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**TRANSCRIPT FROM THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2022: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS
HOSTS AND DELIVERS REMARKS AT AFRICAN HERITAGE MONTH
CELEBRATION**

Mayor Eric Adams: You could feel the energy, and before I get started, I just want us to do a moment of silence for our brothers and sisters who we lost in the Bronx Fire in January. Many of them came from Gambia. And I just want the energy of our ancestors to come and bless them and bless their families during this difficult time. And so if we could just have a moment of silence for them. Okay. It's a moment where we will just be quiet, just quiet and feel the presence of our ancestors and the presence of those who we lost, not only in the fire in the Bronx, but those who we've lost through the middle passage, those we lost through the struggles. And so let's just take a moment to reflect on the energy of us being here together.

[Mayor Adams leads moment of silence]

Thank you so much. Thank you so much. This is an important gathering today because you have to understand the significance of the moment and what New York City is. America, if we want to acknowledge it or not, America is one of the most powerful countries on the globe. And New York City is one of the most powerful cities in America. And so as a mayor of the city of New York, I'm one of the most powerful mayors on the globe.

But the connection you must have is that I am proud to be an American, but don't get it mixed up. I'm African. So our ancestors that were ripped apart from the motherland that left in chains and in slavery, they watched me go back with the mayoralty as I stood in Senegal at the door of no return, as I stood in the dungeons in Ghana, as I walked the streets of Lagos in Nigeria, as I drove along the coast of Cape Town and Port Elizabeth in South Africa, as I traveled through Morocco, as I went to [inaudible] and saw the beauty, I realized the power of the continent of Africa and I drew on all of that energy as I took on this thought and this fight to become the mayor of this city. I am here because our ancestors fed in me the energy that I needed to accomplish this task and say, "We are here as Africans." I am unapologetically African.

And if you allow yourselves to have people disconnect you from the success of having an African as the mayor, then shame on you. Shame on you. You should walk around the globe as you do international trade. You should speak to people all over the city and all over the globe

and tell people, "Y'all better recognize the mayor's African." Nothing personifies the strength of a people than those who endured what we have endured. And then to elevate to this position is an indication of the strength of our people. This country is who and what it is because of our ancestors that came from the shores of Africa. The success of America is tied to the labor and work of African people. And now we're able to bring all of that together and use this moment to move forward with a real agenda.

But it's not only me. The speaker of the city council, one of the most powerful positions, is African. The speaker of the assembly is African. The speaker of the senate is African. The attorney general is African. The public advocate is African. All over the place. People who were enslaved broke the barriers of enslavement and used their power, their intellect to elevate themselves to the highest positions in this city, in the most important city in this country. This is a moment of reflection because we know that because of what we have gone through, we know no human beings should go through that.

So in our noble place, we're not using the pain of the past to stop us. We're using that pain to turn us into the purpose that we need to move us forward. So it doesn't matter if you're from China, doesn't matter if you're from South or Central America, doesn't matter if you're from Europe, it doesn't matter if you're from Portugal, if you're from Spain, if you're from Germany. Doesn't matter where you are. We're saying we're going to use our abilities and our intellect to build the partnerships to make sure we can create a greater environment for everyone so we never reach a time again where people have to be enslaved based on where they were or who they are.

And lastly, it's time to reconnect. We have been torn apart for so long, All of our riches and natural resources have been taken from us. We have produced cocoa for other countries to make their chocolate. Our gold has been ripped from the veins of our ancestors and our land for others to prosper for it. Our diamonds have been taken from the continent. All of our natural minerals, other people have exploited and used it. It is now time for Africa to be for Africans and Africans must be in charge of that land. We must reclaim our land. Colonialism cannot be removed just on paper. Colonialism must be removed in actuality. We must build the industries on the continent of Africa and use the power of those of us here in America to speak on behalf of Africa.

Africa has been denied for so long, have been ignored, have been cast aside, has been taken advantage of. Now it's time for us to unite in the manner in which we can build up Africa and use the technology, the ingenuity, all that we've learned should be zero focus on the continent of Africa. Then we will have the homeland that we deserve and we need and we respect. And I hear this energy all over the globe. When I met with our world leaders from Africa, they're all ready. The African diaspora in the Caribbean, the African diaspora in Europe, the African diaspora here in America, the African diaspora all over the globe, it says, "Now is time for us to come together and reunite as cousins and brothers and uncles and aunties that we've been torn apart for." This is the day that our ancestors waited for. It's time for us to live up to that.

So I thank you. I thank you for coming here today. I thank you for igniting my spirit as I move through the continent last year, as I was embraced by the people of Ghana, as I was embraced by the people of Senegal, as I was embraced by the people of Nigeria, of South Africa, of Cote d'Ivoire. You prepared me for this moment. You prayed for me, you held me, you called on our

ancestors without kings and stated, "We are going to protect this brother." All of the skills that we have, you utilize it. And because of that, I'm here to be the mayor of the City of New York. Thank you, African people. Thank you.

[Applause]

So we have a brother we've given a proclamation to Moshood who held onto the African culture for so many years. He's not here but one of his top designers of here so we want to give it to her on behalf of my brother Moshood, the energy that he has brought for so many years. Please give him our love. I spoke to him this evening and he told me you were coming. Thank you so much. Give it up for him, Moshood.

[Applause]

[...]

I want to thank all our council generals that are here. All of our council generals, thank you so much for being here, representing our countries on the continent. We really appreciate you.

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