

**Statement of Linda Thomas-Greenfield**  
**Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Designate**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**July 24, 2013**

Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Flake, and Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. I am honored by President Obama's and Secretary Kerry's confidence in me and, if confirmed, I hope to work closely with the Congress and with this Committee and its members, to further our partnership with the African people and organizations, nurture our shared values, and advance U.S interests in the region.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to take the opportunity to introduce my husband, Lafayette, and our two children, Lindsay and Deuce. I would not be here today if it were not for their support and encouragement over the last thirty-one years.

My first introduction to Africa occurred in 1964, when I was a mere 12 year old and had the opportunity to meet Peace Corps volunteers and their African teachers, who were living in my small community in Baker, Louisiana, prior to departing for their assignments in Swaziland and Somalia. From that moment, I knew I wanted to be a Peace Corps Volunteer and I knew I wanted to go to Africa. Unfortunately, I never became a volunteer, something I continue to regret today, but did I get a chance to go to Africa.

I have spent the majority of my career working in Africa and on African issues, including as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration responsible for Africa, as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Africa Bureau responsible for west Africa, as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, and as the U.S. Ambassador to Liberia. Most recently in my position as Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources I led a team of 600 employees who managed the Department's 70,000-strong workforce. Ultimately, any organization is only as good as its people. In all my leadership positions, I have sought to better enable our personnel to meet our ambitious foreign policy objectives, to promote strong leadership and accountability, and foster diversity in the workplace. These will continue to be priorities for me, if confirmed. The Bureau of African Affairs is home to approximately 1,100 Foreign Service Officers, 76 Civil Servants, and 12,800 locally-employed staff who are spread across 50 posts, as well as here in Washington. Entry-level officers are often the backbone of our lightly-staffed embassies and many of our desks within the Bureau. If confirmed as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, I will continue my strong professional and personal commitment to the welfare and safety of our people, and to their development through mentorship and my

attention to management issues. I am also committed to keeping our people safe and facilities secure. To that end, I will work closely with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to achieve that goal.

I come before the Committee at a very propitious moment. The President just completed a highly successful trip to Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania during which he reinforced our efforts to expand economic growth in a mutually beneficial manner, to strengthen democratic institutions, and to invest in African youth as the next generation of African leaders. If confirmed, I particularly look forward to the African Heads of State Summit in Washington in 2014, which will further advance the President's efforts on this critical set of issues. The President's trip also extended U.S. engagement on the continent through the unveiling of three critical initiatives. Power Africa aims to increase electricity by at least 20 million new households and commercial entities with on-grid, mini-grid, and off-grid solutions by complementing government resources with private sector commitments. With more than two-thirds of the continent without electricity, this initiative will address Africa's major constraint to economic growth and increased private sector investment. In conjunction with our efforts to expand trade, the President also announced Trade Africa – an initiative that aims to double intra-regional trade in the East African Community (EAC), which includes increasing exports to the United States through targeted investments and support to regional

governments and institutions. With one in three Africans between the ages of 10 and 24 and approximately 60 percent of the population below the age of 35, the Young African Leaders Initiative helps provide the next generation of male and female leaders with the training and mentoring needed for business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership, and public administration.

Our partnership with the countries and people of Africa has contributed to real progress, made all the more evident by the strength of our relationships across the continent – from Ghana to Tanzania and from Liberia to Namibia. Africa has been too often described as a continent of “emerging” nations. However, given the recent strong economic growth, it is undeniable that a number of the nations on the continent have fully “emerged” and are well on their way toward sustained economic growth with visible and strong democratic institutions. We have been especially encouraged by peaceful transitions between political parties, as we witnessed in Senegal and Zambia. As President Obama has said, “Africa doesn’t need strong men, it needs strong institutions,” and this shift is the best guarantee for Africa’s future development and stability. This is a trend that the President has emphasized to great effect across Africa, and it is one that I intend to work hard to reinforce and expand, if confirmed. We are watching closely as the people of Mali and Zimbabwe prepare to head to their polling stations in just a few short days for elections that will be critical to the future of their respective nations. Holding

credible, democratic elections in Mali is the first step in the nation's return to constitutional order and the establishment of a government with the legitimacy to pursue longer-term political and development priorities, including national reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts. In Zimbabwe, we are concerned that elections are moving forward in spite of incomplete reforms and insufficient electoral preparations. Zimbabwe's elections need to be peaceful and credible, and reflective of the will of the people.

In the coming years, across the continent, we will have to prioritize our support for the critical democracy and governance programs that underpin the success of all other efforts – from our investments in global health, to our assistance in the security sector, to our work on advancing women's participation. Democracy and governance have long been – and should remain – a top priority. Without these efforts, progress in other sectors may ultimately be unsustainable.

We are beginning to see visible evidence of parallel gains in economic growth and economic development on the continent. Africa is booming in nearly every sector, from massive energy developments in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Ghana; to the growth of Rwanda and Kenya's information technology sectors; to the thriving auto industry in South Africa. At the same time, we will need to continue efforts to encourage American businesses to actively participate in Africa's economic renaissance. During his address to business leaders in Tanzania,

President Obama noted that strengthening good governance is good business as well. Lack of fiscal transparency and corruption significantly discourage investment. The Administration is working with countries across Africa to improve governance, enhance open government, and uphold the rule of law. Trade and sustainable economic development will flow where rules are predictable and investment is protected. I believe that these political and economic trends are self-reinforcing and will form one of the principal cornerstones of my personal efforts if confirmed. Our businesses understand the importance of respecting international norms, and I will strive to ensure that U.S. companies operating in Africa are treated fairly and are given every opportunity to compete in the marketplace.

When the playing field is level, I am confident that American firms can compete successfully with anyone in the world, including nations such as China. We do not view U.S. and Chinese engagements in zero-sum terms. Chinese efforts to build infrastructure and enable economic growth are much needed but we will also continue to encourage China to play a constructive role through activities that are consistent with international norms. Ultimately, African governments should drive a hard bargain in the deals they make with every nation to ensure they are the best for their people and their futures. U.S. businesses add value and our partnerships create broad, sustainable, economic opportunity, making a meaningful difference in people's lives.

To further support U.S.-African trade, we are looking forward to the upcoming African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Trade Ministerial in Ethiopia this August, and if confirmed, I hope to work closely with Congress to pave the way for AGOA's renewal. Working together alongside our African partners, we will also have to make these trade preferences more effective and ensure that more African goods can compete successfully in the global marketplace. The bulk of our trade is currently with just three countries, South Africa, Nigeria, and Angola, and it must be further broadened. We also continue to support African women entrepreneurs through the African Women Entrepreneurship Program, which identifies and builds networks of women entrepreneurs across sub-Saharan Africa. This program has been instrumental in building the capacity of African women entrepreneurs, who are often agents of change in their communities.

Another part of the challenge ahead will be to maintain our focus on the people of Africa, to listen to their voices, and to include their concerns in our policy deliberations. Our work on HIV/AIDS through PEPFAR is a great example of the new kinds of partnerships we are forming. Thirteen countries have now passed the programmatic "tipping point" where more people are newly receiving treatment than are being newly infected with HIV. And countries such as South

Africa and Namibia are increasingly taking on their own epidemics, assuming greater costs and leadership for treatment.

As we deepen our partnerships on the continent, our efforts will also stay true to the fact that human rights is a core American value. Governments that respect human rights, including women's rights, and democratic norms make stronger and more stable partners for economic growth, development, peace, and prosperity. We will continue to support partners who respect these norms, and will continue to speak out, both in public and in private, when nations stray from their responsibility to protect their people's rights. We must continue to strengthen local human rights groups in Africa and engage high-level foreign leaders when we see laws or actions that impinge on the human rights of their citizens – whether it is attempts to restrict the free flow of information or freedom of assembly, obstruct the operations of civil society and local NGOs, or the ways in which countries confront insurgencies that may put civilians at risk.

We will continue to work hard to consolidate democratic progress, economic growth and the security necessary for families to live “normal” lives in peace and freedom. Both instability and insecurity greatly diminish the prospects and aspirations of future generations, and dampen the hopes of too many citizens. While some countries are stable and experiencing economic and social vitality, others remain years and even decades behind owing to conflict. From the eastern

Congo to the Sahel, and from Somalia to the tensions that still exist between Sudan and South Sudan, too many lives have been lost and too many others remain under severe threats. Violent extremist organizations, some of them affiliated with al Qaeda, seek to exploit conflicts and weak institutions to expand their reach. Our efforts to promote stability have also led to the expansion of partnerships focused on responding to transnational threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, wildlife trafficking, and piracy. Meanwhile U.S. support to critical peacekeeping operations has allowed us to leverage our resources and work multilaterally to encourage peace. In each of these cases we are working with the African Union, as well as other regional and international organizations and the countries themselves to help find solutions. We will continue both our humanitarian efforts on behalf of those living with conflict and our efforts to resolve those conflicts. We also know that for true stability to flourish, we have to push for the full inclusion of women at every step of the process.

I understand that the opportunities and the challenges in Africa require a comprehensive U.S. policy, one that takes a holistic view, is integrative, proactive, and forward-looking. If confirmed, I will always balance our long-term interests with the near-term and urgent imperatives we face each week. I will work to build on the foundation of successes set during President Obama's first term, and clearly articulated in the June 2012 Presidential Policy Directive on sub-Saharan Africa.

This will mean working closely with our African partners to strengthen democratic institutions beyond just the need for free, fair and transparent elections. If confirmed, I will strive to also establish environments where new entrepreneurship ecosystems can flourish, economic opportunities can grow, and comprehensive development frameworks can take root, not only to encourage more trade, investment, and economic growth, but to help reform and create the conditions under which they can thrive. Equally important will be finding sustainable ways to advance peace, security, and stability throughout the region as prerequisites for meeting the aspirations of Africans and Americans alike. I do not mean to sound immodest by raising our expectations and setting very high goals, but for far too many years we have been Africa's partner in times of adversity. While we will continue to support the African people in moments of crisis, we will now also be Africa's partner in times of prosperity. Admittedly this is a big challenge, but, if confirmed, it is one that I very much look forward to pursuing with your help and with the Africa Bureau's enthusiasm and energy.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have.