

# Remarks at the U.S.-African Union High-Level Dialogue

Remarks  
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Secretary of State  
African Union Commission  
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Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, thank you very, very much. Thank you. First of all, we do feel at home. We're very grateful to you for another generous welcome. We're happy to be here. I'm personally happy to be back. And I appreciate the detail and breadth of your opening comments, and they're very important, particularly your discussion about trade and the possibilities with respect to the meeting in Washington and beyond.

Please extend my best wishes to Chairperson Dlamini-Zuma. I know she's off on another visit. And we both understood that we were not able to coordinate our schedules sufficiently this time, but I'm very appreciative to her for being willing to allow the meeting to go on, and we're appreciative for your chairmanship and participation in the meeting. And after I have a chance to share a few comments here and we've opened up the meeting, as you know, our Assistant Secretary of State Linda Thomas-Greenfield will continue the dialogue with Ambassador Brigety, and we've very appreciative for both of their leadership on these issues.

My privilege is to join you in opening the fourth U.S.-AU High-Level Dialogue. And very simply, President Obama is excited that I am here on his behalf, together with our delegation, in order to build on what we have achieved together since the United States first launched our mission to the AU in 2006. I would note that the United States is the only AU partner with a permanent presence. And we hope that that underscores the importance that we place on the relationship.

It's fair to say – and I think your comments sort of summarized it when you talked about the reduction in trade to some degree. When you combine that with other challenges throughout Africa, particularly the challenge of governance; some failed states, some failing; the challenge of violence, which we see in obviously the neighbor in South Sudan and in other places, is a challenge for all of us. Because those who challenge stability and peace and the structure of government are doing so by promoting a brand of lawlessness and extremism that is destructive to the democratic hopes and aspirations of the vast majority of people in Africa. So we need to work together.

We also know, in addition to the challenges of that side of the ledger, on the other side of the ledger you have an enormous growth in the population of young people,

who need to be educated, who will need jobs in the future. And at the same time, Africa is home to eight of the ten fastest-growing economies in the world. The United States is the largest market in the world, and we think there is a lot more that we can do together to promote prosperity, shared prosperity, in keeping with our shared interests. Doing so is going to be critical to making the most of the economic opportunities. It's also going to be critical to dealing with this challenge of violence and of young people. I think you know, Mr. Deputy Chair, that there are too many nations that risk falling into broad-based violence, or remain embroiled in too much bloodshed. And so we are very, very supportive.

This morning I had a discussion with our foreign minister friends from Kenya, and from Uganda, and here, our host. And we talked about this, about the challenge of South Sudan now. The United States, I want everybody to understand, fully supports African-led efforts to confront the most deadly conflicts of the continent. And it is clear that the unspeakable violence in Central African Republic, the deliberate killing of civilians on both sides in South Sudan – both of those underscore the urgency of the work that we have to do together. So I came here committed today to make clear to you, and to our colleagues who are working on this issue, that the United States will do everything we can, with the United Nations to support the effort, to bring and help in assisting with a peacekeeping force – peacemaking force, in some cases – and we think that this is absolutely critical.

We are also enormously encouraged by the remarkable economic activity, the rise of the economies that we see in parts of Africa. And we want to support your efforts to spread that prosperity, to make sure that everybody has a sense that they can share in the future. So a lot of this is going to depend on the decisions that we take. It'll depend on the kinds of things that we're going to dig into today in this dialogue. It will depend on real, concrete choices that we can make about how we could work together and proceed together. So I think this forum is really a vital opportunity to deepen our partnership and make the most of this particular moment of opportunity on the continent.

Now each of our key areas of success – of focus – peace and security; democracy and governance; economic growth, trade, and investment; and development and opportunity – each of these are critical parts of President Obama's strategy for the sub-Saharan Africa. That is exactly the way he is looking at and trying to break up the choices that we're making. They happen to also represent an area where the African Union has already taken a leading role. And so on each of these fronts, you are really already engaged in the business of developing solutions to the real concerns of the continent.

With the dialogue that we're having here – and you mentioned it – we also have this important meeting. The President is inviting all African nations to come and join us in Washington. It's not a – I want to emphasize it's not a summons. It's not some kind of a sort of summary invitation. It's really representative of the President's desire to make clear to the world, as well as to Africa, that we want Washington to focus more on this. And we believe that by inviting people to come to Washington, it will help the Congress of the United States. It will help the American people. It will help everybody to be able to share in the importance of this agenda.

So with our work over the next few days here, with our work together in the weeks and months ahead, we are absolutely committed to forging stronger ties on the continent. And the President, as you know, will be visiting. And he looks forward to that, as we look forward in the two and three-quarter years of his Administration, to strengthen these bonds and open up these opportunities to the greatest degree possible. Most importantly, the President and I and all of us in this delegation want to help forge a shared future, a sense of shared engagement, of shared commitment to making the choices we have to make. And in the end, we're absolutely confident that the relationship between Africa and the United States will be stronger and better for that. So thank you for inviting me here today to share in this, and we look forward to the dialogue.