

**Opening Statement of Ambassador Henry Wooster
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Kenya
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 16, 2026**

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Kenya. I am grateful to President Trump and Secretary of State Rubio for the confidence and trust placed in me for this vital assignment.

I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my family. The unwavering love, resilience, and support of my wife Laura and our children has supported me through a public service journey that spanned decades and taken us across the globe.

My service to the United States began over 40 years ago in the U.S. Army and Army Reserve. As a civil servant and Foreign Service Officer, I have had the honor of leading teams at nine U.S. Missions worldwide, serving in senior leadership roles in Washington, and previously, as the U.S. Ambassador to Jordan and recently, as Chargé d'Affaires of our Embassy in Haiti. If confirmed, I look forward to bringing the depth of my diplomatic and military experience to the U.S. partnership with Kenya.

Our relationship with Kenya is one of our most enduring and consequential partnerships on the African continent, and this nomination represents a convergence of prior chapters in my diplomatic career. As U.S. Ambassador to Jordan, I experienced firsthand the value of a steadfast regional partner with whom we share values, that counters terrorism, and that stands tall on their own two feet in a tough neighborhood. Much like Jordan in the Levant, Kenya plays a similarly indispensable role in East Africa.

Our partnership with Kenya is grounded in shared democratic values, mutual respect, and a common vision for regional and international stability. Kenya is the only major non-NATO ally in Sub-Saharan Africa, a testament to our strong military cooperation and to Kenyan leadership in East Africa. Indeed, Kenya is a frontline partner in the global fight against terrorism and transnational crime.

Beyond security, Kenya represents a cornerstone of American engagement in Africa. As the economic and logistical gateway to East Africa, Kenya boasts a dynamic, fast-growing economy driven by a thriving and innovative technology sector, a young population, and a competitive marketplace for U.S. investment.

My recent tenure as Chargé d’Affaires at our Embassy in Port-au-Prince provided me a direct view into Kenyan leadership on the world stage through the deployment of their police personnel to Haiti in support of the Multinational Security Support mission. Our collaboration there underscored for me Kenya’s commitment to international peace and global stability: Kenya “walks its talk” about global security.

If confirmed, my most sacred duty will be to prioritize the safety and security of the hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens residing in or visiting Kenya each year, as well as the personnel and family members under my authority as Chief of Mission.

On the policy front, if confirmed, my priorities will be to deepen our economic ties and promote mutual prosperity while maintaining security collaboration. Kenya’s dynamic tech sector, entrepreneurial spirit, and democratic institutions make it a natural partner for expanded American trade and investment.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the committee, if confirmed, I pledge to work in close, bipartisan coordination with Congress to advance our strategic interests and honorably represent the American people in Kenya.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today, and I welcome your questions.