

**“The United States - Africa Partnership: The Last Four Years and Beyond”**

**Assistant Secretary Carson**

**The Wilson Center, Washington DC**

*As Prepared Version*

Thank you. I want to thank Michael for his opening remarks, and Michael and Steve for hosting me here today. I also want to thank all of the distinguished guests in the audience, including members of the diplomatic corps and colleagues from the think tank community. It is an honor to speak to such a distinguished group of leaders who, like me, are so committed to Africa. Let me also thank my wife, Anne. She and I have spent most of our lives working on Africa, and nothing that I have accomplished would have been possible without her advice, partnership, and support.

My interest in Africa started in the mid-1960s when I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania. The 1960s was a time of great promise for Africa. As newly independent nations struggled to face what many regarded as the insurmountable challenges of democracy, development, and economic growth, newly independent people looked forward to embracing an era of opportunity and optimism. This promise also inspired me to enter the Foreign Service. After more than forty years of experience in Africa, three Ambassadorships, and now four years as Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, I have experienced first-hand Africa's triumphs, tragedies, and progress. And despite Africa's

uneven progress, I remain deeply optimistic about Africa's future. This optimism is grounded in expanding democracy, improved security, rapid economic growth, and greater opportunities for Africa's people. It is clear that the 21st century will not only be shaped in Beijing and Washington, but also in Pretoria and Abuja.

Let me start today by highlighting two places where no one believed such optimism would be possible: Somalia and South Sudan.

President Obama and Secretary Clinton's strategy for Somalia has turned one of Africa's most enduring, intractable, and seemingly hopeless conflicts into a major success story and a potential model for the resolution of other conflicts on the continent. Since the fall of the Siad Barre government in 1991, more than one million people have been killed in Somalia. The United States and other international partners largely turned their back on Somalia following the tragic Black Hawk Down incident of 1993. Somalia provided refuge to some of the terrorists who destroyed our Embassy in Nairobi in 1998, killing Americans and Kenyans alike, and who tried unsuccessfully to do the same in Dar es Salaam. Early on in this Administration, Secretary Clinton and I travelled to Nairobi to meet with Sheikh Sharif, then president of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government, or TFG. Sharif previously served as the Head of Somalia's Islamic Courts Union,

and we were unsure of his ability to combat terrorist groups like al Shabaab or lead Somalia's democratic transition.

After meeting with President Sharif, Secretary Clinton told me two things: "Don't let the TFG fall," and "Don't let al Shabaab win." Well, as you all can probably imagine, I did not sleep much the night following that discussion. But since that moment, the State Department has partnered with the African Union Mission in Somalia, or AMISOM, to train peacekeepers from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, and now Kenya and Sierra Leone to rebuild the Somali National Army and defeat al Qaida and al Shabaab. The United States also joined with East African partners to advance a political track that, in 2012, enabled President Sharif and the TFG to hand over power to a democratically elected Somali President.

This effort was African-led, but enjoyed significant U.S. support. Its success is remarkable. Just four years ago, al Shabaab controlled most of Mogadishu and south and central Somalia. Today, AMISOM and Somalia's National Security Forces have rolled back al Shabaab from Mogadishu and every other major city in Somalia. Now, for the first time in more than two decades, Somalia has a representative government with a new President, a new Parliament, a new Prime Minister, and a new Constitution, and the Somali people have reason to hope for a better

future. I personally witnessed this renewed sense of opportunity and optimism when I travelled to Mogadishu in June 2012, becoming the first Assistant Secretary to visit Mogadishu in more than 20 years. The United States will continue to partner with the Somali people as they rebuild their country and normalize their relations with the region, and I look forward to the day when the United States can re-establish a more permanent U.S. diplomatic presence in Mogadishu to better support the new Somali government's efforts to provide security, humanitarian assistance, and basic services to its people.

A second major accomplishment of this administration was helping to see through the peace process that resulted in the creation of Africa's newest nation: South Sudan. Building on the work of prior administrations, President Obama continued U.S. efforts to fully implement Sudan's Comprehensive Peace Agreement, or CPA, and end Africa's longest-running civil war. Under the leadership of President Obama's Special Envoys, Scott Gration and then Princeton Lyman, the United States led international efforts to reinvigorate the CPA. President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and Ambassador Rice's leadership kept the January 2011 referendum on South Sudan's independence on track, and led to South Sudanese independence a few months later. Special Envoy Lyman continues to work with Sudan,

South Sudan, the African Union, and many others to ensure long-term peace and stability between the two countries.

Such remarkable progress in Somalia and South Sudan highlights the success of this Administration's overall policy toward Africa. This policy, described in the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa, is comprehensive. It focuses on building partnerships with governments, civil societies, and populations across the African continent to strengthen democratic institutions; spur economic growth, trade, and investment; advance peace and security; and promote opportunity and development.

Partnership is particularly important for advancing the first pillar of this strategy: strengthening Africa's democratic institutions, improving governance, and promoting human rights. Dedication to democracy and human rights is a shared value that links the American people with populations throughout Africa. And President Obama and Secretary Clinton's focus on these shared goals has had a deeply positive impact across the continent.

In Nigeria, when President Yar Adua became ill and passed away, the United States spoke out. We sided with Nigerians who insisted that Nigeria's constitution must be followed and that the Nigerian military

should stay in its barracks. I personally travelled to Nigeria to encourage all of Nigeria's senior leaders of the past ten years to follow the constitution, and to urge that no one attempt to hijack the political process. After a momentary false start, Nigeria's elections went smoothly. And during the first round of the 2011 elections, I remember observing dedicated Nigerian poll workers count presidential ballots using only light from their cell phones. The commitment of Nigeria's young poll workers, the hundreds of thousands of Nigerians who waited in lines for hours to vote, and all those in Nigeria who worked to keep Nigeria's political process on track ensured the success of the 2011 elections and encapsulated Africa's newfound opportunity and optimism.

I witnessed the same commitment to democracy in Kenya in 2010. The United States worked hand-in-hand with Kenyans across the country to ensure a peaceful constitutional referendum designed to reduce the drivers of political conflict that killed so many Kenyans following the disputed election of 2007.

Our message to those across Africa who have attempted to derail the democratic process has been clear: the United States will not stand on the sidelines when legitimately elected governments are threatened or democratic processes are manipulated. When Senegal's democratic

tradition was threatened, I urged President Abdoulaye Wade to live up to his democratic principles and to defend the Senegalese constitution. When he chose to put his own interests above those of his people, we sided with the Senegalese people. Senegal subsequently held another peaceful, democratic election and transfer of power. When a military junta in Guinea-Conakry committed massive human rights abuses, we acted. Working with the governments of Morocco, Burkina Faso, and France, the United States confronted the junta leaders, and I personally met with General Konate in Rabat. Our diplomacy paved the way for Guinea's first free, fair, and peaceful election since achieving independence in 1958. When military coups struck in Niger and Mauritania, we worked with local leaders, regional partners, and the international community to restore democracy to both countries as quickly as possible. And in Cote d'Ivoire, when President Gbagbo disregarded his country's election results, President Obama reached out to Gbagbo, twice, to encourage him to step down. When the situation on the ground in Cote d'Ivoire became intolerable, we actively encouraged the United Nations to act. Gbagbo is now in the Hague, and democracy has been restored in Abidjan.

Of course, democracy and human rights are about much more than holding elections. As President Obama said in Ghana in 2009, "Africa doesn't need strong men, it needs strong institutions." This

means independent courts, legislatures, and electoral commissions. It means a free press, rule of law, and local civil society organizations with the room to operate and speak freely without intimidation from government authorities. And it means respecting opposition parties' ability to hold peaceful public protests and openly criticize those in power.

Across Africa, President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and I have worked to strengthen the capacity of legislatures to play more effective oversight roles. We have partnered with African media and civil society organizations to promote and protect press freedoms. We have supported rule of law programs to strengthen African courts and the national human rights commissions that are so vital for eliminating impunity and ensuring justice for all people, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, race, or sexual orientation. To give prominence to the importance of the judiciary, last fall we invited a dozen prominent African supreme court justices to the United States where they had an opportunity to meet with Chief Justice Roberts and Justices Kennedy and Ginsberg.

In Sierra Leone, we supported the Special Court charged with trying Charles Taylor and others accused of perpetrating atrocities during that country's brutal civil war. And in Uganda, Secretary Clinton presented



the Secretary's Human Rights Defender Award for 2011, which is the State Department's most prestigious international human rights award, to a coalition of Ugandan LGBT NGOs.

Our partnership with Africa on democracy, governance, and human rights is vitally important, but it is just one area of our partnership. President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and I also have focused on promoting Africa's economic expansion.

African economies are among the fastest growing on the planet, and are increasingly attracting foreign trade and investment. And technological change is sweeping across Africa. Today, women in rural markets in Nigeria are using cell phones to move money and check prices in markets several villages away. Bankers in Dakar are trading with brokers in New York. These are exciting, revolutionary changes. According to *The Economist* magazine, seven of the ten fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa. One thing this statistic means is that Africa is beginning to catch up with the world economy. If you look at the list of seven countries, several of them, such as Zambia, Ghana, and Ethiopia, are increasingly complex economies where inclusive growth and middle classes are taking hold. Non-oil related growth has averaged over five percent in Africa over the past five years,

and over the next five years Africa's average growth rate is likely to surpass that of Asia.

These trends are permanently changing Africa's economic and political systems by opening them up to the world. Yet not enough American business executives know that if you want to make a good investment, you should look to the African continent. This is why for the past four years, this Administration has worked to expand U.S. trade and investment with Africa. We extended the third country fabric provision of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, or AGOA, which has helped create hundreds of thousands of jobs across the continent. We held AGOA forums in Kenya, Zambia, Kansas City, and Cincinnati, connecting a broad cross-section of U.S. companies and investors with African partners. The trade mission Secretary Clinton led to South Africa in August of last year was the first ever trade mission led by a Secretary of State to Africa. A separate trade mission I led last year to Mozambique, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Ghana increased the interest of U.S. energy companies in the huge need for the generation, distribution, and transmission of power across the continent. And one of the participants in that trade mission has already signed an agreement with a Nigerian firm that is expected to produce tens of millions of dollars worth of U.S. exports and provide desperately needed electricity to Nigeria.

We also are facilitating more and more reverse trade delegations from Africa to the United States. Just last month, our Ambassador to Nigeria led Nigerian business executives to major trade shows in New Orleans and Orlando. And since 2009, the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation, or OPIC, has supported private sector investments totaling over \$2 billion in Africa - an all time record - and opened a new office in South Africa to promote lean energy projects.

And we continue to build on all of this work. In November, Acting Commerce Secretary Blank visited the region – the first time a U.S. Commerce Secretary has traveled to Sub-Saharan Africa in more than a decade – and announced the launch of the Doing Business in Africa Campaign. This Campaign encourages U.S. companies to seize opportunities in Africa and will make it easier to do so.

But since democratic and economic growth go hand in hand with security and stability, this Administration also has expanded partnerships focused on training African peacekeepers, supporting African efforts to establish a Standby Force, and responding to transnational threats like piracy, drug trafficking, and terrorism. I have already noted the extraordinary success of AMISOM as a model for an African-led peacekeeping operation. In partnership with Uganda; the Democratic

Republic of Congo, or DRC; the Central African Republic; South Sudan; and the African Union, the United States also is supporting regional efforts to eliminate the threat posed by the brutal Lord's Resistance Army. In Mali, the United States supports French military action, an accelerated ECOWAS deployment and the provision of assistance to that African-led mission, the need for a roadmap to restore democratic governance, and urgent assistance to address humanitarian needs.

In the eastern DRC, where more than five million people have been killed during 15 years of violence, the United States is working with UN, European, and regional partners to identify immediate and long-term solutions to end the eastern Congo's cycle of instability. In November 2012, when the M23 rebel group took control of the city of Goma, I travelled to Kampala, Kigali, and Kinshasa with my British and French counterparts to deliver a common message to Uganda, Rwanda, and the DRC. After that mission, the M23 withdrew, and Presidents Kagame, Kabila, and Museveni initiated talks.

The fourth pillar of this Administration's engagement with Africa – alongside democracy, security, and economic growth – is promoting opportunity and development, with a particular focus on women and youth. Women comprise half of Africa's population, but often are excluded from Africa's formal economy. To address this imbalance, we

have increased diplomatic and development efforts designed to empower women and girls through programs like the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program. And we have partnered with the next generation of African leaders through the President's Young African Leaders Initiative. The President and First Lady have personally hosted events in the United States and Africa focused on developing and supporting young African leaders, promoting entrepreneurship, and building partnerships between young Africans and Americans.

We also have seen impressive results across our development agenda. Through the President's Feed the Future initiative, we have partnered with nineteen African countries to reduce malnutrition. The Secretary and I had the pleasure of meeting farmers in Malawi who, with U.S. support, contributed to a 500 percent increase in milk production over the last decade. And President Obama launched the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition under the G8, which aims to raise 50 million Africans out of poverty over the next ten years. Through the President's Global Health Initiative and Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, we have supported health system reform and life saving treatment that's kept nearly five million people with HIV in Africa alive. And through our Millennium Challenge Corporation, or MCC compacts, we have invested nearly \$6 billion in fourteen African countries that have demonstrated their commitment to strong democratic

institutions, accountability, and transparency. And Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Niger – three countries that have recently restored democratic governance and are rapidly emerging as regional leaders on development, transparency, accountability, and growth – were recently selected as eligible to develop new MCC compacts.

U.S. development assistance also has focused on improving child and maternal health, fighting malaria, and improving access to quality education in Africa. And when disaster has struck in Africa, the United States has helped save lives. In fact, we have provided more humanitarian assistance to Africa over the last four years than any other country. Across the Sahel, the United States has delivered emergency aid to many of the more than 18 million people affected across the region. And we provided food, shelter, and healthcare to nearly five million people in the Horn last year during the height of the drought.

We also have found innovative ways to leverage the rapid expansion of mobile and internet technology. The State Department funded "Apps 4 Africa" competition is one example. This competition encourages the creation of mobile phone applications to promote economic growth, development, and opportunity. One recent winner of this competition was an app from Kenya called "I-Cow," which helps Kenyan farmers better manage the breeding of their cow herds.

To promote opportunity through stability and growth, this Administration also has partnered with key regional organizations. We have significantly expanded the size of our mission to the African Union. Secretary Clinton became the first Secretary of State to speak at the African Union in August of 2011, and she has hosted the African Union Chairperson in Washington the last three years in a row. And the United States rejoined the United Nations Economic Commission on Africa two years ago to increase our engagement on African economic issues.

And while we have partnered with Africa across these four areas, we also have focused on elevating Africa in our foreign policy and in global decision making. As Secretary Clinton said in Cape Town last year, “Some of our global problems need African solutions.” This is why we have worked with African countries on issues from climate change to the crisis in Syria.

Yet, despite how far Africa has come, and how optimistic we are about Africa’s future, serious challenges, of course, remain. Let me mention some of them today.

While Somalia and South Sudan have made significant progress, they still have a long ways to go. Mali and the eastern DRC pose serious threats to regional stability and the futures of millions of civilians in conflict-affected areas. In Kenya, the United States already has provided over \$30 million since 2008 for elections preparation and voter education programs, and we will continue to engage Kenyans at the highest levels of our government to underscore the need for peaceful and credible elections this March. In Zimbabwe, we remain steadfast in our demand for a free and transparent constitutional referendum, followed by national elections. We also must continue to seek out creative ways to spur trade and investment, promote opportunity, and advance development throughout Africa. And in helping to address all of these challenges, we must continue to strike a balance between achieving our diplomatic goals, and protecting our people as best we can.

I began this speech by noting that I am deeply optimistic about Africa. In May 2000, *The Economist* ran a black cover with a map of Africa and a picture of a child holding a rocket launcher under the headline: “The Hopeless Continent. “ Then, in December 2011, the same magazine published a different cover, this time with a child flying an Africa-shaped kite under a blue sky and the headline: “Africa Rising.” There is no doubt in my mind that Africa is rising. Africa is moving forward. American businesses, elected officials, NGOs and, lest



I forget, American diplomats who realize this now will have a significant advantage over those who have yet to realize that the 21st century will belong to Africa.

Thank you. I look forward to taking your questions.

##