

Building The Real Wakanda: Ghana's Asante King Brings An Investment Pitch To Washington

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Summary

Ghana's Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, will host Millennium Excellence Week in Washington D.C. this August, aiming to mobilize the global Black diaspora and American investors to finance Africa's future. The initiative seeks to build a "real Wakanda" by transforming cultural and political ties into organized economic power. The Africa Business Summit targets \$500 million in capital commitments for Ghana's infrastructure, including a \$620M transportation system and a \$120M cold-storage hub, alongside tourism projects. The week also features the Akwasidae Kese Festival, bringing sacred Asante traditions to the U.S. This effort positions the diaspora as active participants in Ghana's development, fostering self-reliance and ensuring partnerships benefit the nation's growth.



KUMASI, GHANA - MAY 12: Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II waves to the crowd from his palanquin, known as the Konkroma, during the Akwasidae celebration on May 12, 2024, in Kumasi, Ghana. In late August, the Asantehene will travel to Washington, D.C., for a royal visit highlighting the growing power of the global Black diaspora and Ghana's role within it. -GETTY IMAGES

For years, Ryan Coogler, Chadwick Boseman and Marvel Comics have brought to the world Wakanda, an imaginary African nation powerful enough to control its resources, protect its culture and build its future without the rest of the world's permission.

This August, one of the African continent's most prominent traditional rulers will come to Washington, D.C. with a real-life version of that ambition.

Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, also known as the Asantehene, will lead Millennium Excellence Week—a variety of business, cultural and ceremonial events intended to bring together African leaders, American investors and some of the diaspora's most influential voices. Behind the royal pageantry is a practical proposition: Africa's future can be financed, built and shaped with the help of a global Black diaspora whose political, cultural and financial power has rarely been organized around investment at this scale.

The visit will include the Africa Business Summit at MGM National Harbor Hotel & Casino, where organizers hope to convert conversations about Africa's potential into at least \$500 million in structured capital commitments. It will culminate with the Akwasidae Kese Festival at Bowie State University, bringing one of the Asante Kingdom's most sacred celebrations into the heart of America.

During Millennium Excellence Week, the message will be difficult to miss: building a real Wakanda will require more than imagination. It will require capital, narrative change, institutions, infrastructure—and a stronger bridge between Africa and its descendants abroad.

“This is not a conference,” said Millennium Excellence Foundation, the group behind the event. “It is a deal-making arena - where keynote vision meets boardroom action, and where handshakes become signed agreements.”

For decades, the relationship between the African continent and Black America has largely been expressed through culture, politics and shared history. Millennium Excellence Foundation is attempting to add another dimension: organized economic power.

From August 24 to August 30, the foundation will convene investors, government officials, business leaders and cultural figures across the Washington metropolitan region for a series of events spanning recognition, religious and royal tradition, and dealmaking. The week includes a two-day business summit, an awards gala being held in the United States for the first time in its 25-year history and the Akwasidae Kese grand durbar.

That combination—royalty, culture and capital—is what makes this more than another investment conference or ceremonial royal visit. It is an effort to position the diaspora not simply as an audience for African progress, but as an active participant in financing it.

To engage participants and galvanize the diaspora around the Asantehene’s royal visit to America, the Millennium Excellence Foundation has tapped Dr. Adjoa B. Asamoah—an impact strategist and leading champion of the CROWN Act—to serve as the visit’s principal consultant on the U.S. side.

That work carries a larger ambition. The fictional depiction of Wakanda was never compelling simply because it was rich. It captured the imagination because it represented an African nation whose resources served its own people, whose traditions coexisted with technological progress and whose relationships with the outside world were shaped by confidence rather than dependency.

That is the vision hovering over the upcoming Washington visit of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the Asantehene.

The Asantehene is not Ghana’s head of state. He is the traditional king of the Asante people and the custodian of the Golden Stool, the sacred symbol of the Asante nation’s unity and authority. His office survived warfare, exile and British colonial rule, and it continues to carry significant cultural and political weight in modern Ghana.

Otumfuo Osei Tutu II operates in both worlds: preserving the rituals and institutions of the Asante Kingdom while engaging presidents, diplomats, investors and international organizations.

That dual role helps explain the shape of Millennium Excellence Week. The schedule moves from a royal golf invitational and a two-day business summit to an awards gala and the Akwasidae Kese Festival, before going to one of the most important observances on the Asante traditional calendar, the Akwasidae Kese grand durbar.

The business summit arrives in America at a moment when the global Black diaspora appears to be drawing closer. Social media has reduced the distance between Black communities in the United States, Africa, the Caribbean, Europe and Latin America. A speech in Accra, a protest in London or a political debate in Bridgetown can now circulate throughout the diaspora in hours, all without the help of traditional institutions.



Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama, center, Barbados Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley, right, and other dignitaries attend a wreath-laying ceremony honoring victims of the transatlantic slave trade at Christiansborg Castle during a Juneteenth commemoration and reparations conference in Accra, Ghana. The Asantehene's Washington visit comes as Black leaders across the world intensify calls for reparations from Europe and the United States for the enduring harms of enslavement, colonialism and resource extraction. Friday, June 19, 2026. (AP Photo/Reuben Ekow Quansah) - COPYRIGHT 2026 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

The growing reparations movement is one expression of that connection. Barbados and other Caribbean nations have pushed reparatory justice beyond a historical argument about enslavement and toward a broader debate over development, debt, ownership and the continuing economic consequences of colonial extraction.

At the same time, Ghana and other African nations have made more deliberate appeals to descendants of the diaspora through citizenship, residency, tourism and investment initiatives.

For some in the African diaspora, that outreach has become increasingly tangible. More are exploring citizenship, property ownership, retirement and business opportunities outside the United States. While it is premature to describe this move as a mass departure, the interest speaks to something larger than just tourism.

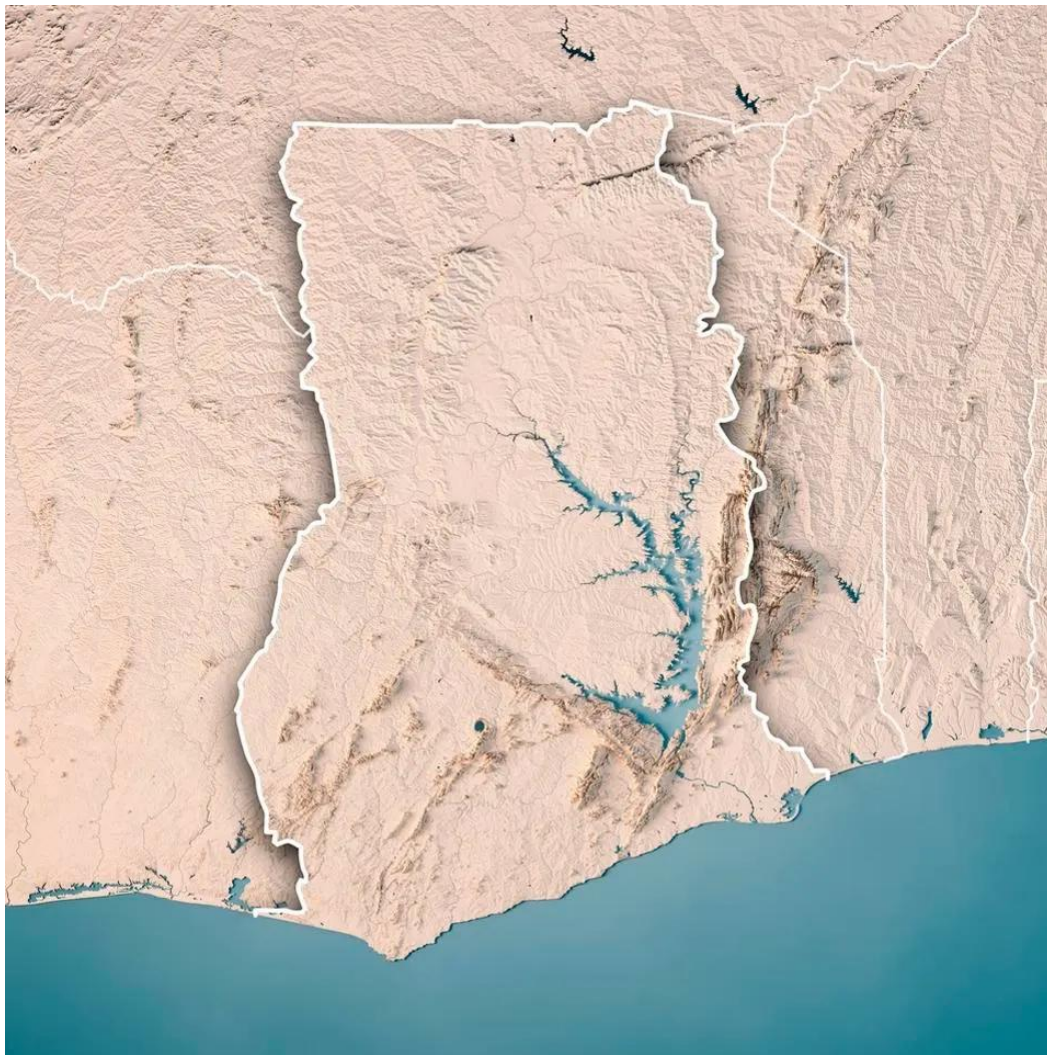
It is a search for a deeper cultural, political and economic belonging.

For some Black Americans, that is an insurance policy against all the uncertainty at home that seems to be continuing to unfold from America's retreat from diversity, equity and inclusion policies and many of the civil rights protections, such as the Voting Rights Act, that set the stage for modern-day American success.

The unanswered question is whether those cultural and political connections can become durable economic power.

Afrobeats, hip-hop, dancehall, African fashion and Black digital culture already operate within a shared global marketplace. That is what makes the Asantehene's visit more than a royal occasion. It is a test of whether the global Black diaspora can convert increasing connectivity into economic coordination—and whether the dream of building a real Wakanda can move from imagination to infrastructure.

That ambition will be tested over seven days in the Washington metropolitan region, with the business summit serving as the economic centerpiece. Structured to generate half a billion dollars in capital for the West African nation, the first day of the summit will focus on sector presentations and investment pitches; the second will move into private deal rooms, bilateral meetings and the formal signing of agreements.



A 3D topographic map of Ghana highlights Lake Volta, one of the world's largest artificial reservoirs by surface area and a central piece of the country's economic infrastructure. During the Asantehene's Washington visit, Ghana is expected to promote a proposed \$620 million Volta Lake transport system designed to connect the country's southern ports with northern communities, lower freight costs and expand access to regional and export markets.

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Some of the projects that will be uplifted at the summit include a \$620 million transportation system linking southern and northern Ghana through Lake Volta, opening up a unique waterway-based trade link that will enhance the nation's infrastructure. Other projects include a roughly \$500 million pharmaceutical and textile industrial park and a \$350 million agro-industrial development centered on sugar production, processing and renewable energy.

Solving for Ghana's infrastructure gaps is a top priority for the Asantehene's visit, according to organizers of the summit and the visit at large. And those infrastructure gaps are visible across the continent and Ghana. The World Bank recently approved \$500 million to improve Ghana's rural roads and market access, citing poor road conditions, high transportation costs and significant post-harvest losses.

A recent Associated Press report from Kenya showed the human cost of the same problem: farmers can successfully grow crops for international buyers and still lose much of their income when heat, weak transportation links and inadequate intervention occur before the harvest reaches market.

In response, one project being uplifted by the Asantehene's visit is a \$120 million air-cargo and cold-storage hub in Tamale, located in the northern part of the Black Star nation.

The summit will also be illuminating Ghana's future as an economic powerhouse and a tourism center. One of the projected highlights is an Accra coastal tourism project seeking capital to connect Black Star Square, Osu Castle and the Kwame Nkrumah Museum through a strategically placed beachfront corridor. The project will be a mixed-use development that will include "hotels, convention facilities, retail destinations, public recreational spaces and cultural attractions," according to the summit's organizers.

Ghana is now one of Africa's ten largest economies. The IMF projects its nominal GDP at roughly \$118.3 billion in 2026, placing it 10th on the continent, just behind Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo and slightly ahead of Côte d'Ivoire. The economy is also growing faster than Africa as a whole. The IMF expects Ghana's real GDP to expand by about 4.8% in 2026, compared with 4.3% for sub-Saharan Africa.

The African Development Bank is slightly more optimistic, forecasting 5% growth in 2026 and 5.4% in 2027, following estimated growth of 5.8% in 2025.

Ghana also has one of the higher per-capita outputs among West Africa's major economies, at roughly \$3,300, and inflation has fallen sharply from the crisis-era highs that helped force the country into a \$3 billion IMF program. The numbers suggest a country moving from stabilization toward growth, although the visit's investment pitch will ultimately depend on whether that recovery can be translated into infrastructure, industrial production and jobs.

These positive economic conditions make this visit even more timely, given the nation's need for capital to continue its own self-reliance and economic growth. The country is still emerging from a debt crisis, while currency volatility, regulatory uncertainty and project execution remain central concerns for international investors. The summit's success will therefore be measured not by the number of agreements announced onstage, but by how much capital is ultimately deployed.

The visit of the Asantehene will also include the Millennium Excellence Awards and Gala, which event organizers call an opportunity to showcase "diasporan brilliance at home and abroad. This

year's honorees are yet to be announced. Past award recipients include: Ghana's sitting president, H.E. John Dramani Mahama; former Nigerian president, H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo; former Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Kofi Annan; Nigerian writer, playwright, and poet Wole Soyinka; and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Ghana's path to actualizing a Wakanda-like vision of African wealth protected from outside extraction and converted into national power will necessarily be more complicated. It will require foreign capital, global partnerships and investors seeking returns. The challenge is ensuring that those partnerships help Ghana retain more of the value created by its resources, workers and ideas.

That is the real test awaiting the Asantehene in Washington. The pageantry may attract attention, and the awards may celebrate achievement. But building a real Wakanda will depend on what happens in the deal rooms—and whether the promises made there survive long after the royal visit ends.

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