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on Africa, Chantilly VA

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FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
REMARKS TO THE CORPORATE COUNCIL ON AFRICA
CHANTILLY, VIRGINIA
APRIL 21, 1997

Heads of State, Prime Ministers, and Vice Presidents; Ministers;
Ambassadors; Members of Congress; Members of the Corporate Council; award
winners; distinguished guests and friends:

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to talk with you. But first, I want to
bring you a brief message from my husband, the President of the United States, Bill
Clinton: [The President's video]

Just a little over three weeks ago, my daughter and I boarded a plane in
Asmara, Eritrea to fly home to the United States after two weeks in Africa. It was
the end of the Christian Holy Week. We touched down in Washington as dawn
broke on Easter morning, and it occurred to me how fitting our timing was.
Millions around the world were celebrating a holiday that marks the passage from
sorrow and despair to hope and renewal. And that was precisely the story we had
seen unfolding in Africa.

I went to Africa -- at the request of the President and the Secretary of State --
to highlight examples of Africa's economic and democratic renewal. I wanted
Americans to see the importance of our partnership with Africa and to appreciate
the stake we have in the future of that great continent. I also wanted to underscore
America's modest contributions in foreign assistance -- and the successes they have
helped produce.

By the time I reached home after visiting six countries -- Senegal, South
Africa, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda and Eritrea -- I was more convinced than ever
that Africa is a continent on the move: a continent bulging with possibilities for
political, economic and social progress. I was also convinced that American
engagement with Africa is essential to our nation's goal of strengthening peace,
prosperity and democracy around the world.

This is not to say that Africa's future is cloudless. We have been optimistic
before. After independence, economists and commentators predicted with great

certainty that the African economy was on the verge of an immense boom; that the world's best economic performers would emerge south of the Sahara; that the continent represented the world's ripest and most lucrative new market for international trade.

History proved more complicated than some of those economists guessed. Colonialism left the African landscape rife with arbitrary divisions -- divisions of class, culture, race, tribe and land. The Cold War imposed new tensions, as Africa became a giant chessboard for superpowers maneuvering for strategic advantage in the world. By the time the Cold War was over, Africa had to contend with the legacy of totalitarianism and closed economies, along with old nemeses like disease, poverty, illiteracy, explosive population growth, environmental degradation, corrupt and incompetent governments, and civil strife.

Now, however, there is reason to be optimistic again. As Deputy President Mbeki of South Africa often says, Africa is undergoing a renaissance. Democracy is flowering across much of the continent. Dramatic economic growth is occurring in country after country. A new generation of reform-minded leaders is in charge in many capitals. And there is new respect for human rights -- and especially the rights of women to become equal partners in society.

President Clinton and his Administration applaud this progress.

The United States wants democracy to take root and grow throughout Africa. And we want Africa to be a strong partner for peace, prosperity and progress in the 21st century. Today, the question for all of us who care about the future of Africa is: What can be done to sustain and deepen the democratic and economic transformation that is underway?

As we know from our own experience in the United States, democracy is a complicated and sometimes messy business. It requires many ingredients. Free and fair elections -- not once, but time and again. A functioning legislative branch, an independent judiciary, active political parties, a free press, and the basic rights of assembly, association and free speech.

It also requires free market economies that can produce and sustain growth and support investments in human capital -- investments in the health, education and well-being of every man, woman and child. People, after all, are every nation's

greatest resource.

Africa has made extraordinary progress on this front. Last year, 30 African countries reported positive economic growth. In Uganda, I saw how democracy and reform had enabled an economy ravaged by decades of war to now record the stunning growth rate of over eight percent a year.

What we have learned from Africa is that the right economic strategy can produce the right results.

Trade and investment are the wave of the future if we want to assure Africa's integration into the global economy. As Secretary Rubin said earlier today, the United States can lead this effort through engagement with Africa and by encouraging trade and open markets on the continent.

The simple fact is: Nations with free market systems do better. Look around the globe: Those nations which have lowered trade barriers are prospering more than those that have not.

It would be our loss if we failed to take advantage of the opportunities that a growth-oriented Africa represents. Today the United States accounts for only seven percent of the African market. Yet even that small market share has produced 100,000 jobs in our country. As that share expands, so will the number of American jobs.

We also know that companies doing business in South Africa have enjoyed returns on their investments higher than in many other parts of the world. Today leading American corporations are setting up operations throughout sub-Saharan Africa, as I saw on my recent trip. And I want to commend the companies represented here tonight for recognizing the investment potential of Africa.

Let me also note that many American businesses are also upholding a time-honored tradition of American corporate philanthropy. Companies like Coca-Cola aren't just benefitting financially from their investments but are offering compelling examples of corporate citizenship in a democracy.

I gained a greater appreciation of the vital role that American corporations have played in the building of democracy when I visited Central Europe last year.

In the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and elsewhere I saw the extent of American corporate investment. The companies opening plants and hiring workers were doing far more than improving their own bottom lines; they were creating jobs, raising incomes and skill levels, spurring local development and growth, and lending confidence to people and institutions undergoing profound political, economic and social change.

I saw the same spirit of corporate philanthropy in Africa, when I visited the Dorothy Duncan Center for the Blind in Harare, which has received computers and software from an IBM subsidiary called Bedford Investments. Coca-Cola has supported arts, cultural, environmental and sports activities in Zimbabwe. And Johnson & Johnson has an active social outreach program there too.

As we continue to promote trade and investment policies that will contribute to Africa's growth, we also must remember that foreign assistance remains crucial for many countries. A good business climate requires a citizenry that is healthy, educated, free and involved in civic life. Foreign assistance -- even the modest sums the United States contributes -- helps create the social and economic conditions that are good for business and make trade and investment viable and profitable.

In other words: Aid is a bridge to trade.

I hope all of you -- as leaders of the American business community -- will speak out in support of American foreign assistance, which is so essential to your individual corporate goals and to our nation's goals of democracy, economic growth and freedom.

In every country I visited, I saw examples of our foreign assistance at work: A village in Senegal where rural women were working to improve health care, education and the economy and were even helping to teach their fellow villagers about the tenets of democracy. A primary school in the heart of Soweto where a classroom of six-year-olds -- led by a wonderful and formidable teacher -- was learning English using a tape recording funded in part with U.S. assistance. A health clinic in Zimbabwe where American assistance has been instrumental in helping to expand family planning opportunities and lower infant and maternal mortality rates. The International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda in Tanzania, where U.S. support is crucial to the investigation and prosecution of genocide. A vocational center in Eritrea, where former women freedom fighters are teaching

their fellow citizens skills and trades so necessary to the future of that young democracy. An AIDS Information Center in Uganda, where we have supported President Museveni's courageous and effective campaign to fight HIV and AIDS.

Let me also say that President Museveni should be commended for recognizing the importance of investing in women and girls as part of his country's democratic and economic transition. Uganda is making an unprecedented effort to train teachers and educate children, especially girls who too often are left out of the academic equation. As President Museveni said to me during my stay there, "Women form more than half of our society, so you'd be hurting yourself if you left behind six of every ten people."

And I would add: Not only would you be hurting yourself, you wouldn't be building a democracy. Because a democracy without the full participation of women is a contradiction in terms.

We have seen in Africa and around the world that a vibrant democracy depends not just on free elections and open markets, but on the internalization of democratic values in people's hearts, minds and everyday lives. It depends on people creating a flourishing civil society in which individuals, community groups, religious institutions, businesses, academia and government join together to promote the common good. And it depends on strong international partners who are willing to support the rise of democratic institutions and free market systems around the globe.

Earlier today, the President authorized his Administration to begin intensive discussions with Congress to outline a joint package that will strengthen our economic partnership with Africa and support the continent's democratic and economic renewal.

First and foremost, the President is committed to efforts that open economies to private sector trade and investment because he realizes that these strategies offer the greatest potential for growth and the alleviation of poverty.

Second, he believes such efforts must be coupled with investments in people, particularly the areas of health and education. Foreign assistance is critical-- but should be viewed as one, not the only, engine of growth.

Third, the President believes that there must be renewed emphasis on management and governance in developing countries if we want opportunities for private investment to flourish.

The United States welcomes the progress that many African nations have made thus far. We also recognize that the governments willing to undertake the boldest actions to liberalize, open and privatize their economies have achieved the greatest results.

At the same time, the President and his Administration understand that not all African countries are at the same stage of growth and development. The United States wishes to create opportunities for growth for all of our African partners through infrastructure investment, better regional integration, new and stronger business partnerships and efforts to support exports to Africa. And we are prepared to provide additional opportunities to support countries that are pursuing ambitious growth-oriented policies.

This approach, the President believes, will enable more African countries to achieve their goals of greater self-reliance and full integration into the global economy. At the same time, it will attract U.S. investment to Africa and spur jobs and growth here at home.

As optimistic as we are about Africa's prospects, we cannot overlook threats to Africa's fragile democracies: regional conflicts; crime; narcotics trafficking and international terrorism, all of which undermine political and economic progress. And that is why the United States will collaborate with our partners in Africa to maintain peace and stability and ensure that democracy is given every chance to grow.

During my last few days in Africa I had the opportunity to visit the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania, where scientists and anthropologists have made many discoveries about the origins of human kind. It is hard to walk through the gorge, as I did, without being overcome by the realization that all of us — no matter the color of our skin, our faith, or our beliefs — came from the same place. We share a common home. We are part of a larger family.

The message embedded in the rock at the gorge is that we share a common past — and we share a common future. We have a stake in each other's triumphs

and failures. And I hope that in the days and months ahead we will see a growing consciousness in people's minds — here and in Africa — that despite the wide ocean between us, we are neighbors on this shared earth. We cannot live without each other. We have much to learn from each other. And we have much to give to each other.

As you know, the President will travel to Africa during this term. Whenever he makes his trip, I am confident he will return home as moved as I was by the people he meets and the places he sees — and as inspired by the promise and possibility that Africa represents.

Thank you very much.

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