

President Ramaphosa honoured by Traditional Leaders

Chief “Dwasaho”, which means “The Great Warrior”, is the name President Cyril Ramaphosa was given by Ivorian traditional leadership during his State Visit on Thursday, 2 December 2021, to the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire.

The President arrived to a warm reception and loud cheers by the locals who held huge banners of his face at the City Hall in Abidjan where he was given the status of a Chief.

Overcome with emotion, President Ramaphosa was handed over the Key of the Autonomous district of Abidjan and presented with and robed in Ivorian traditional garb by Traditional Leadership during the handover ceremony.

He said the gesture of honour of traditional recognition was unbelievable as he never expected this type of honour being bestowed on him.

“I am truly humbled by this honour, it is impressive in many ways, because it is a demonstration of the rituals of our African people and ancestors.

“You started off with three greetings and I immediately thought about home but this is my new home now,” the President said.

Filled with gratitude and humility, the President said that he’s always wanted to be a Chief and now the Ivorians had given him the “key to the city as well as traditional title of being a chief among Ivorian people”.

“The rituals that you have connected us between the present and the past and they also give us a pathway to the future. I am delighted that the people of Côte d’Ivoire are not only focussing on the past and present but they are also focussing on the future. That future for us was clearly represented and demonstrated in the important agreements that we signed with the Government of Côte d’Ivoire,” he said.

Reacting to the ceremony, the President said that “this ceremony has given me this wonderful robe. I never thought in my life that I would wear a crown. I never thought I would also wear a necklace with an elephant, an elephant is a totem for my family”.

The statesman said the gesture by traditional leaders also proved their common ancestry and he felt very connected to the local people in Abidjan.

Speaking at the ceremony, Governor of the Autonomous District of Abidjan, Robert Beugré Mambé, said that Côte d’Ivoire was now the President’s home second to South Africa.

“You are our family. (Our ancestors) they are there for you for whatever you may need in the future ... we will pray for you and South Africa to be supported for whatever you need in the future,” he said.

Later in the evening, President Ramaphosa was hosted by President Ouattara and Mrs Ouattara at a State Banquet in his honour and was bestowed with Côte d’Ivoire’s distinguished Order of the Dignity of the Grand Cross.