



**Embassy Series  
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***African Women Leaders:  
Their Role in Promoting Investment, Trade and Peace***

Keynote Speaker:  
**Ambassador Sheila Siwela, Zambia**

Additional Remarks by:  
**Ambassador Faida Mitifu, Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Ambassador Tebelelo Seretse, Botswana  
Ambassador Amelia Sumbana, Mozambique  
Ambassador Fatima Veiga, Cape Verde**

**Patricia Ellis:** Good evening everyone and welcome. I'm Patricia Ellis, President of the Women's Foreign Policy Group. We promote women's leadership and women's voices on pressing international issues of the day, and we're so, so pleased to be here at the Embassy of Zambia tonight. I want to thank our host, Ambassador Sheila Siwela, for having us here. [*Applause.*] And tonight the topic is "African Women Leaders: Their Role in Promoting Investment, Trade and Peace."

So on behalf of the WFPG and our Board members who are here—Carolyn Brehm, Dawn Calabria, Donna Constantinople, Isabel Jasinowski, and Diana Negrofonte—I just want to thank you again for having us here. Thank you for your warm hospitality. It's beautiful—this tent and the rain stopped, and all the wonderful food and drinks. And I also want to welcome her colleagues, the other African ambassadors: the Ambassador of Botswana, the Ambassador of Cape Verde, the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Ambassador of Mozambique—welcome. And I also want to recognize our Corporate Advisory Council Members from Boeing, Pfizer, and P&G. We have other diplomats here, government officials, UN officials, and we just thank you all so much for coming. Our Embassy Series is one of our most popular series, and over the past year we've had events with the Ambassadors of India, Singapore and most recently with the Ambassador of Pakistan. So we like to go around the world. We're very, very pleased by the huge turnout because it shows the great interest in Africa.

I just wanted to mention one thing. We will have some smaller events over the summer but one thing to kind of keep in mind—in the fall, we're going to have one of our Author Series events with the well-known author Robin Wright, who is also a Middle East expert, and it's going to be about her new book called "Rock the Casbah." So that should be a lot of fun.

Tonight's event could not be more timely. So much is going on in Africa, and we're covering so many different aspects of it. But the recent AGOA conference, which took place in Zambia, which Secretary Clinton attended and we're going to hear from the Ambassador about that and their initiatives on women's empowerment as well as investment. The visit of Michelle Obama to Africa. The situation in Libya. The concern about the drought in the horn of Africa and East Africa. I could list many more things, but I'll stop here because we'll be able to get to a number of them in our discussion. So our format's going to be a little different tonight. The Ambassador is going to give her opening remarks and then we will introduce the other Ambassadors and we'll go right into discussion. I'm going to lead it off

with some questions and then we will open it up to the audience. As you know, there's a wonderful spread of food out there, and the Ambassador hopes that everybody will take great advantage of it.

Now you have a program book and you do have the Ambassador's bio in it—and she has such an impressive bio—but I just want to give you a few highlights. Well, first of all, the Ambassador is relatively new. We were just discussing—her first event in Washington was the Women's Foreign Policy Group event that we had with Melanne Vermeer, and it was very exciting to have her there. In her capacity here she represents so many different countries. I'm going to read them off because I was so impressed: Mexico, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Belize, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and she also is the representative at the World Bank and the IMF, which is really, really—you must be very, very busy! She previously was Ambassador to Belgium and there she was Ambassador to the EU, to the Netherlands, Luxemburg. She was Ambassador to Zimbabwe and she was the Deputy High Commissioner to Nigeria. She's a specialist in gender issues and leadership skills, and she's the founder and lead consultant on something called "Motivational Center for Africa's Transformation." So please join me in welcoming Ambassador Sheila Siwela. [Applause.]

**Ambassador Sheila Siwela:** Good evening, such a pleasure to welcome all of you to Zambia House. I want to acknowledge my fellow ambassadors who have come to support me, give me solidarity. Pat Ellis, first time when I went to see her, she impressed me so much that when I saw the invitation to go to the function, I went. I left the office without even presenting my credentials and appeared at her function. [Laughter.] So I broke protocol, but don't tell the State Department please!

When she said, "Can we host [the] reception July after AGOA at the embassy?", I said "Yes, yes, yes." What I didn't think was in Zambia, July is very cold so I said we can do it outside. [Laughter.] I forgot that here it is very warm. [Laughter.] I want to be so apologized, Really, I had Zambia in mind for 13 July, because right now people are using heaters at home. [Laughter.]

I was asked to just do some remarks. As everybody knows, Pat knows, she is very, very particular and strict. "You can only talk for 10 minutes, Sheila. There will be time for to talk for longer but this time, 10 minutes." So if I don't breathe, please don't think you need the ambulance, it's because I'm rushing at this time. [Laughter.] I'll breathe after 10 minutes. [Laughter.]

The topic today was the invisible hands of the African women in promoting trade and growth and peace. The invisible hands—this is under the umbrella topic of African women leaders and our roles in promoting investment, trade, and peace. So my topic is the invisible hands of the women in the promotion of trade, development, investment, and peace.

Let me first talk to you a little bit about Africa, which I'm sure everybody is familiar. It had 54 nations until Saturday; now we are 55 nations thanks to Southern Sudan. [Applause.] Africa's got about a billion people. Nearly all of these nations' populations, 50% or more, are women, everywhere. There's no country where there's more men than women. In at least two-thirds of the countries in Africa, there are more women than men. Africa is the second largest of the seven continents, which is about 25% of the land area of the whole world. It's the second largest land mass in the world. 60% of Africa's share of the world total amount of land is in Africa. There's a new investment stage in Africa. Projections show that four sectors could be worth \$2.6 trillion in revenue by the year 2020 in the sectors of consumer, agriculture, and infrastructure. Just to zero in on some countries, South Africa and Libya—they are the world's top uranium producers. We're talking about other countries producing diamonds, limestone, copper—Zambia, copper—zinc, gold, phosphorous, etc., etc. Algeria has the seventh-largest gas reserves in the world. Nigeria is the tenth-largest oil producer. I'm told, I confirmed this, that the calendar of 365 days has its origins in [Inaudible.] ancient African civilization. So you are here today calling yourself 13, July 2011 thanks to Africa. Give it a round of applause. [Laughter.] [Applause.]

But in all these things, how are women doing? In all these good statistics, where are the women and how are they doing? It's important to recognize the important role of the African women in the midst of

all these developmental strides on the continent, otherwise we'll be forever invisible. More than half of the population in sub-Saharan Africa directly or indirectly relies on the rural agriculture for livelihood, which is—70% [of] cultivators are women. So women are feeding the continent. It's their invisible hands turning the wheels of the wagons of agriculture. Women are indeed a hard-working group.

Women in sub-Saharan Africa—SSA—have less cash income than men. Married women generally have less say in decision-making over how their cash earnings are spent. Caste and structural roles limit women's access to land and other types of property. As a gender specialist, we fought so much to have laws in place, including the CEDAW, which is actually the debates are now going on in New York—Commission for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. That convention was signed by everybody, but what we discovered that administration, the practice is not the same as the laws. We have the laws and the policies, but the practices have a different story. Women are still lagging behind. Households of one mother with young children are more likely to be poor in Africa than those of single fathers with young children.

So what's the current status of women? There's some good news. Women's participation in the market economy—how am I doing on time? Okay. [*Laughter.*] I'm reading as fast as I can. The current status of women in trade and investment—women's participation in the market economy has seen a steady rise especially in the informal sector where they do domestic things like cross-border trade. The internal trade, marketing, agriculture, food processing, and apparels—we see a lot of women coming to that sector. Another thing that we're seeing with women is women's roles in domestic and productive activities have remained significant across Africa. Studies have shown that women in both urban and rural areas work longer hours than men—shame. [*Laughter.*] This is when both market and non-market activities are taken into account. Efforts such as the African Women's Entrepreneurs Program, AWEP, is good news to African women. This is a program that was conceived—it's a branch out of the idea of the sector of that Mrs. Clinton, who last year at the Forum on AGOA in Washington, DC bragged that she decided that there could be a program that could be annexed to the forum specifically on women. Her vision was that she wanted women to be part of the AGOA process, but not as an [integrated] part but as a stand-alone group, which eventually could be used in the Forum of AGOA. Women were brought in—one woman was brought from all seven participating member countries. It was a beautiful program—I don't know if she's here, she managed a very good process and we're going to counsel us with them. So successful the program that Mrs. Clinton and the State Department decided that the next forum, which was Lusaka, we're going to even put more visibility to it.

Now, what is AWEP? AWEP is the African Women Entrepreneurs Program. It's a program specifically for export-ready women, not women who are [in] incubators, no, but women who have good enough product to start exporting. So now this time we had 37 who were here last year in Lusaka and a new 37. So that's 37 plus 37—we had about 74 women from 37 countries in Lusaka—very, very bright group, very, very ready-to-do-business group. Secretary Clinton announced that the US government was going to put in 2 million US dollars for program for the next five years to bring the capacity of this group and other groups that will be coming to promote women in export arena so that they can compete favorably with the men in their products. That's AWEP, and the first group is coming in October for three weeks and there's going to be some embassies and some organizations on some exchange program. So that effort has been applauded because it's because of such efforts, it's because of such solidarity that bring women together that you shall start to see results because now when women just work on their own we are not seeing the statistics, but when women come together and start producing, we are going to have success. One of the things that came out as a resolution, the women themselves said they can't export themselves alone because some of them don't have enough quantities, so the new strategy was that they're going to go region or they're going to get ten women who have the same project regardless of which country they come from. They put their products together and start now selling it to the US or the EU and they come in and they share their profits instead of one, one, one. So that is a way forward, and it was only going to happen when they met and they shared their ideas.

So what I want to do is talk about the role of the women leaders on how to make these things happen. But the women themselves, ourselves, we have challenges that we need to look at before we get into this global arena, because it's a jungle there. It's quite tight in that arena. Number one: women lack the ambition, they are all the time taken for granted. I do not know if there's anybody sitting here who did not feel that she was under-valued for what she does. Anybody who thinks like that that sometimes we're taken for granted, hands up—yes, husbands alike, they take us for granted. [Laughter.] So we need to start being recognized for what we are doing. Unfortunately, for domestic work, nobody quantifies it or puts a value on it; maybe that's why we're not being recognized. So instead of calling ourselves domestic-minded wives, we call ourselves home managers so that we can give a sign to what we are doing.

Lack of opportunity to be exposed to creative and innovative ideas, believe me, just sitting in the sessions of the women in Lusaka, I've never heard so many creative and innovative ideas but they don't have arenas or platforms where they can express all these things. So those are the challenges: lack of access to credit (everybody knows that), no collateral, issues of ownership in our countries in Africa. By and large, it's very difficult for a woman in Africa to own land. It's a lot of time, it's a challenge. Even if you own, it's after protracted bring this, bring this, bring this document. So the issue of ownership brings us down. Lack of IT skills. Everything now is on the Blackberry, everything's on the iPhone, so now if my aunt does not have the iPhone, she will not sell her bananas. So we need to expose IT skills. The women, also we don't take risks, so we're low-risk takers. So, in short, we need to start now going to uncharted place, trying something that we've never tried before. A lot of people, they're succeeding in the arena because they're taking risks but looks like a lot of us in Africa we're still staying in our comfort zones. Our job is just to step aside and go and do some bungee jumps in Livingston or going camping in Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. Let us try and do something not to draw people's attention because I think they're looking at us as "business as usual." And then women don't have support from the trailblazers, those that have achieved—where are they? Is there anyone who has quantified them? Do we have documentation of the best of practices and the people who have succeeded who we can look up to and emulate? Not many in Africa, especially on the business front. So we need to see and define people who have gone before us and see what they have done and how they have done it and start to learn.

Now, what is our role as leaders? My colleagues and both my ambassadors here who can understand what I am saying. Number one: we need to facilitate linkages, because some of them sitting in Mozambique will have no idea what's happening in DC. It's our job to start to facilitate these linkages. We need to mobilize critical information for them; we need to advocate for them to access collateral and free loans; we need to actually give them enough advanced information when we know that the Millennium Challenge Corporation is floating some money for something. We need to give them quickly any money information. We need to document and disseminate success stories, tell them that they can trade in any language, they can trade in Bambai or Buka in any language.

For a long time, my mother thought that development was in English so when she saw me and my sister talking English she was always admiring us, thinking maybe that we are better than them. I am standing here and I have three degrees, but my mother, who never went to high school, was wiser than myself. So, what I'm trying to say is that education has nothing to do with success; it's wisdom. So now what we need to do is to make sure that these women even if you can't speak English fluently, you can be a genius in your own small language. You have to encourage them to take business courses and leave their comfort zone. Let them go out, let them go to Alaska, go for a business trip, let them go to Wyoming, let them go to New York, let them come and see for themselves. That is our job, to make that happen.

So in all this thing, as I conclude—I think I've overshot already—I just want to say my challenge to all of us is that it's time to set our agenda. For a long time we are always trying to challenge the status quo, and that just becomes very frustrating. We started with the Mexico, then we went to Beijing, we went to Nairobi, we went to the Copenhagen, we did Beijing plus 10 in New York in '05, all of this time to look at

our agenda to say why am I doing that? It's about time we had our own agenda and started developing our own thinking on how best we think we can participate in the global arena on 50/50. Sometimes we are unfair to the men—we can't push them aside. There's only one earth—it's this earth—so the best thing is to negotiate our existence so that we can have a win-win-win situation. Thank you so much for coming to Zambia Embassy and thank you so much indeed for this evening. *[Applause.]*

**Ms. Ellis:** Thank you so much Ambassador. I just wanted to recognize two of our Board members who just arrived—Dawn Calabia and Diana Negrofonte and her husband, Ambassador Negrofonte. Thank you so much for joining us.

Okay, what we'd like to do is invite the Ambassadors to come up here, join us at the podium. I'm going to lead this off with a few questions and I'm going to—as a former journalist, I think I'm going to just start with the newsiest first. And the first question, because you'll have to come up here to speak, I think that would be better because of the mic. Yes?

So the first question relates to the newest African country, and I want a little comment on the importance of this and how African countries or the AU are going to help prevent it deteriorating into more conflict again. And I'll throw out my second question, which relates to food security, and there's a tremendous drought in the east end and the horn of Africa, and so I'd like to get you started on what thoughts there are about trying to ensure that there is enough food in the future to feed Africans. So who wants to start off with the South Sudan? You want to say something? Go ahead. This is the Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Ambassador Faida Mitifu:** I think since I'm the neighbor of Southern Sudan, I will speak first. We are very happy for the people of Southern Sudan in the sense that this was their choice. We saw the results of the referendum; it was overwhelmingly for the independence of Southern Sudan and seeing that June 9<sup>th</sup> was a moment of celebration, no doubt about it, but we cannot also forget the challenges that they are faced with. As we see this newborn of Africa and because the world has become a global village, we as neighbors, we as an international community at large, we have the moral duty of accompanying the people of Southern Sudan, whether it's about consolidating peace in Southern Sudan, whether it's about resolving unresolved issues or whether it's about the development of Southern Sudan, we need to accompany them.

**Ms. Ellis:** Okay, thank you. Does anyone else want to say anything on this? Okay, yes, Ambassador?

**Ambassador Amelia Sumbana:** Thank you, good afternoon. I'm the Ambassador of Mozambique. Well, I think that my colleague has said [it] all in this short time we have. I want to say that Mozambique supports Southern Sudan. We are going to recognize the country; we are with them, with the people of Southern Sudan and we hope that they could learn from the good lessons, other African countries and others not to commit the same mistakes which we have committed. Sometimes the lack of knowledge leads us to commit some mistakes. I think that out of the 54 countries, at least in Africa, there are some very good experiences from where they can share. Thank you. *[Applause.]*

**Ms. Ellis:** Thank you. Let's move on to the issue of food security, and who wants to jump in here? I mean, what is the thinking going forward because there's always dealing with the crisis but what kinds of plans and thinking might there be to ensure...because right now there are so many people suffering and it's going to get worse. Does anyone want to jump in there? Do you want to try to take that?

**Ambassador Fatima Veiga:** Maybe I won't be the right people to speak on food security because my country is a country that has been affected by drought. Or, maybe, I am the right people. We have been affected by drought more in the Capes. Agriculture has been, until recently, only an area for purely survival activities. But it has changed, it has changed. It has changed recently and we have adopted a strategy that will invest in agriculture. We don't have much rain but we are working in order to mobilize water and we have a program with the United States, the MCC program [Millennium Challenge

Compact], the first compact where we managed to have infrastructure, in particular constructing some bins in order to capture the water of the rain. And also by utilizing the water of the sea in order to have sufficient water, not only for the household consumption, the rest of the activities, but also to invest in agriculture. We recently signed the NEPAD [New Partnership for Africa's Development]. As you all know, this is a very important instrument that Africa has adopted in order to promote agriculture and promote food security. We are working on a regional basis, in our case with [Inaudible.] in order to advance with our regional programs. We have also according to the decisions taken by our heads of state, we have already established a ceiling in our budget to dedicate to agriculture, to dedicate to food security, and I hope that with the support of our partners in terms of not only financial support but also technical support, research because it's very important to invest in research, that we'll manage to really implement our programs. In this case, I would like to mention the future initiative of President Obama. Cape Verde is not part of it but I'm happy that other countries are part of it. And I think this program will help a lot in putting into practice our politics.

**Ms. Ellis:** And thank you. Ambassador, do you want to jump in here? You mentioned women and agriculture.

**Ambassador Siwela:** Thank you so much. Just want to agree with my colleague from Cape Verde. For the beginning of all development, for anybody to be productive, you must eat food. You must have food, eaten something. And I think for a long time we bring the top-down the approach to agriculture, but now with these issues of food and drought, we think that we should bring from down-up. We should be down at the village level. People themselves should decide what food they need and what food they need to reserve for the next crop. So when we put in the implements—the fertilizers, the seed, the land—we give them to the best people in the village and the food will start producing itself and if you have excess it goes to the community. If you have excess, it goes to progress. If you have excess, it goes to the nation. As much as we have commercial farmers, but my experience from my country we feel that it's most skilled agriculture is going to serve the day. If everyone grows enough to feed themselves and a little bit more for their neighbor, eventually the country will have enough food to feed themselves and a little bit more for export. Thanks. [Applause.]

**Ambassador Mitifu:** I just wanted to add something to what my sisters have just said about the droughts, particularly in the horn of Africa. This is an emergency. This is not going to wait until we find seed and plant them and then food grows. It's an emergency. We know that there's a discussion on the budget right here in Congress. We have organizations such as the World Food Programme that have been very, very helpful in actually introducing creative ways of helping communities in the developing world and particularly on the continent of Africa. So they have not limited themselves in just distributing food to communities in need, but they have introduced innovative ways of not only distributing seeds to different communities but to also helping them, teaching them how to grow, introducing even some aspect of agriculture extension. We know that the United States is one of the major contributors to the World Food Programme. There's an emergency in Somalia so each one of us as Ambassadors and you, the very important people and citizens of the United States, help us lobby the Congress so that they can provide funding to intervene in this urgent situation in the horn of Africa. [Applause.]

**Ms. Ellis:** Thank you. I'd just like to recognize Allan Jury, who represents the World Food Programme here in Washington, DC. Okay, two other questions of a very different nature that I'm going to throw out together. One relates to trade and investment, and the other relates to Libya. Okay, so on trade and investment, right now the EU is gearing up. Angela Merkel is currently in Africa visiting Angola, Kenya, and Nigeria. But most of the discussion about increased investment in Africa relates to China. Of course, we're hearing more now about India, Brazil, [and] Turkey, but I'd like to get the reaction from our ambassadors about how they feel about one, I said the visit of Angela Merkel, the significance of this, if there is, to them, but also particularly about their view on Chinese investment in Africa and how positive or negative it has been for them. My other question on Libya, is initially the African Union supported NATO's intervention, and then there were concerns raised, I'm wondering if you could tell us

what the current thinking is? Thank you.

**Ambassador Mitifu:** They want me to take Libya, but I wanted to say a little bit about China. There has been a lot of buzz about China in Africa. I think for many African countries, we like this kind of competition. I think if we manage it very well, this is a competition that goes to our advantage. When was the last time a German Chancellor visited the continent of Africa? So we see this in a very positive light, we know what are—what is at stake. We are in the process of learning. In my country, for instance, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we signed an agreement with China, and this agreement consisted of using our mineral resources, and in exchange, develop our infrastructure. We know that infrastructure is key to any type of development—whether we're talking about agriculture, [*Inaudible.*], or any other type of development—infrastructure is key. So we signed this agreement with China, we brought it to the IMF, we brought it to even the United States government at the time, and basically we asked them to help us improve this agreement, so that we're not going to be taken for granted. And it's working after so many... I'd say, not fights, but after intense negotiations with the IMF, we finally managed to agree on the amount to get out of this deal. And it's working. We are building roads, slowly. My country is a big country, the United States east [of] the Mississippi. It's a country that lacks almost completely road infrastructure, railroad infrastructures, etc. We are building roads—this is real. We have been cautioned by former President Bush, to make sure this is creating jobs to Congolese, not jobs to the Chinese. We have Congolese, if you go on the site, you will see Congolese working on the roads. There will be Chinese supervisors, but there are Congolese working on the roads. We are building hospitals, and we are building schools, slowly. So we love this competition, we want everybody to come in, and that we market ourselves quite well. Thank you.

**Ms. Ellis:** Thank you. Do you want to jump in on China? Yes, thank you.

**Ambassador Sumbana:** In Mozambique, we have Chinese people, Chinese government, we have cooperation with China. But let me say that the cooperation we are having now with China, Mozambique got its independence 35 years ago. And all along this time, we've had cooperation, both with China and with other countries. And now we are in the development path. As my colleague said, we are having cooperation with different countries, and we have different donors and different partners. We choose, normally the policy in Mozambique, is that we choose the partners according to the needs of the country. Infrastructures are very important in Mozambique. Even if we have a very good partnership and very good cooperation with the United States, we are part of many programs for the future, we are part of the Millennium Challenge and others. But infrastructures are fundamental. And that's where the Chinese jump in. So this you say, that Chinese, Americans, Europeans are in Mozambique. That's why when sometimes the question comes, on how do we rate the cooperation with the Chinese, we used to say that we need those who come to help our country. Of course, they are working with the Mozambiqueans, they are transferring knowledge to the Mozambiqueans, they are building infrastructures, roads, schools, and other facilities. And that's what we are looking for. That's why also, obliged to pledge here and to say to American friends, that we need your presence in Mozambique, and in Africa as a whole. [*Applause.*]

**Ambassador Viegas:** Joining my colleagues, I also would like to say that in Cape Verde, there is no difference. We have a very friendly business environment. Cape Verde has a very modern legislation in terms of investment, and we have been making a lot of advances, progress thanks to the participation of different partners. And we have for example, the European Union as a whole, and different member countries, participating, investing, in particular in the area of infrastructures. We are an archipelago [of] ten islands and we have to multiply by nine every infrastructure that we do in Cape Verde, so infrastructure is key in order to attract other investments. So the European Union are very present there, but also the Americans are there through the Millennium Challenge account, as I said initially. We have built a number of roads, and we have expanded and modernized our airport which is essential, not only to permit that all the population participate in the benefits of the development but also to permit us to expand our relations with our neighbors. And we have the Chinese. The Chinese are also investing a lot, in particular in infrastructure and health infrastructure. Health is very important

for any people; without health you cannot advance in other areas, so the Chinese are essentially in the area of not only [*Inaudible.*] but also the area of transmitting, transferring technology, in the areas of education, and giving Cape Verde a line of credits in very concessional conditions, that will permit us to build the infrastructure that we need to continue to develop our country, to put in practice our strategy for transformational development and society organization. I think there is still space for other partners to jump in, and we are doing our best to attract our American friends to invest more in Cape Verde and with your help, maybe, we can reach out to them, for them to see that there are opportunities in Cape Verde, that they should go there, and explore those opportunities as other partners are doing. Thank you so much.

**Question:** I want to know, in these four countries, what is the average African woman getting out of all this investment? Especially [with] the Chinese [investment].

**Ambassador Siwela:** That's a very good question. That's a challenge to us, to ask what are we doing to facilitate women to participate... Welcome Botswana! She should come up and answer for Botswana herself. [*Laughter.*] Yes, as I was saying, that is a very good question. This is a time for us to come up with the strategies, and also initiative that will make the women participate. What we have discovered is that women are very comfortable in the informal sector. So what we should do is protect the women in that sector, so that they are not indebted to take simple jobs that they can trade. It takes rules. Each country must set rules so that everybody participates, especially women. My country has set aside an organization, established an organization called the Zambia Development Agency. Now in that agency they are good rules, so that whoever wants to invest in Zambia, if the rules are right, we don't care where they are coming from, so they come in. What women have done, they have engendered that particular policy. When they come they must make sure that the women participate in whatever money is coming. So now the government is putting together a second program that's going to encourage women to participate in the development of our country. So you are very right that if you just leave it blank, the women might lag, but now my country has delivered rules specifically to encourage women to participate in the investment of our country.

**Ms. Ellis:** So I would like to introduce the Ambassador of Botswana, who is the newest of the African women ambassadors here, so welcome. [*Applause.*] We're just discussing what all the aid and investment is doing for African women, and we've also just been discussing the Chinese involvement in Africa. So if you could just address those two and then we're going to open it to everyone's questions. Thank you.

**Ambassador Tebelelo Seretse:** Thank you very much. My apologies, but I did state that I would run a little bit late [*Laughter.*] Let me state first off, that what I am about to say, particularly in reference to the Chinese, is not based on any empirical evidence. However, it may some of it be based on perceptions. But all of you do know that after some time perceptions turn into reality.

For Africa as a whole, Chinese investment, especially when it comes in the infrastructure, is a very welcome development, because out of infrastructure, out of roads, out of airports, then women and the general business community will be able to move and move their goods to the market and to wherever they want to go and that will bring income. But when it comes to SMEs [Small and Medium Enterprises], we have a concern, particularly in reference to Botswana. We have a concern because now a lot of the SMEs, as you may appreciate, are run, managed, and operated by women. Now these women are having to deal with challenges of low prices, undercut prices, which is not helpful because they are also trying to get income and grow their children. At certain times, you find that issues of tricks, intellectual property rights, are breached, and the goods which are coming into Africa are of inferior standards. So therefore it does not help the growth and does not help the market, if these goods are inferior. However, you all know, that it has been stated that Africa has grown the highest, with the intervention of the Chinese, registering growth rates of above 5%. In Botswana we are used to a double-digit growth rate until the recession. So therefore it's also a challenge from that area. But one



would think as they develop airports, you then have women taking up opportunities to run the small little airport kiosks, with their arts and crafts, and out of that they will grow.

In certain areas, China has been criticized, and maybe correctly so, but like I said, my presentation is not based on any empirical evidence. On law labor standards, law labor practices—a poor record of human rights. So the question then arises, has employment been created? Employment is so much needed by Africa. Most of the Chinese companies which come into Africa, they bring their own people. So therefore the local employment, per se, does not grow. Competition is healthy, but therefore what is my conclusion? My conclusion is that Africa as a whole would need to ensure that the legislation, the competition policy bodies, is in place proper, ensuring that the practices which are being employed do not breach the competition policies. Africa would have to make sure that we tighten our borders, so that the customs and regulations which are necessary, as goods are being moved back and forth, are complied [with], because it is out of that customs that then revenues would grow. Africa will have to be diligent to ensure that taxes are being paid at whatever level, that there is compliance to the local rules, and compliance to the international various treaties and statutes, of which we remain members of. My apologies, I will answer any questions, I thank you. [Applause.]

**Ms. Ellis:** We have time for a few more questions. I'm going to take three questions together, and one question only. Keep it brief, please. Stand and say your name so we can hear and I'll repeat it. Yes?

**Question:** Hello Ambassadors, my name is Gia Cromer, I'm a graduate student. My question involves the infrastructure that everyone has mentioned, regarding airports. However, I have not heard mention of the internal structures that might be put in place regarding ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organization] standards that would encourage airlines to come into Africa, with shorter distances, rather than everything being routed through Europe. I was wondering if you could address that, please.

**Ms. Ellis:** Okay, wait. Are there other questions? Yes. So the first question was about infrastructure for airports to encourage more airlines coming in.

**Ms. Kromer:** What do airlines need to have them come into African countries.

**Question:** My name is Clara Isama. We all know that, the life of an African is in the mores of community. And for you to achieve a lot, you walk through the more of community. My question is this: is there any initiative, coming from here, to utilize that popular setting to promote rule of law, the empowerment of women, the eradication of poverty, the proper nutrition, to [Inaudible.], to, you know, revise policies and fight challenges? [Inaudible.]

**Ms. Ellis:** Okay we're just going to answer the question, because it was a complicated question... she [Ambassador Serestse] is going to incorporate it into her answer. Was there another question? Okay, Donna.

**Donna Constantinople:** Donna Constantinople. I wanted to ask about the nature of the primary focus of Chinese investment. Many of your countries have natural resources that have high value, for energy, development, and things the Chinese are, frankly, in desperate need of getting a hold of. How do you ensure the ownership rights to those natural resources that you possess are not given away, and that you end up just simply having some roads to possibly nowhere?

**Ms. Ellis:** The question was about the protection of natural resources in Africa with all the Chinese investment there. Okay, last question here.

**Question:** My name is Mamadou Beye, I work for Chevron. I have heard a lot of questions about China and Africa, but I think we are here in America, and I'd like to ask the ambassadors about what America should do to maintain competitiveness in Africa? What American government, American companies, American citizens can do, I'd like to hear.

**Ms. Ellis:** Okay, let's start with the last question, what America should do to maintain its competitiveness in Africa. Who wants to begin?

**Ambassador Sumbana:** Thank you for that question, it's very important. Of course when we are asking about China, I was also thinking, what about America? Mozambique has some companies working there, even in oil. That is, I can say, I'm going to relate a little bit with the ownership of the country. In Mozambique we are revising our legislation, related with resources, natural resources. And I don't know whether you know, Mozambique will become, maybe in 2012, the biggest producer—I don't know what's the term—of coal. Because the discoveries of coal in the country, it seems that it's everywhere. And there is a lead, and Mozambique is doing the revision of all its legislation regarded to that. So we are conscious that we have to have in place strategies and policies to safeguard what is the wealth of the country, to serve the people.

Regarding the other question, which was how Americans can be in Africa, what I could say, I would like to say, is that more Americans should make their, how do you say, homework, in terms of, first of all, trying to know the legislation of the countries. What are the opportunities in the countries? Sometimes when I've talked with some Americans, they used to say "Well, Africa. Africa, it's too far! And we don't know what we are going to find there." So what I would like to say and stress today is that we need you, but we need you to face the challenges which are in Africa. Sometimes those who come earlier, are those who get the best. *[Laughter.]* Coming to Africa, even knowing about the challenges. I think that at the end of the day, those who come earlier are those who are going, first of all, are going to help us in improving the legislation, bringing the capacity and helping the people of Mozambique, in this case, to be their own and to be the guides of what the people of Mozambique need. So this is to say in brief, English is not my mother language, that's why I have some difficulties, but to say that opportunities are huge in Africa. What we need is that the Americans open your minds and go to Africa, knowing that the opportunities are there. *[Applause.]*

**Ms. Ellis:** We're going to have closing remarks from each ambassador, on any question that you heard, thank you.

**Ambassador Siwela:** I just wanted to add to my colleague from Mozambique on the question on what the US should do in order to compete on a level field with China. The US came into Africa, I tell you, almost earlier than China or almost at the same time. In 2000, when the then-President Bill Clinton visited Africa, when he got back to the United States he initiated the piece of legislation called the African Growth Opportunity Act. It's an act of Congress, and was passed in 2000. That act stipulates, amongst other things, how to boost trade between Africa and the US. So in terms of the US' presence, it has been boosted as actually an Act of Congress to boost trade between Africa and US. So from 2000 to now, this has been going on. Statistically from 2000 to now, when it started it was \$33 billion came into the States of the trading figure, but now 2011 June, \$66 billion has been spent in between trade. But that unfortunately is just concentrated on the traditional exports, energy and oil. So what we are saying to the United States, *[is]* that open up your borders for other non-traditional products like honey, leather, apparel. The good news is that's already happening, we have the third-country fabric provision which now is allowing goods to come into this country. And a lot of countries, especially the region I come from, are benefitting from the provision. So in short the question is, America is already in Africa. America has its own set of rules, especially on agri-products. It's very difficult to bring an agri-product into the States. So what we have said is, while we are still fighting on how we can interact under these conditions, let us do easier things like in honey, leather, and apparel, and boost the economy. There is enough for everybody. Thank you so much. *[Applause.]*

**Ambassador Mitifu:** I don't want us to leave this room with the thought that we are just promoting trade between China and Africa. The United States came to Africa way earlier than China. The United States has helped Africa in many ways to fight colonialism, and we have United States companies investing in Africa, Chevron is one of them, and even in other areas, whether it's in agribusiness or in

the mining area. Right now, for instance, we have in the Congo the largest producer of copper and cobalt company from the United States. The company in Congo has acquired one of the largest reserves of copper in Congo. The good thing, in many ways, is that American companies, they are setting good practices, especially when it comes to corporate responsibility programs. They have programs with communities around which they are operating. It's really setting the tone for other companies from elsewhere who are coming, and that has helped us, as a country, to put in place a good mining code—a mining code that also involves, that has that corporate responsibility program arm. So when I said, we welcome it, but we like the competition because if we manage very well this kind of competition, we as Africans, if we set up good standards, then we'll have—everybody will be coming in, and nobody will be taking advantage of Africa like it was in the past. Thank you. [Applause.]

**Ms. Ellis:** Thank you. No more questions. We're going to hear from the last two ambassadors briefly. The ambassador wanted me to remind you there is a wonderful meal waiting for you afterwards. So we're just going to wrap it up right now.

**Ambassador Viegas:** Yes, on the same issue, I think that there are two important issues. We ambassadors have to do our own homework here in the US, marketing our countries, showing the potential that we have, showing that there are opportunities for the Americans to come and to explore. Africa, in general, has been making a lot of advances, in particular, in terms of economic reforms—economic reforms that really create and facilitate the environment for businesses. For example, in our own case, the case of Cape Verde, we have reduced the time to create and to register a business, from 45 days to 1 hour. We have, through the ICTs [Information and Communication Technologies], we can facilitate all the documents, all the elements that are needed to create a business. We have been working in terms of producing fiscal conditions in order to promote more investment, because we know that if the taxes are too high, then we cannot attract investors. We have been having contacts, an exchange of good practices with some countries, including Mauritius, that have a very good experience. A delegation of Cape Verde was there in order to learn from Mauritius in the fiscal area. We are also going this summer to Singapore to try to learn from their experience, and I think with all these measures that we are taking on the fiscal area, on the economic reforms, we are creating the conditions for more businesses to come in. In Cape Verde there is a lot of attention in the area of global energy, fisheries, but also transportation, and ICTs. So I have been doing this work, trying to have some world trade shows, but I think we have to do more. And I think also the administration has to do a little bit more in terms of helping us with opening the bank and mechanisms and facilities, in order for these facilities to be loaned to the potential American investor in Africa.

I would also like to talk about the ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organization] question. Yes we have to make time to implement all the standards of the ICAO so we can have more and more connections to our countries. In particular in Cape Verde we have, we're one of the very first countries in Africa to have the FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] Category 1 certificate, which shows we have the all the conditions and the security conditions to attract more airlines. Thank you so much. [Applause.]

**Ambassador Seretse:** 9/11 has ensured that all African countries, indirectly, whether they like it or not, comply to some of ICAO's standards. A lot of the African countries are members of ICAO. So in terms of auditing ICAO, in terms of the certification of the African countries' airlines, they are being certificated. Ethiopian Airlines and Kenyan Airlines, those two which are leading in Africa, are doing lots of business. The constraint, therefore, is not the compliance with ICAO, but the lack of resources to buy airplanes to do long-haul and to do direct flights.

When it comes to what America can do, America must build and must help Africa to build capacity. Traditionally, we used to be told that there are prerequisites to FDIs [Foreign Direct Investments], a lot of African countries which have met those prerequisites, Botswana being an example, still do not get the flow from American countries as they are supposed to. It would be unfortunate to see America lose the number one position of a democratic, friendly country to China. But if America doesn't do something and do it as of yesterday, it is the game, the rules of the game, they will lose that spot.

When it comes to minerals, it depends from country to country. If you take a country like Botswana, all the mineral rights belong to the state, so you would never have the threat of anybody coming there to exploit the minerals and to take them away, because if in my house today they find minerals, I'll have to move and be compensated accordingly. So what can be emphasized, is that Africa needs to put in place, as I was talking about customs, a mechanism to ensure that it is not depleted. My sister, when it comes to capacity-building of women, what are we doing here? This is why ourselves, as the African ambassadors, especially and particularly as the women ambassadors, are alive to the fact that the problems of Africa affect and afflict the women and the children more than anything else. We get together to chat away, and to make requests to whatever bodies come to use, to [*Inaudible.*] that we can we talk of, and to be working with our colleagues in the UN to ensure that statutes are passed to ensure that women's rights are protected. So we'll throw out of that, the business and empowerment of women. I thank you. [*Applause.*]

**Ms. Ellis:** Let's give a big round of applause for all these wonderful women ambassadors. [*Applause.*] You are fantastic, great role models. You are all cordially invited to join us inside for dinner. Thank you very much for coming.