

Statement of Donald L. Heflin
Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of Cabo Verde
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 29, 2014

Chairman Coons and Members of the Committee, it's my honor to appear here today as the President's nominee to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Cabo Verde. I am grateful to President Obama and Secretary Kerry for this tremendous vote of confidence and for this opportunity to come before you.

I wish to acknowledge my daughter, Sara, who is here with us today. Sara is currently a Junior at Austin Peay State University, and lived in six countries growing up. Her first posting as a Foreign Service kid started when she was eight weeks old.

I regret that my parents did not live long enough to be here today. They both devoted their entire working lives to public service, highlighted by my father's four years as a pilot in World War Two.

The ten islands that make up the Republic of Cabo Verde are just off the west coast of Africa. Cabo Verde enjoys a vibrant, multi-party political system and an unbroken history of civilian rule since independence in 1975. It is a success story of progress, prosperity, political stability and democracy.

Cabo Verde and the United States have enjoyed warm relations since we opened our first consulate there nearly 200 years ago. There are more than 450,000 Americans of Cabo Verdean origin. Many of these families have lived in New England since originally immigrating to work on the 19th century whaling ships. They participate fully in the life of our great country, and many of them wish to invest in the prosperous future of Cabo Verde.

The United States and Cabo Verde are partners on a number of important matters. Among them, maritime security and transnational crime are key. The Government of Cabo Verde strongly supports counter-narcotics maneuvers and is a gracious host to U.S. ship visits. Cabo Verde is a model in the region for strategic partnership. If confirmed, it is my goal to maintain and enhance this multilateral and inter-agency collaboration.

U.S engagement in support of Cabo Verde's economic and commercial development is bearing fruit. Cabo Verde's first Millennium Challenge Account Compact was successfully completed in 2010, producing significant gains in all three of its projects, namely: 1) improvements in transportation networks facilitating integration of internal markets; 2) improvements in water management and soil conservation, which promoted increases in farms profits and incomes; and, 3) support to Cabo Verdean

microfinance institutions. It is my hope, if confirmed, to engage Cabo Verde in consolidating these gains.

Cabo Verde's continued strong governance performance resulted in its selection as the first country to qualify for a second Millennium Challenge Account Compact, which began in 2012 and is focused on carrying out wide-reaching reforms in the water and sanitation and land management sectors. These two compacts support Cabo Verde's overall national development goal of transforming its economy from aid-dependency to sustainable, private-sector led growth.

Mr. Chairman, prior assignments in Africa and in African Affairs have equipped me with the cultural and regional knowledge and language skills to relate to the Cabo Verdean government and people. Similarly, if confirmed, I will draw upon my 27-year career in the Foreign Service, including my experience as Principal Officer in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, to effectively lead the U.S. Mission in Praia, Cabo Verde. I look forward to mentoring entry-level officers who staff many of the Embassy's positions. If confirmed, my number one priority will be to promote the safety and welfare of American citizens in Cabo Verde.

I would be pleased to answer any of your questions.