

Confirmation Hearing Testimony of
Dr. Reuben E. Brigety, II
Nominated to be the
Representative of the United States to the African Union, with Rank of
Ambassador
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on Africa
July 24, 2013

Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Flake, Members of the Committee, good morning. It is a great honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Representative of the United States of America to the African Union, with the rank of Ambassador. I am deeply grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have shown in me through this nomination.

If I am confirmed by the Senate, my engagement with the African Union (also known as the AU) will focus on the four themes that encompass President Obama's strategy for sub-Saharan Africa: (1) democracy and governance, (2) economic growth, trade, and investment, (3) peace and security, and (4) promotion of opportunity and development. If I am confirmed, my tenure will be defined by pursuing and attaining concrete advancements in these four priority areas, and I look forward to working closely with this Committee on each.

My earliest exposure to Africa was listening to stories of my father, Dr. Reuben Brigety, Sr., about the time he spent in Northern Rhodesia (in what is

now Zambia) as a volunteer with Operation Crossroads Africa in 1963. I am pleased that my father is here in the room with us today, alongside my mother, Dr. Barbara Brigety. I am also happy to be joined today by my wife, Dr. Leelie Selassie, and our two young sons whom we adore: Roebel, age 8, and Redda, age 5.

My duties in the State Department, as well as my experiences in the U.S. military, the non-profit sector, and academia, have given me a diverse skill set that is directly relevant to leading the U.S. Mission to the AU. From November 2011 until June 2013, I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of African Affairs. My duties there included supervising the Office of Regional and Security Affairs, which supports our Mission to the African Union. In this capacity, I became familiar with the issues facing the African Union, the leadership of the AU Commission, and the complexities involved in leading the U.S. Mission to the AU. In addition, I supervised the Office of Southern African Affairs and engaged in democracy and trade promotion activities throughout Africa.

From December 2009 until November 2011, I served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, where I supervised U.S. refugee programs in Africa. This role led me to humanitarian crises across the Continent, from Kenya to Ethiopia, and from eastern Congo to

western Algeria. These travels showed me in unforgettable detail the human consequences of Africa's conflicts.

In short, I have direct experience in each of the four themes that I hope to advance at the African Union. I am excited at the prospect of assuming this responsibility at such a critical time in the history of the African Union, and indeed of the Continent.

The United States remains committed to partnering with the AU and deepening our cooperation to advance our goals on the continent. We continue to work with the AU and support their efforts to resolve conflicts on the continent including Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, and Mali. We will work along with the AU on the priorities they have set for advancing democratic norms, empowering women, and engaging youth. I will also continue our partnership with the AU in its leadership on food security issues and our dialogue on promoting trade and investment across the continent.

At the fiftieth anniversary AU summit in Addis Ababa earlier this year, Secretary Kerry quoted the African proverb: "If you want to go quickly, go alone. But if you want to go far, go together." If confirmed, I will be dedicated to helping the United States and the African Union to go far together, building an Africa that is peaceful, prosperous, and proud. I look forward to working with this Committee, and the Congress, on these worthy goals.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your questions.