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Testimony for Subcommittee on Africa & Global Health Policy
on China's Malign Influence in Africa
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Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Booker, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on China's role in Africa and our approach to advancing American priorities on the continent while countering China's interests. As the Senior Bureau Official for Africa, I am honored to discuss our strategic priorities and the measures we are taking to ensure that our engagement in Africa furthers the Trump Administration's goal of making America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

Africa's growing economies and population provide extraordinary opportunities for Americans and U.S. businesses. The economies of sub-Saharan Africa have long been growing at 6 percent per year and are expected to add \$800 billion in GDP by 2030. Its import demand is booming: between 2000 and 2024, sub-Saharan Africa imports rose from \$49 billion to \$435 billion. New sectors are also gaining ground. The region's digital economy, valued at \$180 billion in 2024, has quadrupled since 2016 and is projected to exceed \$700 billion by 2050. As African countries negotiate continent-wide trade integration under the African Continental Free Trade Area, the U.S. has an opening to expand exports and investment in digital services, infrastructure, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing.

In the face of these tremendous and growing opportunities in Africa, the U.S. share of exports to sub-Saharan Africa has been in sharp decline for decades. In 2000, the U.S. was the second-largest exporter to sub-Saharan Africa but thanks to Beijing's assertive, government-backed strategies to capture African market share, China exported \$137 billion to sub-Saharan Africa in 2024—more than seven times the United States (at \$19 billion)—underscoring a fundamental point: the opportunity in

sub-Saharan Africa is not theoretical—it's already being seized by our adversaries.

For too long the United States has done too little to compete commercially in sub-Saharan Africa or to support joint ventures with African partners in bilateral and supply chain trade, but this has already begun to change under the Trump Administration: we are now focusing on investment-led and trade-driven growth, which is more sustainable. And we will prioritize engaging the African continent more strategically, to the great benefit of Americans and our African friends.

This approach could not have come soon enough – greater U.S. economic engagement is urgently needed to bolster African efforts to counter China's growing influence on the African continent. China has long recognized the important role Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa's resources are part of Beijing's global hegemony ambitions. China's strategy for economic dominance in Africa relies on a centralized, state-directed, and nationally resourced approach to dominating global markets and strategic supply chains, limiting foreign competitors, and making other economies dependent on China. This is harmful to both American and African interests.

China exploits Africa's natural resources in its play for dominance and control over global critical mineral supply chains. This is a clear example of the economic, political, and national security threats that China's influence in Africa poses to the United States' and Africa's safety, strength, and prosperity.

As Secretary Rubio stated during his confirmation hearing, "It is in the interest of global peace and stability that we speak with China, but we cannot allow Beijing to continue to flout the rules, undermine us economically, or allow it to damage or weaken our alliances and presence in the world."

It is imperative for the United States and Africa to be free of Beijing's corrupt monopoly—especially in supply chains we rely on for defense and innovation. African markets need to diversify, empowering the continent as it progresses and grows. We will remain vigilant against China's disruptive and exploitative practices.

So, as I said, we are fundamentally shifting our approach to Africa from one rooted primarily in development assistance to a strategy that prioritizes robust commercial engagement, recognizing and treating African nations as equal partners in trade and investment. By focusing on private sector-led growth and empowering American companies to compete more effectively across sub-Saharan Africa, the Administration is responding to longstanding gaps that have allowed global competitors, such as China, to dominate the continent and monopolize its natural resources to its own advantage and to the expense of Africans.

This approach comprises six targeted actions designed to reposition the United States as a preferred economic partner for Africa. These include making commercial diplomacy a core priority across U.S. embassies, promoting private-sector-identified market reforms with African governments, and implementing high-quality infrastructure projects. Additional measures include commercial diplomacy missions with private sector representatives, connecting export-ready U.S. companies with African opportunities, and reforming U.S. trade and financing tools to better compete with China's swift and risk-tolerant financing model.

Together, these efforts reflect a bold, action-oriented vision to increase U.S. exports and joint ventures with African partners, close trade imbalances, and foster lasting prosperity. The strategy's success relies on U.S. companies expanding into new markets and African partners creating enabling environments for transparent and lasting commerce. Ultimately, this approach offers a clear alternative to China's model by favoring long-term quality, local capacity-building, and mutual respect over fleeting financial gains and economic dependency. And it will

create wins at home, as U.S. companies profit, and critical supply chains are secured and diversified.

The stakes for Africa, the United States, and the global community are high, but we are steadfast in our commitment to champion transparency, openness, and fair competition, driving innovation and fostering robust economic growth. As we deepen our economic engagement across Africa, we will counter the predatory and destabilizing influence of China with credible, reliable, and fair alternatives.

Thank you for your attention. I welcome your questions.