

STATEMENT OF DR. WILLIAM R. STEIGER  
UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO  
MOZAMBIQUE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

October 03, 2007

Chairman Biden, Ranking Member Lugar, and distinguished members of this Committee:

It is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today as you consider my nomination to serve as Ambassador to the Republic of Mozambique. I am grateful for President Bush's nomination, and for the support of Secretary Rice, and I want to thank the Committee for granting me this hearing.

If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working with this Committee and the many others in Congress who are interested in Mozambique's progress. Ever since the United States helped broker the 1992 peace accords that ended 16 years of civil war, relations between our two countries have been excellent. Now our relationship is even closer and more robust, as demonstrated by the June 2007 visit of First Lady Laura Bush, then the signing of a Millennium Challenge Compact in July, and,

finally, the August visit of Health and Human Services Secretary Leavitt. That staff members from this very Committee have visited Mozambique in recent weeks further emphasizes the increasing importance and dynamics of U.S.-Mozambique relations.

The past fifteen years have seen real democratic advancement in Mozambique. The country is a multi-party democracy under the constitution of 1990, and in 1994 Mozambique held its first democratic elections. Provincial elections are planned for January 2008, to be followed by municipal elections, and then Presidential and legislative elections in 2009. Recent elections in Mozambique have been judged as generally free and fair by the Carter Center and international observers, and if confirmed I pledge to help ensure future elections are transparent and open to all political parties, so that Mozambique can secure and enjoy a position among the world's functioning democracies.

Additionally, Mozambique has enjoyed remarkable economic growth by pursuing policies that have earned it the respect and support of international financial institutions. Despite remaining one of the world's poorest countries, Mozambique's Gross Domestic Product per capita has more than tripled since the conclusion of the peace accords. If confirmed, I will work to encourage an open and favorable business climate necessary to

attract foreign direct investment and responsible economic stewardship that will bring further prosperity to the country.

Although Mozambique has enjoyed political and economic improvement, it must also aggressively address the devastating reality of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. Nationwide HIV prevalence is now greater than 16 percent within Mozambique's adult population. It is extremely troubling that the number of new infections each year still appears to be increasing.

Malaria also takes a huge economic and human toll in Mozambique. The disease is responsible for an estimated 40 percent of all outpatient visits to health facilities and for some 60 percent of admissions to hospital of children. There are as many as six million cases of malaria each year in Mozambique--a country with a population of just under 20 million.

Helping Mozambique fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria, and tuberculosis are among the U.S. Government's highest priorities. Mozambique is currently one of only two nations in the world that is a focus country for both the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) and has also signed a Millennium Challenge Compact. Mozambique's MCC compact includes a \$204 million Water/Sanitation Project over five years, aimed at providing fresh-drinking

water and curbing the incidence of malaria, and also includes a five-year \$176 million project for road construction and rehabilitation. Because the MCC and our Mozambican partners realize that improved roadways mean greater movements of people, the road construction and rehabilitation project will also develop HIV/AIDS-awareness programs along heavily traveled routes to educate people in disease prevention. In brief, because of the size of these investments, the U.S. is the largest bilateral donor to Mozambique. Mozambique is among the top recipients of U.S. Government assistance in Africa, and is also one of the top ten recipients of U.S. assistance worldwide.

Mr. Chairman, since 2000, I have gained much experience coordinating our international programs and policies at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Such experience has provided me with the knowledge and insight to advocate for our Government's goals in Mozambique while helping fortify and expand the successes we've already achieved through our considerable efforts. My service on the interagency steering groups for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the President's Malaria Initiative, as well as my time as the U.S. Representative on the Board of Directors of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, have given me an intimate understanding and knowledge of

Mozambique while continuing to vigorously press our national interests.

Thank you again for this opportunity to address you. I would be pleased to answer any questions you and your colleagues might have.