

Statement of Eugene Young
Nominee to be Ambassador of the United States of America to the Republic of
the Congo
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
June 9, 2021

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee.

It is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Ambassador to the Republic of the Congo. I am grateful for the trust and confidence that President Biden and Secretary Blinken have placed in me.

I would like to acknowledge my wife, Zoë, and our two sons today and thank them for their enduring support and love. I believe my mother Margaret is also watching from home and I am so grateful to her and my late father, Sanford, for their encouragement, care and rock solid upbringing.

Thanks to the hard work of our diplomats on the ground in Brazzaville and the local staff at the Embassy, the United States has built a strong relationship with the Republic of the Congo. We've been able to deepen the ties between our governments, engage in regular and serious dialogue, and work on issues of mutual concern. Our countries are working together to effectively fight COVID, to protect our shared environmental heritage, and to combat trafficking in persons. If confirmed, I will seek to maintain this improved U.S.-Congo partnership.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, as you well know, the Republic of the Congo occupies a vital but tenuous position in Central Africa. Congo itself is stable, but it lies in a region beset with challenges. In the past year, Congo has dealt with a suspected Ebola outbreak from across the Congo river and accommodated refugees fleeing the Central African Republic. Congo is also home to the great Congo rainforest, an invaluable ecological treasure, known as the second lung of the world, but one that is in danger of imprudent exploitation. Congo's significant oil reserves, which have boosted its economy, but also fueled corruption, will still be crucial to the country's immediate future.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to address these challenges and to ensure the safety and security of American citizens in Congo as well as for our American and Congolese staff at the Embassy. Working with this committee, the various agencies of the U.S. government active in Congo, other donor nations and multilateral organizations, I will continue the good work our mission is supporting across key economic and social sectors in Congo. If confirmed, I will focus on encouraging democratic progress, supporting efforts to protect the Congo Basin, working with Congo to protect against this and future pandemics, as well as encouraging the diversification of the Congolese economy. And for U.S. business, I will continue the efforts of

our Embassy team in seeking a level playing field and a more transparent and inviting business environment.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee, thank you once again for the opportunity to appear before you today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee and other interested members of Congress to advance U.S. interests in Congo and I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.