

Statement of Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health
March 24, 2010

Chairman Payne, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the Committee:

I welcome the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss our policy in Sub-Saharan Africa. As you know this is my first appearance before this committee, and I salute your commitment to Africa as well as your efforts to examine tough issues. I look forward to working with the Congress and especially with this committee to identify appropriate tools to assist our on-going efforts.

President Obama has a strong interest in Africa and has made the continent one of our top foreign policy concerns. This has been evident throughout his first year in office. The President's visit to Ghana last July, the earliest visit made by a U.S. president to the continent, underscores Africa's importance to the United States. Last September, at the UN General Assembly, the President hosted a lunch with 26 African heads of state. He also met in the oval office with President Kikwete of Tanzania, President Khama of Botswana, and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai of Zimbabwe. And the President invited dozens of people to the White House to see him give the Robert F. Kennedy Prize for Political Courage to a leading women's organization from Zimbabwe.

All of the President's senior foreign policy advisors followed his lead—many of them travelling to Africa as well. The U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations visited five African countries last June, including Liberia and Rwanda. Deputy Secretary of State Jack Lew traveled to Ethiopia and Tanzania in June 2009.

Last August, Secretary Clinton and I embarked on an 11-day, seven-country trip across the continent. In January, Undersecretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero headed the U.S. delegation to the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, where we discussed a range of issues including democracy and governance, climate change, and food security. Undersecretary Otero also visited Kenya and Uganda.

From Ethiopia, I travelled to Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria where I met with senior government officials and members of civil society. We discussed the need for free, fair, and transparent elections. We also talked about other issues such as regional stability, economic development, and the responsible use of resource revenues. I stressed the need for governments, particularly those that have discovered large quantities of oil like Ghana and Uganda, to use their new found wealth responsibly.

President Obama has said repeatedly that the United States views Africa as our partner and as a partner of the international community. While Africa has very serious and well-known challenges to confront, the President, Secretary Clinton, and I are confident that Africa and Africans will rise to meet and overcome these challenges.

Last June when the President was in Ghana, he said, “We believe in Africa's potential and promise. We remain committed to Africa's future. We will be strong partners with the African people.” Africa is essential to our interconnected world, and our alliance with one another must be rooted in mutual respect and accountability. I echo the President’s sentiment that U.S. policy must start from the simple premise that Africa’s future is up to Africans.

The Obama Administration is committed to a positive and forward looking policy in Africa, but we know that additional assistance will not automatically produce success across the continent. Instead, success will be defined by how well we work together as partners to build Africa’s capacity for long-term change and ultimately eliminate the continued need for such assistance. As Africa’s partner, the United States is ready to contribute to Africa’s growth and stabilization, but ultimately, African leaders and countries must take control of their futures.

Just like the United States is important to Africa, Africa is important to the United States. The history and heritage of this country is directly linked to Africa. But the significance and relevance of Africa reaches far beyond ethnicity and national origin. It is based on our fundamental interests in promoting democratic institutions and good governance, peace and stability, and sustained economic growth across sub-Saharan Africa. All of these interests affect the United States. The United States will focus on these areas and others that are critical to the future success of Africa.

STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

We will work with African governments, the international community, and civil society to strengthen democratic institutions and protect the democratic gains made in recent years in many African countries. A key element in Africa's transformation is sustained commitment to democracy, rule of law, and constitutional norms. Africa has made significant progress in this area. Botswana, Ghana, Tanzania, Mauritius, and South Africa are a few examples of countries showing that commitment. But progress in this area must be more widespread across Africa.

Some scholars and political analysts are saying that democracy in Africa has reached a plateau, and that we may be witnessing the beginning of a democratic recession. They point to flawed presidential elections in places like Kenya, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe; the attempts by leaders in Niger, Uganda, and Cameroon to extend their terms of office; and the re-emergence of military interventionism in Guinea, Madagascar, and Niger.

Moreover, democracy remains fragile or tenuous in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, and arguably Africa's most important country, Nigeria, which continues to experience political tensions caused by the prolonged illness of President Yar'Adua.

The United States welcomes President Yar'Adua's recent return to Nigeria. However, we remain concerned that there may be some in Nigeria who are putting their personal ambitions above the health of the President and more importantly ahead of the political stability and political health of the country.

Nigeria is simply too important to Africa and too important to the United States and the international community for us not to be concerned and engaged. Widespread instability in Nigeria could have a tsunami-like ripple effect across West Africa and the global community.

During my recent visit to Nigeria, I was encouraged by the steps taken by Nigeria's elected officials at the national and state level to elevate Goodluck Jonathan to Acting President. Although political progress has been made, Nigeria still faces significant political challenges and uncertainty in the run-up to the next presidential and national assembly elections in 2011.

It is important that Nigeria improve its electoral system reinvigorate its economy and resolve the conflicts in the Niger Delta and end communal violence and impunity in Plateau State. It is also critically important that all of Nigeria's

leaders act responsibly and reaffirm their commitment to good governances, stability and democracy by choosing constitutional rule.

Our engagement in Guinea following the September 28 massacre continues to yield tangible results. Working with international and regional partners we insured that junta leader Dadis Camara would not return to Conakry from Morocco, where he sought medical attention after an assassination attempt. He is now in Ouagadougou. Our calls for, and support of, a transitional government and clear path to elections were effective – we are moving in the right direction and elections are scheduled June 27.

Nigeria, Guinea and other African countries need civilian governments that deliver services to their people, independent judiciaries that respect and enforce the rule of law, professional security forces that respect human rights, strong and effective legislative institutions, a free and responsible press, and a dynamic civil society. This is not a list of options or some menu from which governments and leaders may pick and choose to suit their own ambitions. There has been far too much of that behavior in the past. Rather, all of these rights are requirements for a stable and prosperous Africa that will help ensure a brighter future for the African people.

The political and economic success of Africa depends a great deal on the effectiveness, sustainability, and reliability of its democratic institutions. That means a focus on process and progress, not on personalities. African leaders must recognize that the United States is engaging and building long-term ties with their countries and not just with them. Credible, strong, and independent institutions are the key to this deeper relationship. Over the next two years, 27 countries in sub-Saharan Africa will hold elections. We encourage those governments to get it right. To level the playing field, clean up the voter rolls, open up the media, count the votes fairly, and give democracy a chance.

Although elections are but one component in the process of democratization, there is a strong correlation between electoral processes, including strong and independent electoral institutions, successful elections, and efforts to consolidate democracy. And there is strong evidence that suggests that democratic governments perform better economically.

To stay abreast of developments in these important contests I've instituted a monthly meeting with NGO's to discuss upcoming elections, including sharing

experiences and best practices, and ensuring that scarce resources are equitably spread throughout the continent.

In Kenya, for example, which is scheduled to hold elections in 2012, we have redoubled our efforts to strengthen democracy and governance in the wake of 2007-2008 post-election violence. Our multi-year investment in strengthening Parliament continues to show strong results: as a result of U.S. institutional capacity building and material support, Parliamentary business is now broadcast live across the country to an eager and interested audience. We also co-hosted, in conjunction with the strong assistance of the House Democracy Partnership, Members of Parliament in order that they benefit from the experience of their peers here on Capitol Hill. As part of our efforts to empower independent voices in Kenya, we sponsored the National Youth Forum, which brought together leaders from all youth-oriented civil society groups to work jointly on democracy and reform initiatives. On the other hand, the Secretary warned that there will be “no business as usual” with those who impede democratic progress. This is not an idle threat as we already revoked the visas of selected high-ranking government officials and sent warning letters to others.

We will continue to work with, support, and recognize Africans who support democracy and respect for human rights. This includes working with governments, local NGOs, and international actors to highlight concerns such as security force abuses, infringements on civil liberties, prison conditions, corruption, and discrimination against persons due to their sexual orientation.

This month, the First Lady and the Secretary presented the 2010 International Women of Courage Award to Jestina Mukoko of the Zimbabwe Peace Project and Ann Njogu of the Kenya Center for Rights Education and Awareness. The courage these women exhibited in confronting injustice in their countries is an inspiration to all of us.

The United States will continue to work with Africans, as partners, to build stronger democratic institutions and to advance democracy in Africa. It is in that context of partnership, that I am encouraged by the growing political maturity of the African Union. At the most recent African Union summit in Addis Ababa, the assembled heads of state and government adopted important new measures to strengthen the continent’s democratic institutions and make clear that it would not be a club for strongmen and coup leaders. I applaud African leaders for approving new rules and procedures that bind the AU to reject "constitutional coups" by leaders who seek to illegitimately extend their terms in office.

PROMOTING ECONOMIC GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM

Africa's future success and global importance are dependent on its continued economic progress. Working alongside African countries to promote and advance sustained economic development and growth is another Obama administration priority. Africa has made measurable inroads to increase prosperity. Mauritius, Ghana, Rwanda, Botswana, Tanzania, Uganda, and Cape Verde have made significant economic strides. Yet Africa remains the poorest and most vulnerable continent on the globe.

To help turn this situation around, we must work to revitalize Africa's agricultural sector, which employs more than 70 percent of Africans directly or indirectly.

The United States is committed to supporting a new Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative, which builds upon the model of the African-led Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) to partner with countries and other development partners to reduce hunger, poverty and under-nutrition. The President's commitment of at least \$3.5 billion over three years to agricultural development will help us work with African farmers to employ new agricultural methods and technologies, and help them deliver their production to markets. The initiative was developed to help enhance Africa's ability to meet its food needs through improved production, markets, and distribution systems. It will also enable African states to further develop their agricultural industries, and spur economic growth across the continent. We conducted multiple briefing sessions with the African diplomatic corps on the Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative before it was officially released. This garnered continent-wide support, as well as important input, on further development of the plan.

In addition to the Food Security Initiative we are funding smaller projects that will provide employment and income, especially in the agricultural sector. For example, in Zimbabwe we are implementing a program that promotes agricultural livelihoods through activities that stimulate agricultural production, restore the agricultural value chain and build market linkages. We are also implementing a revolving loan guarantee program that helps small landholders obtain agricultural inputs and training.

I was encouraged by the election of President Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi as the next chair of the African Union. Malawi has made great progress in the field of agriculture and the President indicated that he plans to use his chairmanship of the AU to advance agriculture in Africa. Countries that are food secure are stronger, more stable, and better able to weather economic downturns.

The United States also wants to strengthen its trading relationship with Africa. We already have strong ties in energy, textiles, and transportation equipment. But we can and should do more. The Obama administration is committed to working with our African partners to maximize the opportunities created by our trade preference programs such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). And we hope more African nations will take advantage of AGOA.

We also continue to explore ways to promote African private sector growth and investment, especially for small and medium-sized businesses. The AF Bureau established an Economic Growth Working Group in 2009 that meets regularly with economic and commercial counselors from the Washington-based African Diplomatic Corps to bring together U.S. Government agencies and businesses and to create business and economic links. This group will try to leverage the opportunities under AGOA as well as work to expand trade and investment throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

The President's Entrepreneurship Summit, scheduled for April 26-27, will highlight the important role entrepreneurship can play in economic growth and community development. It will include 24 African businesspeople, including nine women. In advance of the Summit, our embassies are holding roundtables with private sector and non-government stakeholders to explore new programs and partnerships that can continue long after the Washington event.

In the midst of these efforts, we cannot forget the critical role African women play as producers and agricultural traders – they must take part in this economic growth. We must ensure that African women are an equal part of Africa's economic future and success.

IMPROVING HEALTH, COMBATTING HIV/AIDS AND OTHER PANDEMICS

Historically the United States has focused on public health in Africa. We are committed to not only continuing, but increasing, that focus. From HIV/AIDS to malaria, Africans endure and suffer a multitude of health pandemics that weaken

countries on many fronts. In addition, weak health systems mean that many Africans cannot easily access the care they need, due to transportation, stock outs of commodities, or the lack of trained health professionals, especially in rural areas. Women and children continue to become sick and die from easily preventable conditions. Desperately sick men and women cannot work and contribute to the economy, or provide for their families. They cannot serve in the armed forces or police and they cannot provide for the security of their countries.

The Obama Administration has pledged \$63 billion over six years to meet public health challenges throughout the world under the Global Health Initiative, or GHI. GHI will have a particular focus on improving the health of women, newborns and children through programs including infectious disease, nutrition, maternal and child health, and safe water. Since GHI aims to maximize the sustainable health impact the United States achieves for every dollar invested, we will work in partnership with African governments and civil society, supporting their efforts to ensure that high-quality treatment, prevention, and care are accessible to communities throughout Africa. We will also engage in dialogue with partner countries, multilateral organizations, and other donors to ensure that there is a shared global response to global health needs.

Under the Initiative we will partner with Africans to invest in public health systems, including training more medical professionals and ensuring that there are good jobs in their own countries once they are trained. We will also support partner countries in focusing on maternal, neonatal, and pediatric health care, which are closely related to several Millennium Development Goals.

By linking our existing health programs, the Global Health Initiative will strengthen and leverage our existing disease-specific programs such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), enabling us to respond in a coordinated way to the needs of African populations.

We are also working with governments on other projects that will improve the health of Africans. For example, we are working with the government of Malawi and civil society to support the distribution of supplies for point-of-use water disinfection, hygiene promotion and proper storage. We are also helping the government to spread the message on the need for good hygiene practices like hand washing with soap, protecting wells to improve water quality, and maintaining boreholes in communities to improve access to safe water.

PREVENTING AND RESOLVING CONFLICTS

The United States is committed to working with African states and the international communities to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts and disputes. Conflict destabilizes states and borders, stifles economic growth and investment, and robs young Africans of the opportunity for an education and a better life. Conflict can set back a nation for a generation. Throughout Africa, there has been a notable reduction in the number of conflicts over the past decade.

The brutal conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia are over, and Liberia transformed itself into a democracy through the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first female head of state. These examples of what can be accomplished in a short period of time should make us proud and hopeful for solving the problems of seemingly intractable conflicts elsewhere. The United States provided \$168 million to assist the military and police to strengthen the state's capacity to secure its territory and promote the rule of law.

However, areas of turmoil and political unrest in countries such as Guinea, Somalia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger and Madagascar create both internal and regional instability. Furthermore, we must not forget the extreme harm inflicted by gender-based violence and the recruitment of child soldiers. The Obama administration is working to end these conflicts so that peace and economic progress can replace instability and uncertainty.

President Obama demonstrated his commitment to work with African leaders to help resolve these conflicts through the appointment of the Special Presidential Envoy for Sudan, General Scott Gration, whose mandate is to ensure the implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The Special Advisor for the Great Lakes, former Congressman Howard Wolpe, is also working to address the root cause of conflict and to bring peace and stability to the Eastern Congo. Sustained U.S. diplomatic engagement in the Great Lakes already contributes to better relations between Rwanda and the DRC, a jump-start to security sector reform in the DRC, and greater stability in Burundi as it enters its second phase of elections. The Administration is also seeking to ameliorate the worst impacts of gender-based violence through USAID, State, and DoD programs to address prevention and treatment, the need to bring perpetrators to justice, and to support public advocacy efforts.

We will also continue our cooperation with regional leaders to look for ways to end Somalia's protracted political and humanitarian crisis. We continue to call for well-meaning actors in the region to support the Djibouti Peace process of

inclusion and reconciliation, and to reject those extremists and their supporters that seek to exploit the suffering of the Somali people and impose an alien ideology of intolerance on the country.

Additionally, the United States is proactive in working with African leaders, civil society organizations, and the international community to prevent new conflicts. We are cooperating with African leaders to defuse possible disagreements before they become sources of open hostility.

The Bureau takes advantage of 1207 funding from the Department of Defense to further support peace-building requirements. In northern Uganda, USAID and 1207 funding are supporting Uganda in its post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction in the north of the country, which was previously the location of major human rights violations and humanitarian need because of the actions of the Lord's Resistance Army.

We provide a full menu of programs to build African capacity to manage conflict, including support for the African Peace and Security Architecture. USAID provides funding for the ECOWAS early warning system. The United States also supports the Africa Standby Force at the continental (AU), subregional, and member states level with equipment, training and advisory support.

As we pursue these avenues of promoting stability and peace in Somalia, we are also shouldering the lion's share of humanitarian assistance to the people of Somalia. The United States consistently is the largest single country donor of humanitarian assistance to Somalia, providing more than \$123 million in humanitarian assistance in 2009. In the past three years, the U.S. has been the lead contributor to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with over \$185 million in training, logistics, and equipment. AMISOM successfully enabled the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to withstand the efforts by terrorist group al-Shabaab to take control of South Central Somalia.

We are also working to train African peacekeepers to take the lead in ensuring peace and security on their continent. The Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) Program is a State Department, Bureau of African Affairs program with the mission of enhancing the capacity of African partner nations to participate in multinational peacekeeping operations in Africa. ACOTA trains and equips African peacekeepers and enables African partner nations to be self sufficient in the long term by training African peacekeeping trainers and helping to develop peacekeeping training facilities. ACOTA's programs of instruction fully comply with United Nations standards. In

addition to soldier and staff peacekeeping tasks, the training includes HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, human rights, and the prevention of gender-based violence, child exploitation, and trafficking-in-persons. ACOTA now has 25 African partner nations and since 2005 has trained more than 107,000 African peacekeepers of whom over 90 percent have deployed to United Nations and African Union peacekeeping operations. The objective of training 75,000 for peacekeeping in Africa was accomplished one year ahead of schedule and today African peacekeepers represent over 30 percent of global peacekeepers.

WORKING TO RESOLVE TRANSNATIONAL CHALLENGES

We also seek to deepen our cooperation with African states to address both old and new transnational challenges. The 21st century ushered in new transnational challenges for Africa and the world. Africa's poverty puts it at a distinct disadvantage in dealing with major global and transnational problems such as climate change, narco-trafficking, trafficking-in-persons and arms, and the illegal exploitation of Africa's minerals and maritime resources.

Meeting the climate and clean energy challenge is a top priority for the United States and the Obama Administration. Climate change affects the entire globe. Its potential impact on water supplies and food security can be disastrous. As President Obama said in Ghana, "while Africa gives off less greenhouse gasses than any other part of the world, it will be the most threatened by climate change." Often those who contributed the least to the problem are the ones who are affected the most by it, and the United States is committed to working with Africans to find viable solutions to adapt to the severe consequences of climate change. We are making concerted efforts to persuade African countries to sign on to the Copenhagen Accord. Our Ambassadors have raised the issue at the highest levels with host governments. Additionally, Climate Envoy Todd Stern and I called in the African Diplomatic Corps to urge association with the Copenhagen Accord. These efforts resulted in more African associations with the accord.

Narco-trafficking is a major challenge for Africa and the world. If we do not address it, African countries will be vulnerable to the destabilizing force of narcotics trafficking in the years ahead. As Africa faces the impact of these new transnational problems, the United States will actively work with leaders and governments across the continent to confront all issues that are global in nature.

STRATEGIC DIALOUGE WITH ANGOLA, NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

I would now like to turn to our new programs and initiatives, which work to implement our policies to move our partnership with Africa forward. We are establishing in-depth, high level dialogues with South Africa, Angola, Nigeria, and the African Union. We are increasing our cooperation with other countries interested in Africa such as Canada, the UK, France, China, Japan, and multilateral bodies such as the EU.

We also hope that increased funding for projects and programs in Africa, as requested in the 2011 budget, will be approved by Congress. With enhanced resources we can further strengthen our partnership with Africa.

NEED FOR GREATER DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE

Finally, one of my personal goals is to expand our diplomatic presence in Africa. I am working with the Administration and Congress to increase resources – both funding and people – at our embassies and consulates. I want more American diplomats living and working in Africa. An increased diplomatic presence is important for our mutual progress on all of these pressing issues. It is my sincere desire to open more consulates in Africa, which will enable us to reach citizens beyond the capital cities. We must be in Mombasa as well as Nairobi, we must be in Goma as well as Kinshasa, and must be in Kano as well as Abuja.

In furtherance of our goal to expand our reach on the continent, the Bureau of African Affairs is working with the Department to deploy 74 new “Diplomacy 3.0” entry-level Foreign Service positions to overseas posts in the coming months. Approximately 26 of these new officers will work on Democracy and Good Governance and 24 will focus on issues related to Economic Development. Many will cover Transnational Issue portfolios as well. The Bureau is also working, on a priority basis, to address the logistical, staffing, funding, and approval requirements to establish a facility in Kano, Nigeria, my top priority for expanding U.S. diplomatic presence in Africa.

At the same time, we are keeping pace with Africa’s technological developments to provide information about the United States via SMS text messaging and internet-enabled mobile technology. Our Embassy in Khartoum, Sudan, for example, began a mobile messaging service that can handle up to 10,000 mobile phone subscribers, offering educational advising alerts, invitations to the latest U.S. Embassy cultural programming and updates for English instructors.

AMERICAN CENTERS CAN PROVIDE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OUTREACH

To extend outreach to new audiences, especially young people, we are actively pursuing funds to renovate five free-standing American centers throughout Africa. Instead of requiring African citizens to come through elaborate security procedures in order to meet with us in our embassies, we are taking our resources and employees to more accessible spaces.

We must also do a better job of using our diplomatic presence on the continent to listen to the people of Africa and learn from them how we can better work together on the challenges they face.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions you have.