

BY: Senator PARKER

HONORING Masai Ujiri upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by FACE Africa at its Ninth Annual Wash Gala on March 31, 2018

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to call attention to those events which serve to enhance the cultural enrichment and preserve the heritage of Africa; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Masai Ujiri upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by FACE Africa at its Ninth Annual Wash Gala "A Night Celebrating African Excellence" to be held at The Current at Chelsea Piers, New York, New York, on Saturday, March 31, 2018; and

WHEREAS, The FACE Africa WASH Gala is held annually in New York City to raise awareness and funds for clean water projects; in addition, it is a celebration of Africans and Friends of Africa making a difference in their respective industries and communities; and

WHEREAS, This year, FACE Africa's goal is to raise \$500,000 to provide Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programs and facilities to communities in rural Liberia and Nigeria; and

WHEREAS, The theme for this year's gala "Water Fuels the Future" is more than a statement, it is the recognition that the availability of clean drinking water is a prerequisite to achieving all of the other development indicators like health, education, gender equality, growth, community commerce, agriculture, and self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, Masai Ujiri was named President and General Manager of Basketball Operations of the Toronto Raptors on May 31, 2013, returning to the organization where he received his first front office position in 2007; and

WHEREAS, A native of Nigeria, Masai Ujiri brings tremendous knowledge and extensive global connections to the Raptors; he played professionally in Europe for six years, with stops in Belgium, Germany, England, Greece and Finland; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, he has scouted all over the world, including Europe, Africa, Asia and South America; he has also managed and coached the Nigerian junior and senior National teams; and

WHEREAS, On August 27, 2010, Masai Ujiri became the first African General Manager in the NBA when he was hired to run the Denver Nuggets' basketball operations department; this was also his second stint with the club after working as a scout from 2003-2006, and the team's Director of International Scouting during the 2006-07 season; and

WHEREAS, Prior to joining the Denver Nuggets, Masai Ujiri worked as an International Scout for the Orlando Magic; and

WHEREAS, Equally driven to make change off the court, Masai Ujiri has built a legacy of action with his not-for-profit organization, Giants of Africa, which was born from a willingness to dream big; and

WHEREAS, Using basketball as a tool to educate and enrich the lives of African youth, Masai Ujiri and Giants of Africa also provide quality facilities, coaching and instruction, while enhancing the growth of the game of basketball within Africa; and

WHEREAS, This year, under the able direction of Masai Ujiri, Giants of Africa built and launched a basketball court in an underserved area of Kigali, Rwanda; and

WHEREAS, Striving to create a pathway for youth, Masai Ujiri uses basketball to create opportunities to better their lives; he has also served as the Director of the NBA's Basketball Without Borders program since 2002; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Masai Ujiri upon the occasion of his designation for special recognition by FACE Africa at its Ninth Annual Wash Gala on March 31, 2018; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Masai Ujiri.