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Ambassador-Designate to the African Union
Statement Prepared for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today in consideration of my nomination to serve as the United States Ambassador to the African Union. I want to thank President Obama and Secretary Clinton for the trust and confidence they have shown in nominating me for this position. I am also very honored, that my home state Senator Johnny Isakson, has introduced me today.

I would like to acknowledge the members of my family who are here with me today: first my wife Linda Ann, my daughter Lisa Angela, who has just transferred from Korea to work at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds; my sister, Betty Battle Turner, who is a former judge in the St. Louis City Court and her husband Fred Turner, a retired police officer. Without my family's love and support, my long career in the service of the young men and women of this nation would not have been possible.

I share two passions – building bridges to Africa and building bridges among people and communities, including faith communities. As a Chaplain in the U.S. Army Reserve for 20 years, as an academic at universities in Virginia and Illinois, and as President of the Interdenominational Theological Seminary for the past six years, I have been committed to academic and professional excellence and to training people to serve the Church and the global community. If I am confirmed as Ambassador to the African Union, my highest priority will be to build greater understanding and cooperation between Africa's premier regional organization and the government and people of the United States.

First and foremost will be an understanding of a shared commitment to democracy and human rights. As Vice President of the American Committee on Africa, I had the privilege of participating as an election observer at the first free election in South Africa in 1994. It was a remarkable event as thousands of Black South Africans waited in line for hours to freely choose their leader for the first time in their lives. And I am pleased that in April of this year, South Africans of every color went peacefully to the polls to elect South Africa's fourth president since the end of the Apartheid era. Similarly, Ghana held its fourth successful presidential

election in the past 15 years and its second that resulted in the transition of power from one party to another in the past decade after a very closely contested election this past December. We have also witnessed the restoration of democracy and a commitment to accountable and transparent government in Sierra Leone and Liberia in recent years and continued strong adherence to democratic and accountable government in a number of other countries. However, over the past year we have also seen dramatic reversals in democracy and free elections in Mauritania and Madagascar, and a military coup in Guinea. Elections last year in Kenya and Zimbabwe were terribly flawed and there are concerns about upcoming elections later this year in Gabon and Cote d'Ivoire.

I am pleased that the African Union has taken a principled stand against the undemocratic changes of government in Guinea, Mauritania, and Madagascar and is vigorously engaged in efforts to bring about a restoration of constitutional order in Mauritania. On April 30 it hosted, in conjunction with the Southern African Development Community, the first International Contact Group Meeting on Madagascar.

While suspension of states in which leaders have come to power through coups is a good first step, the AU must actively lead international efforts to restore constitutional government. If confirmed, I will use every opportunity to support the African Union's efforts to advance democracy and a free press, strengthen electoral systems, promote peace and security and advance AU efforts to get African leaders and civil society to promote and above all, to "internalize" universal values of human rights, good governance, and rule of law.

In addition to our shared values of democracy and human rights, we also share a strong commitment to Africa's development and to alleviating hunger on the continent. I am pleased that the theme of the recent African Union Summit in Libya was "Investing in Agriculture to Ensure Food Security." Some 70 percent of all African households depend in one fashion or another on agriculture for income, yet in Africa, yields per acre for corn are the lowest in the world and crops in Africa have 20% of the yield of similar food crops in the U.S. The green revolution has seemingly bypassed Africa and much of the continent remains mired at the subsistence level.

We must work with the AU to harness Africa's comparative advantage in agriculture, promoting policies that facilitate regional trade, improve infrastructure, emphasize exports, and ensure the equitable distribution of inputs. I am pleased that the President's recently-announced Food Security Initiative for Africa will

adopt a comprehensive approach to increasing agricultural productivity by promoting private sector investment, increasing access to quality seeds and fertilizer, and expanding support for agricultural research.

It is my hope that we can work with the AU to encourage and increase the exchange of academic talent and skills, especially through our land grant universities. If confirmed, I will also work to increase academic opportunities for Africans, particularly those who are interested in agricultural production and value-added agricultural commodities for export.

But agricultural development and economic growth in Africa can only be advanced in an atmosphere of peace and stability. We must support efforts by the African Union, including those of the Peace and Security Department, to mitigate conflict, manage peace support operations, and develop a continent-wide peace and security architecture. We must strengthen the AU's Continental Early Warning System, which will seek to identify potential conflict areas and resolve political, ethnic, or religious differences before they engulf entire nations or regions on the continent.

The African Union must be emboldened to speak out against violence and injustice and to protect those in Darfur, the Eastern Congo, Somalia, and Zimbabwe who seek such basic requirements as access to food, water, and shelter and the ability to share the wealth and resources of their homeland. If confirmed I will urge the African Union to speak out and act decisively on such issues as rape and other forms of gender-based-violence in conflict and post conflict areas.

We must also work with the African Union on transnational threats to our shared desire for peace and stability on the continent. Among these are Al Qaida in the Maghreb and foreign fighters supporting al-Shabaab in Somalia. We must work with the AU to counter the drug trafficking rings threatening governments in West Africa and who are making inroads into parts of Southern Africa, and those who traffic humans (a modern form of slavery) both within Africa and from Africa to Europe and the Middle East. If confirmed, I will work with the AU on mitigating the potentially devastating impact of climate change and the ongoing pandemics of HIV/AIDS and malaria. I am especially proud of our nation's leadership on all of these issues and our ability to bring international partners to the fight against these transnational threats.

I believe that America's reputation on the continent, grounded in respect for our democratic principles, our support for free markets and development, and our strong historic and cultural ties, including the education of many African Union

permanent staff and representatives at U.S. colleges and universities, gives us unparalleled standing with the AU leadership and members. We must use this influence wisely in pursuit of a just and prosperous future for both Americans and Africans.

I look forward, if confirmed as the U.S. Ambassador to the African Union, to working closely with you and other Members of Congress to ensure that U.S. interests, policies, and assistance to the African Union promote democracy, human rights, peace and security, and sustained economic growth on the continent.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for scheduling this hearing, and I would be pleased to answer any questions that you or the other members of the Committee may have.