

Opening Statement of Nutan Patel
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cabo Verde
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 17, 2026

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the privilege of coming before you today as the President's nominee to serve as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Cabo Verde. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust President Trump and Secretary Rubio have shown in nominating me. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with Congress to advance our interests in Cabo Verde.

I come from humble beginnings, raised to understand the importance of hard work, empathy, integrity, and resilience. Even when times were tough, I always dreamed big. I am grateful for the family and friends here with me today, and those watching from afar, who have helped shape who I have become and why public service means so much to me. I also want to acknowledge my nearly two-year-old son, Aadi, who motivates me to be better each day.

Cabo Verde is a small nation with an outsized story. Since gaining independence in 1975, it has become one of Africa's strongest democracies reflected time-after-time through its peaceful transfers of power. Its government acts against officials who engage in corruption and its laws provide freedom of expression, including for the press. Cabo Verdean leaders have shown remarkable resolve, from interdicting multi-ton narcotics shipments in the mid-Atlantic to standing firm against pressure from actors seeking to exploit its strategic location. And its people-to-people ties with the United States, dating back to the 18th century, has built a bond with America that spans generations.

If confirmed, my highest priority will be the safety and security of U.S. citizens in Cabo Verde, including the thousands who travel there for business, tourism, or to spend holidays with loved ones, and our Mission team doing incredible work in Praia. Part and parcel of supporting the Mission is ensuring our new embassy compound construction is on track for completion in 2029.

I will also work to promote broad-based, mutually beneficial economic development, encouraging U.S. businesses to seize opportunities in a market with a stable political environment and low corruption. I will advocate for American businesses and look forward to encouraging investment in infrastructure, tourism, fisheries, and digital services and addressing barriers to U.S. commercial success.

Additionally, I will prioritize our security partnership, particularly in maritime domain awareness. Cabo Verde is made up of 10 islands and 8 islets within a maritime domain that is over 170 times larger than its actual landmass. This presents challenges to combat transnational crime, illegal fishing, and narcotics trafficking. If confirmed, I will work to deepen our security cooperation efforts in support of these areas of mutual concern.

Finally, I would be remiss not to mention that Cabo Verde made its first-ever appearance at the FIFA World Cup this year and became the smallest country ever to make it to the knockout round of the tournament. It was a moment of tremendous national pride for Cabo Verdeans and brought this small nation into the American consciousness. I hope to build on this momentum to bring our two countries even closer together.

If confirmed, I will work every day to strengthen this vital partnership. Thank you, and I welcome your questions.