
JOHN KUFUOR

Former President of Ghana from 2001 to 2009

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John Kufuor was President of Ghana from 2001 to 2009.

President Kufuor was a prime mover in bringing democracy back to Ghana after the country had been subjected to a long line of coups and military dictators. In 2001 he was democratically elected as President, defeating Jerry Rawlings, who had been in office for 20 years. During his time in office President Kufuor implemented major changes in education, health-care, and infrastructure development. His administration's domestic policy was marked by fiscal and monetary stringency, aimed at stabilising a national economy that had stagnated. His social vision was focused on unleashing the entrepreneurial, creative and innovative potential of Ghanaians as a means of creating wealth and hence dealing with the social challenges facing them. This socio-economic vision was encapsulated in the Five Priority Areas Programme, the pursuit of good governance, modernisation of agriculture for rural development, private sector participation, enhanced social services and vigorous infrastructure development.

President Kufuor was Chairman of the regional grouping ECOWAS, the Economic Community of West African States from 2003-2005, and Chairperson of the 53 nation African Union from 2007-2008. He has carved out a reputation for peacemaking: In Sierra Leone, he led negotiations that halted the civil war; In the Ivory Coast, he led the negotiations and peace missions that abetted violence and political conflicts; In Liberia, he ensured the exile of President Charles Taylor to Nigeria thus preventing the country from plunging into a deeper civil war again; In Kenya, he led a commission which finally resolved Kenya's post election crisis. This resulted in the declaration of a new constitution in 2010.

President Kufuor is now Chairman of the Interpeace Governing Council, the leading peace building organisation with 300 peace builders supporting 16 locally-led peace building initiatives programmes running in Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East and Central America. He took over this position from Nobel Peace Prize Winner and former President of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari.

President Kufuor was the winner of the 2008 Chatham House Prize. The award honoured President Kufuor for his tireless and selfless mediation in multiple crises across the continent during his chairmanship of the African Union in 2007. It also recognised his positive role in mediating conflicts with Ghana's more immediate neighbours, including Liberia and the Ivory Coast.