bringing together, regardless of their tribal, race or religious affiliation. And that has helped me in getting integrated into the Nigerian society, which I am part of. Nigerians see me as one of theirs and I see my fellow compatriots as mine and LaLiga's. At LaLiga, we are borderless. Because of this, I am able to relate with people and understand their truth, where they are coming from and their aspirations.

I can switch, at will, between Nigerian and Spanish cultures, and strike balance and understanding.

#### **Do You See Yourself As a Diplomat?**

Well...I don't know. All I know is that I'm representing one of the biggest leagues in the world. As a delegate, I have to ensure that I adhere to all the protocols of the company. The company's objectives would always come first, not individual's. And every LaLiga delegate across the world live everyday working towards the objectives, which are to speak the local language, enhance local talents in our host communities and bridging alliances. We are simply representatives of a good cause.

#### **Tell Me About Spain As A Destination.**

Spain as a tourist destination is fantastic. There are several elements that make Spain a choice destination - attractions, geographical location, cultural heritage, extraordinary variety of services, infrastructure, gastronomy, festival of international interests, major sporting events and security.

If you want people to visit your country, you have to ensure they are well protected, so that they can go home and tell tales of the great experience they had in your country.

Spain has a lot to offer. It's the second most visited country in the world, with 83.5million international arrivals in 2019. It's home to the headquarter of United Nations World Tourism Organization. We have cultural cities like Sevilla, Madrid and Barcelona. There are football and other sports. You can visit the stadia and have live experience of Spanish Football.

If you are going to Spain, you can be sure that you'd be well looked after and get value for money. Transportation is seamless. You can travel from Sevilla to Barcelona in 5hrs by road, 1hr by flight and 3hrs by train. We have beautiful beaches. You go once and you'd want to return there every summer.

**//**

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### **What Can Africa and Spain Learn from Each Other?**

One of the most important things Africa can learn from Spain is management. It's not enough to have the best this or that. What's most important in every enterprise is management. You must have the ability to manage every kind of resources unto profitability, growth and sustainability. You have to be able to manage and grow your people. A happy collection of citizens robs off on the destination and the

perception outsiders have about their country. Tourism as the highest employer of labor in the world, grows a country socioeconomically and Spain has been able to deploy it effectively for growth. Nigeria can learn from Spain.

What Spain can learn from Nigeria? Nigeria is a country with a lot of diversities and vibrant cum intelligent youths, who are leading trends and causes. I believe there's something in the cultures, traditions and fashions of the peoples, that Spain can learn from.



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On the sideline of Travel Ndaba, Walk for Love made its debut in Durban, South African, while the 2km walk was simultaneously observed in other African cities

**W**alk For Love (WFL) Not-for-Profit Organization is a pioneer in promoting intra-Africa connectivity, towards creating a domestic market. We believe that the travel and tourism sector plays an important role in Africa's trade, growth and development. Founded by Toni Ukachukwu – a Pan-Africanist – who has passion for a self-reliant Africa, chose to use collaborations and partnerships to foster growth and unity Amongst Africans. His commitment led to the development of a framework that has country Directors in 15 African countries and growing. His vision is to foster love and Unity, by highlighting and promoting the potentials of a domestic market that can sustain Africa's heritage and culture.

The organization's mission is to promote intra-Africa connectivity to drive travel, tourism and trade. This is evidenced by the awareness created with Walk for Love flagship 2k annual walk across African countries simultaneously. WFL has programs at country, regional and continental levels, with the aim to continue advocating for a

connected and borderless Africa. WFLHUB is a marketplace for the travel and tourism ecosystem, to connect all the stakeholders to encourage market linkages, collaborations and partnerships in Africa. WFL was founded in Nov 2021. It was launched with a 2km walk across 14 African countries and 20 cities which flagged off in Nigeria and ended in Capetown with release of our official theme song titled song of love by Vicky Sampson (click to listen).

WFL is poised to empower SMEs in the travel and tourism ecosystem with skill acquisition, mentorship, trainings and retrainings and providing incentives for sustainability.

The organizers believe that an inter-connected Africa will facilitate easy movement of people, promote travel, tourism and trade, and helps to push the agenda of Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) and African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). Furthermore, this will promote African Union Agenda 2063 to achieve a socio-economic development.





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