Raising the Level of Engagement Between America and Africa

Presented to the U.S. House Subcommittee
On Africa and Global Health
March 24, 2010

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I'd like to thank Subcommittee Chairman Payne and Ranking Member Smith for allowing me to testify today on the issue of American foreign policy toward Africa. I have analyzed or participated in our country's foreign policy for more than 30 years and have had the honor of working with this Subcommittee for part of that time. I now write a twice weekly blog on Africa issues (http://africarising2010.blogspot.com)

The Leon H. Sullivan Foundation presented a white paper on our government's Africa policy shortly after the election of President Obama in 2008, which we shared with both this Subcommittee's Chairman and Ranking Member and their counterparts in the Senate. It also was shared with Assistant Secretary of State Johnny Carson and others in the executive branch. We are about to launch a survey on the views of American Africa policy that will be shared this September at our Africa Policy Forum at the Sullivan Global Reunion in Atlanta.

I also am Policy Committee Chair of the African American Unity Caucus, a coalition of dozens of organizations that focus on the various aspects of our policy toward Africa. Every September, during the Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series, our members present forums on important Africa issues facing our government. We also have forums at other points in the year, such as the one featuring Assistant Secretary Carson last year.

For many years, the United States had no Africa policy beyond that connected to policy involving the colonial powers – our European allies. During the period in which African nations were gaining their independence, American policy was guided by the policy of the European colonial power in question, except, for example, Liberia and South Africa. Then-Vice President Richard Nixon came to support U.S.-Africa trade as the result of his late 1950s visit to Africa for the Eisenhower Administration, but not much resulted from his suggested initiative. The end of colonialism provided an opening for more direct engagement with the new African governments, but that opportunity was not taken advantage of at the outset.

When President George H.W. Bush became president, few would have expected him to do anything much to benefit Africa despite his extensive foreign policy expertise. As it turned out, his Administration came to power at a point in history when the Cold War influence on U.S. policy toward Africa was about to end and colonialism was already finished. Now America could consider relationships with African nations that had nothing to do with European colonial powers or the former Soviet Union. Under the first Bush Administration, the United States fielded a large humanitarian operation in Somalia and created the Africa Regional Electoral Assistance Fund, which would make significant technical contributions to the wave of African elections and transitions to democratic systems in the 1990s.

Moreover, the Administration of the first President Bush issued National Security Review 30, a paper that outlined a broad policy of increased U.S. engagement with Africa. That policy initiative came too late in his Administration to be enacted, but fortunately, President Bill Clinton did enact it. Clinton had no Africa experience to speak of coming into the presidency, but building on the Bush plan, he produced a robust engagement of Africa that has set the tone for his successors. He signed into law the first African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which realized the increased U.S.-Africa trade Nixon had spoken of decades earlier. Many of his Cabinet secretaries visited Africa and involved their departments in Africa programming.

The second President George Bush came into office with no Africa experience as well, but he assembled a remarkable record of achievement on Africa policy, including his Administration's greatly expanded contributions of funds to combat HIV-AIDS and malaria on the continent, his steadfast advocacy of AGOA, his support for African education (especially for girls) and his partnership with African governments on mutual security issues.

We expect President Obama to continue the growing engagement with Africa that his immediate predecessors championed and take America's relationship with Africa to a new level. Unfortunately, like all Administrations, President Obama faces crises that distract from longer-term planning and implementation of development policy for Africa.

Immediate Crises

Because of the imminent loss of life, the new Administration and Congress have had to deal with issues of insecurity and conflict. The Bush Administration was focused on conflict issues in Africa and did achieve successes in ending conflicts, particularly in West Africa and the North-South civil war in Sudan. However, there remain conflicts in Africa that must be given priority treatment.

Somalia continues to pose a particularly important concern for a number of reasons. This East African nation has been a source of instability in the Horn of Africa since the fall of its last national government in 1991, with militants crossing into Kenya, weapons flowing into Uganda and UIC support for Somali rebels in Ethiopia's Ogaden region expanding that long-simmering conflict. Moreover, since the attacks of 9/11, the Pentagon and intelligence services have been focused on the potential for al-Qaeda to use the ungoverned spaces and non-existent border controls in Somalia to build a terrorist network. Consequently, the al-Qaeda-connected youth and military wing of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) – al-Shabab – were placed on the list of foreign terrorist organizations. More recently, pirates operating from Somalia have seized ships (including a $100 million Saudi oil tanker) and hundreds of crewmen and pose an increasingly serious threat to maritime operations in the Gulf of Aden.

Of course, **Sudan** has been a perennial concern for U.S. policymakers in recent years. The Darfur conflict has not only consumed diplomatic efforts by the U.S. government, but also resources taken from other Africa projects. There are elements that make resolution of conflict in Sudan problematic. First, continuing violence in Darfur has claimed hundreds of lives, and the influx of weapons into southern Sudan threatens renewed conflict before or after the referendum on self-determination next January. Second, the upcoming elections in Sudan are not being broadly contested by the opposition parties, which the Khartoum government hopes will lend it legitimacy. Third, the International Criminal Court indictment of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir – the first such case of charges brought against a sitting head of state – has made negotiations with Sudan more problematic. Given all the factors involved, further U.S. action on Sudan is inescapable, but this complex situation, which also involves Sudan's impact on neighbors such as Chad and the Central African Republic, will continue to be a U.S. priority and a U.S. responsibility.

Conflict in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** is the one African issue President Obama addressed as Senator. Then-Senator Obama's legislation – S. 2125 –

calls on the Congolese government to reform its behavior in order to qualify for reconstruction support. The five-year conflict that began in 1997 – sometimes referred to as "Africa's world war" – eventually involved Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe on behalf of government forces, while Uganda and Rwanda backed the rebels. An estimated 5.4 million people lost their lives during that war. Renewed conflict in eastern Congo has claimed thousands more lives, while more than 250,000 Congolese remain displaced. A share of Congo's vast mineral wealth, which includes vital supplies of diamonds, gold, cobalt, oil and radium, has been an incentive for neighboring countries to engage in warfare in Congo. Conflict further has been driven by the ongoing ethnic element of Tutsis living in the East finding discord with Hutu refugees from Rwanda, as well as local Congolese ethnic groups such as the Mai-Mai.

There are tensions just below the surface in many other nations that could break out into armed conflict (and have in some cases). Global impacts already have been seen in oil producing nations such as **Nigeria.** Many Americans may not have been fully aware of how attacks on oil pipelines and the kidnapping of oil workers in Nigeria's Delta region made significant contributions to the steady rise in oil prices in recent years. While Nigeria is one of the wealthiest African nations based on per capita income, there is tremendous poverty amongst the oil wealth, especially in some of Nigeria's richest states. The current power struggle between Acting President Goodluck Jonathan and apparently incapacitated President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua is causing further instability. Nigeria accounts for 50% of West Africa's gross domestic product, and its implosion would quickly cripple the regional economy, and significant oil supply interruptions would help send global oil prices higher in short order.

The contentious 2007 election in **Kenya** led to weeks of ethnic clashes that claimed the lives of an estimated 1,500 people. Some in the international community, apparently mostly here in Washington, were surprised at the level of violence sparked by the disputed elections, but Kenya has a troubled ethnic history dating back to colonial times. In the days since multi-party democracy in Kenya returned in 1992, there has been continuous wrangling among the dominant Kikuyus, the Luos, the Luhyas and other ethnic groups and among the politicians who represent those groups. Moreover, the World Bank four years ago placed Kenya among 11 African countries described as being deficient in wealth creation efforts because of massive destruction and depletion of natural resources and high population growth. Given the important role Kenya has played in America's Africa policy, the United States cannot fail to take note of ethnic unrest that could boil over into deadly clashes that threaten the stability of an ally.

The importance and relative wealth of an ally must not blind us to painful truths about instability. **South Africa** is arguably the most economically powerful African nation, certainly among the non-oil producers. South Africa was one of the G20 nations called together to consult on the global economic meltdown. Nevertheless, South Africa has fissures that threaten to erupt if not handled well. There is a widening economic cleavage between rich and poor black people in South Africa. The numbers of black South Africans living on less than $1 a day has risen from 1.8 million in 1996 to 4.2 million in 2005, according to the South African Institute for Race Relations, and this gap is not being significantly closed. A nation such as South Africa, which has critical minerals and gems such as diamonds, gold and platinum and world-class companies, such as South African Breweries (which owns Miller Beer Company in America), would create a global ripple if unrest were to cripple its economy in the post-majority rule era. South Africa is in reality two countries: one is a developed world nation with Western infrastructure and the other is a poor African country with high crime and unemployment and inadequate social services and jobs.

Uganda survived the mass killings by the regimes of Milton Obote and Idi Amin to become one of the continent's most admired countries under the leadership of Yoweri Museveni. The country's major cloud has been in the form of the Lord's Resistance Army, a rebel group attempting to establish rule according to the Bible's 10 Commandments. Led by fanatical leader Joseph Kony, the LRA has plagued not only northern Uganda, but also southern Sudan and eastern Congo. More than 25,000 Ugandan children have been caught up in the northern Uganda war – either as child soldiers or concubines or as internal refugees nightly attempting to escape capture by rebel bands. Peace efforts continue to fail, and two million Ugandans have been displaced. International aid agencies have had difficulty in delivering much-needed supplies to help those involved in a humanitarian crisis that rivals that of Darfur. Many of the rebels are kidnapped children, and their capture has been the goal. Their reintegration into Ugandan society, though, will not be easy. Local Ugandans fear the boys trained to be killers and often refuse to accept the girls who have reluctantly become mothers due to their nightmare experiences in the LRA.

The growing crisis in **Zimbabwe** was farmed out to the South African government by the Bush Administration, which had initiated a policy relatively early on to stop engaging with the regime of President Robert Mugabe. Then-South African President Thabo Mbeki was seen by Americans as the leader of a powerful African nation to whom the Zimbabweans owed much. To Zimbabwe's leader, however, Mbeki was a second-generation post colonial leader and not his equal. Current South Africa President Jacob Zuma was a liberation leader who served time in Robben Island Prison and has a strong labor base, which makes him less easy for Mugabe to ignore. Mugabe has successfully played the role of the victim of neo-colonial efforts to dominate his country and managed to portray the British reneging on promises to fund purchases of white farms as manipulation on their part rather than a reaction to cronyism in the allocation of farms. With President Zuma now in charge of negotiations, one expects this political shield wielded by Mugabe to become ineffective.

Major Long-Term Issues

When the Bush Administration created the Millennium Challenge Account, it installed a new formula for deciding which countries would be recipients of grants larger than those normally provided under foreign aid programs. Participating governments were required to create economic freedom, rule justly and invest in their people. Furthermore, they had to effectively control corruption and devise a business plan in conjunction with the business sector and civil society. This formula is critical to creating an environment in which good government can be established and maintained. Almost simultaneous with the American effort was an African process to achieve similar goals.

At a summit in Durban, South Africa in July 2002, the newly-created New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) successfully promoted a Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance that committed participating African governments to "just, honest, transparent, accountable and participatory government and probity in public life." In order to fulfill that commitment, NEPAD presented the concept of an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to which governments voluntarily agree to be measured in terms of democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development.

The mechanism was hailed by the international community, but many donors neglected to acknowledge the term "voluntary" and insisted that the APRM was bogus so long as countries such as Zimbabwe were not assessed. Thus far, 29 African governments have signed onto the APRM, and as of November 2008, nine countries have undergone the review process: Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, Algeria, Benin, Uganda, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.

U.S. and Africa policy dovetail on this matter, and there is ample ground for collaboration to make the MCA and APRM processes more effective. What would further enhance the common intent to promote good government would be the fulfillment of an often-discussed but little-implemented American plan to work with African governments to recover stolen funds – both from government revenues and from donor funds.

Approximately, 70% of Africans are believed to be involved in the agriculture sector. Nevertheless, while agriculture is the backbone of African economies, agricultural output in Africa has declined significantly from the 1960s, when many African countries were self-sufficient in food production. The UN Food and Agricultural Organization estimates that nearly 200 million Africans were undernourished in the year 2000 as opposed to only 133 million 20 years earlier.

There are many causes for this lack of agricultural production, including a diversion of attention to oil production, a lack of modern agricultural techniques, poor soil due to overuse, the diversion of crops to create alternative fuels and a dearth of investment in African agriculture. One major reason that has been suggested is the lack of markets for African agricultural products due to developed country sanitary/phyto-sanitary regulations that are not well understood by African agricultural producers. Oil and gas comprise nearly 90% of AGOA imports into the United States even though many of the 6,400 eligible items are agricultural products.

Africa has lost one-third of its human capital, according to the International Organization for Migration, and since 1990, an average of 20,000 skilled professionals leave the continent annually. IOM estimates that more than 300,000 skilled African professionals now live abroad. In a paper presented at AFRICAfest at the University of Pennsylvania in 2002, Dr. John Kiwanuka Ssemakula, a Ugandan public health doctor living and working in the United States, stated that each skilled individual who leaves an Africa country costs approximately $184,000 in replacements costs, totaling $4 billion for about 100,000 foreign experts.

Once world-class African universities are suffering from a lack of resources and losing experienced professors at an alarming rate. Meanwhile, African countries have among the lowest rates of primary school enrollment in the world. At the beginning of this century, approximately 82 million young women and 51 million young men were illiterate, with another 130 million children not in school.

The image of African villagers carrying water, wood and even commercial goods by foot may be a quaint sight for tourists, but it is inconsistent with Africa's transportation needs in the 21st century. The *Financial Times* did a series of articles in 2006 examining the African infrastructure challenges as well as the successes that have been achieved. The publication reported that the paucity of transportation connections, particularly by road, has been a glaring obstacle to regional and even national integration. Few railway lines have been built since independence. At current rates, it is estimated that 60% of sub-Saharan Africans will lack electricity by 2020. While drought is the persistent image many have of Africa, there are available water resources, although only three percent of renewable water resources are managed, and nearly 40% of Africans still lack access to clean water.

Thanks to the entrepreneurial spirit and the presence of public-private partnerships, however, the infrastructure news is not all bad. The number of mobile telephone lines in Africa rose nearly 54% between 2000 and 2006, compared with 24% globally. In Nigeria, entrepreneurs have started private airlines to first compete with and then compensate for the collapse of Nigerian Airways. The U.S. Agency for International Development's African Global Competitiveness Initiative has committed $200 million through 2010 for African economic development, and its infrastructure component seeks to leverage more than $41 billion in investments in energy and other infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa. American investment and expertise can help Africa leap into the 21st century in all forms of infrastructure as it has with telecommunications.

Other Important Issues

Environics International, a Canadian-based issues research and consulting firm, released a 20-country survey in 2006, which found that in wealthy countries, corporate social responsibility contributes more to corporate reputations than brand image and that companies that ignore this lesson risk market share. This lesson has been learned by companies operating in Africa, who are adopting CSR standards. Unilever in Ghana, Anglo-American in South Africa, Mozal Aluminum in Mozambique and Brookside Dairy in Kenya are among the growing number of companies operating in Africa with active CSR practices.

At the seventh Leon H. Sullivan Summit in Abuja, Nigeria, in July 2006, ten African heads of State signed a declaration endorsing the Global Sullivan Principles for Corporate Social Responsibility (GSP). Overall, there are more than 400 endorsers of GSP globally, including companies operating in Africa. GSP provides a framework by which socially responsible businesses, governments and organizations can be aligned. Implementing these principles can create a more favorable commercial environment in African countries, can safeguard the human rights and safety of employees and involve corporations in mutually beneficial relationships with the communities in which they operate. It is particularly useful as a guide for governments in the process of negotiating concessions with companies seeking to utilize natural resources.

Increasingly, civil society in Africa is being asked to facilitate an expanded role in society for both women and youth. Traditionally, the role of women has been limited in African countries and policies were routinely developed without significant female input, but that is changing. At the inception of NEPAD, women's groups banded together to protest the lack of involvement of women in its creation, but by the time of the development of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme in 2003, NEPAD acknowledged that "special attention must be given to the vital food-producing and entrepreneurial roles of women in rural and urban African communities." An estimated two-thirds of African economies involve women entrepreneurs.

African youth have faced a troubling trend that threatens their future. According to the International Labour Organization, the number of young people aged 15 to 24 seeking jobs in sub-Saharan Africa continues to outpace the number of new jobs being created in the region. Too often, unemployed African youth, including educated youth, are falling into crime or being recruited into political party and government militias. The creativity of young people is not being properly applied to African development, and many young people are emigrating for opportunities abroad, further exacerbating Africa's brain drain. African college graduates are not counted as professionals if they never work in their professions because of a lack of employment opportunities, but they represent an uncounted portion of the brain drain since they take what skills they have with them if they leave their home country. Therefore, the brain drain could be much worse than what is currently calculated.

African civil society organizations provide the early warning system for crises in African countries and are the nexus between donor programs and the grassroots. Continued empowerment of women and youth through African civil society organizations and the enhancement of the capacity of civil society organizations themselves are critical goals for the U.S. government.

Recommendations

As I have stated earlier, there are numerous challenges in executing an effective Africa policy in the areas of: insecurity and conflict, governance, food security/agriculture, human capital development, infrastructure/transportation, corporate social responsibility and civil society development. Here are my recommendations for addressing these issues

In selecting policy options, the Leon H. Sullivan Foundation has developed recommendations for Administration and Congressional actions that include:

- Diplomacy in conjunction with regional African organizations to address warfare, lack of governance and piracy involving Somalia, Guinea and other troubled African countries;

- Multi-level strategies to identify and implement a lasting solution to the complex problems in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo;

- American security assistance and U.S. government and private sector support for more effective community programs in oil communities in Nigeria, Angola and other oil-producing African countries;

- Diplomatic and programmatic attention to simmering crises in Kenya, South Africa and other African countries facing internal turmoil;

- Consensus among African and African Diaspora leaders on dealing forthrightly with the regime in Zimbabwe;

- U.S. government assistance and American private sector investment in all forms of infrastructure in Africa;

- Effective rules for how to proceed in the fight against corruption in Africa, as well as a stepped-up U.S. effort to facilitate the return of stolen funds to repay debts and address unmet social needs;

- Elevation of the importance of U.S.-Africa agricultural trade, capacity building assistance for African producers and encouragement for investment in African agriculture;

- Enhanced support for distance learning and student and teacher exchanges, as well as encouragement of the involvement of members of the African Diaspora in America in diminishing the impact of Africa's brain drain;

- Stronger endorsement for effective corporate social responsibility practices as embodied in the Global Sullivan Principles for Corporate Social Responsibility, and

- Continued empowerment of women and youth through African civil society organizations and the enhancement of the capacity of civil society organizations themselves.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify.