

Statement of Tulinabo Mushingi
U.S. Ambassador-Designate to Burkina Faso
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
June 19, 2013

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you as the nominee for United States Ambassador to Burkina Faso. I very much appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me for this position. I am equally grateful to receive this distinguished Committee's consideration.

I believe that my work and travels across Africa have provided me with the experience needed to foster strong ties between the United States and Burkina Faso. If confirmed, it will be a privilege to return to Africa to lead the efforts of our robust interagency team, which is committed to the growing partnership between the United States and Burkina Faso, and our country's increasing engagement in the Sahel region of West Africa.

Our strong bilateral relationship with Burkina Faso aims to build a shared and mutually beneficial commitment to strengthening democratic institutions, fostering inclusive economic development and promoting regional stability. Working in partnership, the leadership of our embassy and the Burkinabé government have successfully advanced some political and economic reforms in Burkina Faso that will serve our peoples well. If confirmed, I will continue this work to deepen our bilateral partnership through programs and policies that support multi-party democracy, sustainable development to address chronic food insecurity, good governance, and regional security.

In December 2012, Burkina Faso successfully held parliamentary and local elections, which were judged free and fair by the international community. We will build upon this momentum to further strengthen democratic institutions, including promoting transparent and accountable governance, respect for human rights, and adherence to constitutional rule.

Burkina Faso faces serious economic challenges. A serious drought in 2011 resulted in a regional humanitarian emergency, which further exacerbated high levels of poverty, malnutrition and food insecurity. Since then, the United States has provided humanitarian assistance for vulnerable populations in Burkina Faso, including 50,000 Malian refugees the Burkinabé government is hosting in the north

of the country. We will continue to support Burkina Faso's efforts to address long-term development challenges. A five-year, \$481million Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact, which is on track to successfully conclude in 2014, will help to reduce poverty through investments in roads, improved agricultural productivity, land use rights, and primary education. Current USAID assistance is boosting food security, supporting economic growth, improving governance, and widening access to basic health care services. Our strong Peace Corps program has on average 150 volunteers working in education, community economic development, and community health programs.

Economic diversification and improvements to infrastructure and education will be critical to generating the sustainable growth Burkina Faso needs to tackle high poverty rates. The Burkinabé government has taken steps to combat corruption and improve the investment climate, including land tenure policy reforms supported under the MCC compact. If confirmed, I will continue to support progress on economic reforms and promote bilateral trade. I will also continue to work to leverage our assistance programs with those of other donors and the private sector to support Burkina Faso's continued transition to a market economy.

Burkina Faso has been a valued partner in promoting regional security and combating terrorism. It has deployed over 660 troops to the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) and has recently pledged to increase its commitment to 850 troops when the mission transitions under a UN mandate. Burkina Faso will also soon deploy its fifth battalion of peacekeepers to the UN mission in Darfur, all trained by the U.S. Government through the Africa Contingency Operations Training & Assistance (ACOTA) program. Burkina Faso is also an active member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and a dedicated ally in efforts to combat violent extremism. To date, the Burkinabé have played a positive role in mediating conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Guinea, and most recently in Mali.

If confirmed, I will work to maximize the effectiveness of our security cooperation with Burkina Faso. I will above all endeavour to protect American citizens and interests, advance U.S. national security in the Sahel region, increase mutual understanding, reflect American values in interactions with the government and people of Burkina Faso and deliver results for the American people.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.