

African Affairs

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U.S. Department of State

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My vision and priorities for U.S. Africa policy derive directly from President Bush's charge to make the world safer and better, and the Secretary's guidance to use America's diplomatic power to help foreign citizens better their own lives, build their own nations, and transform their own futures. Translated to Africa, the key priorities are to support the spread of political freedom throughout the continent; expand economic opportunity and growth; address the unique challenge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic; and reinforce African initiatives to end conflict and fight terror. We succeed as African countries take their place squarely in the community of democracies building an international system based on our shared values, and contributing to global peace and prosperity. In my academic career and during my government service, including as my nation's Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa, I have studied and learned much about the challenges that the African people face. Now, as Assistant Secretary of State, I am grateful for the opportunity to work with African nations to meet those challenges and serve my own country at the same time.

After 25 years of studying and working on U.S. policy toward Africa, I can attest that there has never been a more auspicious time to consolidate the progress and promise of the continent. Democracy in Africa is spreading, with more than 50 democratic elections in the past four years. Economic expansion on the continent is at an eight-year high, with 20 countries registering growth each of the past five years. Six major wars have ended in the past six years: in Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Sudan's north-south 22-year civil war. Africans are taking control of their collective destiny through institutions like the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) program, which contributes to better governance and friendlier ties among states. The Bureau of African Affairs is capitalizing on these historic shifts by engaging and helping to build the institutions that will sustain progress across generations. We are instituting an "Era of Partnership" with Africa.



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U.S. First Lady Laura Bush (standing, center) and Ghana's president, John Agyekum (right), at the Accra Teacher Training Center where Mrs. Bush launched the Africa Initiative Textbooks Program.

SUPPORTING THE SPREAD OF POLITICAL FREEDOM IN AFRICA

The United States will continue to support the institutions essential for democracy—a free press, an independent judiciary, a sound financial system, and vibrant political parties. Over the next two years, strengthening the electoral infrastructure will be a priority since, in many African countries, elections have become flash points for conflict: losers frequently contest results with policy issues taking a second place to ballot theft and street protest. We will work in two areas: (1) building the capacity of independent national electoral commissions to conduct free, fair, and transparent elections that engender public confidence; (2) encouraging all candidates and political parties to “earn their votes” by focusing on service delivery and policy debate to gain support.

Working with civil society groups and advocating for press freedom will remain core to my efforts to promote and protect human rights and basic freedoms.

The prospects are good. In the last decade, more than two-thirds of Africa's 48 countries have held free elections. Moreover, in 1990 Freedom House (a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that promotes liberal democracy throughout the world) classified four sub-Saharan African countries as free; 20 as partly free; and 24 as not free. In 2006, the numbers have reversed: 34 are free or partly free and only 14 were classified as not free. The trend offers a ray of hope for the continent with 34 of the 48 countries now on the freedom path.

Even so, we cannot take progress for granted. One key is to embed the values of freedom in transnational African institutions like the NEPAD Secretariat and Peer Review Mechanism. If the institutions that link African nations



Photo: USAID/William Creighton, DAI

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is supporting efforts to help Tanzanian farmers, such as this family, understand the paprika market and learn how to successfully grow this new crop.

embrace fairness and democracy, they will reinforce those principles among African leaders and help instill positive attitudes toward good governance.

Building democracies and transforming societies is not the result of politics alone; efficient, honest, and transparent financial systems provide important support for positive change. Leveraging the substantial resources of President Bush's multibillion-dollar aid program, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), will help encourage reform, good governance, and accountability.

EXPANDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND GROWTH

Africa is a rich continent in an impoverished state. Over the next two years, we will focus heavily on supporting Africa's entrepreneurs. We believe their talents and drive hold the potential to harness the continent's great potential to create prosperity for its people. These business leaders will need access to markets in order to sell their goods and create badly needed jobs. A primary vehicle for market access is the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), signed into U.S. law in 2000, which provides for trade preferences and duty-free entry into the United States for certain goods from sub-Saharan nations introducing market-based reforms.

We are also encouraging domestic reforms to support small and medium-sized businesses, leveling the playing field in our global economic institutions, and using development assistance as a catalyst for growth. One focus of this aid is empowering women and girls. President Bush's Africa Education Initiative has trained over 220,000 teachers in 15 countries, distributed over 1.8 million textbooks, and awarded some 85,000 scholarships to girls from 38 countries.

Protecting the environment and inculcating proper management of water, wildlife, fisheries, forests, and other natural resources are crucial to preserving and harnessing Africa's resources for future generations. In Central Africa, the Congo Basin Forest Partnership Initiative brings together the United States, several African

nations, and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to shape and implement conservation programs that also spur economic opportunities. We will expand our efforts beyond this successful program.

Our aid budget for Africa this year is \$4.1 billion, up from about \$700 million in 2001. This six-fold growth reflects the Bush Administration's willingness to increase aid in exchange for greater recipient accountability for how the funds are used. President Bush has also taken aim at reforming global economic institutions to fight poverty and encourage economic development.

In both international trade and international debt relief, our policy is to create greater opportunity for our African friends. Agricultural export subsidies make it more difficult for African agricultural goods to compete in world markets. We seek to level the playing field by ending those trade-distorting subsidies. In 2001, President Bush urged the World Bank to provide all new assistance to the poorest countries in the form of grants—not loans—to stop the suffocating cycle of debt that disproportionately affects African nations. His initiative at the G-8 helped cancel 100 percent of the debt of the heavily indebted poor countries. It helps to free up some \$30 billion of resources that now can be invested in the health and education of Africa's people.



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Alexandra Zekas (center), Chad Country Manager for the Ambassadors Girls' Scholarship Program (AGSP), talks with girls in a school in Chad. The AGSP, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), will provide 550,000 scholarships to schoolgirls in sub-Saharan Africa.

FIGHTING HIV/AIDS AND MALARIA

It was a privilege to be President Bush's choice to be U.S. Ambassador to South Africa. But this assignment put me at ground zero of the devastation caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, face to face with the men, women, and children suffering and dying from HIV/AIDS.

Having studied and worked on U.S. policy toward Africa for over 25 years, I am sadly familiar with the devastation caused by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The President's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) offers the first chance at winning the war against this deadly disease. In 2000 our assistance for global HIV/AIDS was around \$300 million; now, at \$15 billion over a five-year period, the United States has provided more resources than all other donor nations combined. Through the President's leadership, the United States initiated wide-scale treatment for Africans, transforming not only lives but also health care systems, as we helped create the medical infrastructure necessary to support treatment from only 50,000 people to over 550,000 people in Sub-Saharan Africa in just two years.

Twelve of the 15 focus PEPFAR countries are in Africa, which is the largest recipient of this bold initiative. We aim to prevent 7 million new infections, treat 2 million HIV-infected individuals, and offer care to 10 million individuals who are infected with, or affected by, HIV/AIDS.

The President's recently announced malaria initiative also mobilizes global efforts to combat a major killer that strikes especially hard at Africa's children. Malaria is both preventable and treatable, yet every year it kills almost 1.2 million people. Estimated yearly economic loss due to malaria is about \$12 billion; a crippling 1.3 percent annual loss in GDP growth in countries where the disease is endemic. The President's initiative currently targets seven African countries to eradicate this killer. We aim to cover 175 million people in 15 African countries by increasing funding of malaria prevention and treatment to \$1.2 billion over five years. Working together—donor and African governments, private corporations, foundations, voluntary organizations—we can reach our goal of reducing malaria deaths by 50 percent in each target country.

ENDING WARS AND COMBATING TERROR AND VIOLENCE

We will support efforts to mediate conflicts between African nations and strengthen African capacity to carry out peace support operations and to fight terror. Since 2001, when I was senior director for Africa at the National Security Council, the administration's approach to working collectively with lead African mediators and multilaterally with the African Union, the United Nations, and sub-regional organizations like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has succeeded. Largely as a result of this partnership, Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has become Africa's first elected woman president. She replaced one of the continent's worst dictators, former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who now sits in The Hague to be tried for war crimes by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. I am proud of the role American diplomats and Marines played to end Liberia's 14-year war.

We will train 40,000 African peacekeepers through the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) and Africa Contingency Operations and Training Assistance (ACOTA) programs. Our investment of \$600 million over five years will yield global dividends. Africans are sharing the burden of international peace and security by supplying 30 percent of U.N. peacekeeping forces worldwide. Four countries—Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa—are among the top ten U.N. troop contributors. Another program, the Women's Justice and Empowerment Initiative, extends the effort to help victims of abuse and sexual violence recover their dignity.

I rely on the East Africa Counterterrorism and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiatives to provide robust and multifaceted programs to deny terrorists safe-havens, operational bases, and recruitment opportunities. We must reach out to counter the despair that can feed extremist ideology. As we confront America's gravest threats of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass

destruction, we have willing partners and ready models in Africa. Extreme poverty in Africa has not provided fertile recruiting grounds for extremist ideology. South Africa's renunciation of nuclear weapons has proved that abandoning WMD and nuclear ambitions can enhance a country's global standing and influence.

Together with our Ambassadors and embassies in Africa, I will pursue our Africa policy priorities covering 48 sub-Saharan African countries. As we move forward, our relations with Africa's strong democratic and economic reformers (like Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Tanzania, and others), and with its most influential powers—Nigeria and South Africa—will be critical. We will invest in success, not chase crises.

The strength of our partnership with Africa is built on people-to-people ties. America's cultural links with Africa are intrinsic: we share a common heritage. Through public diplomacy and youth outreach, we continue to strengthen bonds and illustrate the link between America's well-being and Africa's progress. We are moving beyond traditional exchanges among foreign policy diplomats to incorporate a cultural diplomacy that enriches understanding and builds common cause between Americans and Africans. Through our *AfricaAlive* initiative, we have engaged with eminent persons such as Angelique Kidjo, Bono, Salif Keita, and NBA basketball star Dikembe Mutombo. We also screened the Academy Award-winning South African film *Tsotsi* to help institute an Era of Partnership.

I am confident that our Africa policy will prove successful. Many fine men and women, American and Africans, work every day to achieve that common success. With the innovative initiatives and historic resources at hand, together we will advance freedom, peace, and prosperity in Africa. ■

For more information:
<http://www.state.gov/p/af/>
<http://usinfo.state.gov/af/>

Africa



Photo: USAID/Richard Nyberg

Facoumba Gueye (left), a volunteer with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-sponsored Digital Freedom Initiative, explains how information technology can help clothing merchant Omar Fall increase efficiency and profits. Through the Digital Freedom Initiative, USAID works together with leading U.S. companies to promote economic growth for entrepreneurs and small businesses in developing countries.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (right) greets South African Foreign Affairs Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma at the U.S. State Department in Washington, D.C.



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On Senegal's remote island of Carabane, a project of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided training for the technicians who installed this water pump, which brings safe drinking water to the island's inhabitants.

Presidential election posters in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, preceding the country's first democratic election in more than 40 years.



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Africa



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In Sauri in western Kenya, a woman takes a break from clearing the bush to make space to plant maize. Sauri is part of an experiment in poverty reduction sponsored by private donations through Columbia University's Earth Institute.

This 37-year-old woman is attending a nighttime literacy class in Gabarone, Botswana. One of the aims of U.S. assistance is the empowerment of women and girls.



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Ambassador Randall Tobias, Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance and USAID Administrator, applauds First Lady Laura Bush after a speech describing additions to the President's Malaria Initiative in June 2006 in Washington, D.C.