

“An Examination of the Prospects for Africa in the New Millennium”

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I. Introduction

Thank you President Tilghman, Dean Slaughter of the Woodrow Wilson School, Dean Russell of the Graduate School and the officers and members of the Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni for bestowing this high honor on me and for giving me the opportunity to address the Princeton University family and guests.

This is truly a very special occasion for me, my family and the friends that have been invited to Princeton University for this year's Alumni Day programs. First, I would like to pay a special tribute to my father and mother for all of the sacrifices that they made and the support that they gave me to get to Princeton and to complete my studies. My late father passed away two and half years ago at the age of 94 and my mother is still alive at age 94 but is suffering from Alzheimer's and is not able to be here today for this special

occasion.

I also want to pay a special tribute to my wife and daughter, who over the years, have made tremendous sacrifices that have allowed me to pursue my career in the foreign service and in Africare to help improve the quality of life of people in Africa and the other countries I have served in. This has not been an easy life for them so I'm very happy that they can share this special occasion with me. My daughter has traveled all the way from Accra, Ghana to share the joy of this occasion. I brought her to Princeton, Harvard and Yale at age 7 and told her that I would like for her to attend one of these Universities, and that my preference was for her to come to Princeton. She was admitted to Princeton but chose to go to Yale to make her own path in life. As loyal Princetonians, I believe that we should forgive her for that choice.

I would also like to recognize my brother and his wife, my cousins and other relatives, some of whom have come all the way from Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Georgia, Florida and Tennessee to be here today, other friends and former Princeton classmates. My Princeton classmates provided needed friendship and academic support to help me to complete my studies at this great institution. I also want to acknowledge the presence of Dr. Walter Massey, the President of Morehouse College, who was my former boss and who has been a long time mentor and friend. I appreciate the presence of Frank Fountain, the Senior Vice President of the DaimlerChrysler Corporation

and the Chairman of the Africare Board of Directors, who came all the way from Detroit to attend this event. Finally, I want to acknowledge the presence of Senator Bill Frist, who has been a long time friend of Africare and the continent of Africa.

At this event, I am also pleased to be able to speak on a topic of great interest to me and on a region of the world that I have devoted some 46 years of my life studying, working and traveling in and that is the region of Africa. I first developed an interest in Africa while I was a high school student in Atlanta, Georgia. I, like most of my fellow students, was keenly interested in the wars of liberation that were being waged in Africa and I was struck by the independence of Ghana in 1957. I had a keen interest in wanting to learn more about this vast continent and its people. Most of what I learned in this early period was obtained through books, newspapers and television. This was not a lot, since Africa rarely made the news in those early days.

I got my first opportunity to visit the African continent in 1961 when I was a sophomore at Morehouse College. I was then Secretary of the Student Government and convinced each of my fellow students to give me \$1.00 so that I could pay the fees necessary to become an Operation Crossroads Volunteer and travel to Africa. I promised them that I would return and share my experiences with them. Happily, they accepted my proposition and I was off to Africa at the ripe old age of 19 to work and travel in Africa for the Summer. My first country on this trip was Senegal, where I worked in a

village with fellow American and Senegalese students, to build a one room school house in the village of Popenguin, and went on to Mali where I traveled over 2,000 miles going from Kayes to Bamako to Segou, Mopti and the Dogon country via train, Land Rover and mule. This trip was the beginning of a life long love of the African continent and a career of helping the world's poor to improve their quality of life, especially in Africa. After completing my studies at Princeton, I went into the USAID Foreign Service and worked and lived in Vietnam, Morocco, Liberia, Nepal, Swaziland and Senegal. My career lasted for some 28 years, carrying me from a lowly junior officer trainee to become a Mission Director with the highest personal rank in the Senior Foreign Service of Career Minister at the time of my retirement in 1994.

With this background in mind, let me now turn my attention to the real issue of my talk and that is the continent of Africa.

II. Africa and Poverty

At the beginning of the New Millennium, the then President of the World Bank, Paul Wolfensohn, in an address to the Bank's Annual Meeting in Prague stated:

“We stand at the beginning of a new millennium and at the end of a decade during which globalization has accelerated dramatically. We

must treat globalization as an opportunity and poverty as our challenge.”

He further stated:

“We have learned that poverty is about more than inadequate income or even low human development; it is also about lack of voice and lack of representation. It is about vulnerability to abuse and to corruption. It is about violence and fear of crime. It is about lack of self esteem. It is about lack of fundamental freedom of action and choice of opportunity.”

In the same speech he made the following statement about inequality in the world.

“We live in a world scarred by inequality: 20% of the global population receives more than 80% of global income; 10% of a country’s population receives half of its national income; the average income for the richest 20 countries is 37 times the average for the poorest 20 poorest countries (this gap has more than doubled in the past 40 years); 1.2 billion people live on less than one dollar a day and 2.8 billion on less than two dollars a day Poverty anywhere in our community, whenever we live is our responsibility. The fight against poverty is the fight for global peace and security.”

When we look at Africa, we see that it is poor in both absolute and

relative terms. There are some 600 million who live on less than \$2 per day and this figure is expected to rise to some 800 million people by 2015. Some 210 million people are considered to be desperately poor and live off less than \$1 a day. Another indication of Africa's poverty is the fact that the number of people who are malnourished has risen in the last decade rather than declined as it has in other parts of our global community. In fact, some 36% of the African population is undernourished. This is almost double the figure for the rest of the developing world. Diseases such as Malaria are killing some 3,000 children daily and far more than this number die of hunger. Only half of Africa's people have access to clean water, compared to 84% of the population in South Asia. In addition, there are some 47 million school aged children who receive no education and only one in three of these children in school actually finish.

What are some of the causes of extreme poverty in Africa?

First, it should be noted that Africa is very vulnerable to drought and other natural disasters such as floods. Over the past five decades, there have been several major droughts covering the Sahelian and southern Africa regions of Africa. In addition, there have been several major infestations of locusts that have moved from the Sudan across Africa to the Sahel region. Africa's high temperatures and heavy rainy seasons serve as an ideal breeding ground for the *Anopheles* mosquito which carries Malaria and whose transmission rate in Africa is nine times that of India.

Secondly, Africa is a relatively young continent when one considers the fact that most of the African countries only got their independence in the 1960s. Since gaining independence, there have been a number of difficult and prolonged civil wars that have had a devastating impact on Africa in terms of the number of lives and property lost. These various conflicts have resulted in more deaths and the displacement of people in Africa than the various famines and floods have caused.

Thirdly, Africa is composed of countries that were born out of a colonial experience and many of the states established had borders created in an arbitrary manner without regard to natural boundaries or ethnic considerations. Many of these countries also started out with weak governmental structures and civil services that were not well trained. This has resulted in a history in some African countries of corruption, poor delivery of basic services and the lack of sound fiscal management.

III. Long Term Develop Trends and Problems Confronting Africa in the New Millennium

Now I would like to take a look at Africa's long term development trends over the past 40 years and various problems the continent will continue to face in the New Millennium. These problems do not paint a favorable picture of the African continent, but I would be less than honest if I did not

discuss them. This first problem is that of political instability and poor governance.

A. Political Instability and Poor Governance

The first country to gain independence in Africa was Ghana in 1957. Almost all of the other countries in Africa achieved their independence and were self governing by 1965. Only three years later, there were a total of some 64 military coups, attempted coups or mutinees on the continent in this short time frame. In addition, many African governments have been ruled by dictatorships and had very poor leadership and governance structures. Some of Africa's most notorious dictators have been Idi Amin in Uganda, Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, Charles Taylor in Liberia, Mobutu in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Zaire), Sekou Tourne of Guinea and David Apt Moi of Kenya. Some of these leaders ruled for only a short period of time while others ruled for a lengthy period, but all left negative consequences for the growth and development of their countries. There were other African leaders who were not bad dictators but who held on to power for long periods of time. They include Bongo in Gabon (40 years); Edyadema in Togo (37 years); Neto in Angola (28 years); Ngeuma in Equatorial Guinea (28 years); and Biya in the Cameroon (25 years). Before 1990, there have been only two democratically peaceful transfers of power in the history of Africa - Mauritius and Senegal, that I am aware of.

B. Civil Conflicts and Wars

Now let us turn and look at civil conflicts and wars, which have caused more deaths on the African continent than famine and disease. There have been major civil conflicts in numerous African countries. Some of the most prolonged and severe have been the civil wars in the Sudan, Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Nigeria, Burundi and the Rwandan genocide. It is currently estimated that there are more than 13 million displaced or stateless people and some 2.2 million refugees on the African continent at the present time. Civil conflicts have also taken a terrible toll on the African people and have often become a breeding grounds for international criminal activity, terrorists infiltration and the spread of diseases. Some of these conflicts have been rooted in the colonial experience and its aftermath, others have resulted from weak or oppressive regimes and the remainder have arisen out of the growing population pressure on the land available for cultivation and aggravated environmental degradation.

C. HIV/AIDS Pandemic

Since the start of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, it is estimated that some 13 million Africans have already died of AIDS; another 26 million are now living with HIV/AIDS and some 12 million African children have been orphaned by AIDS. The 21 countries in the world with the highest prevalence

of HIV infection are all in Africa. AIDS in Africa is not only changing lives; it is changing the very nature of development i.e., more African leaders are dying each week than can be trained to replace them, including judges, government officials, police, teachers and military personnel. Nothing has been a greater challenge to peace and stability in African societies than the AIDS pandemic. Since 1990 adult life expectancy in Africa has declined from a little over 50 years to 46 years. HIV/AIDS has been one of the factors for this decline.

D. Malaria

More than 90% of all Malaria cases are found on the African continent. This disease has killed more people than any other communicable disease with the exception of Tuberculosis. Deaths as a result of Malaria are estimated at over 1 million youth annually and are mostly African youths. This disease is expected to continue to have an enormous toll in lives and medical costs for the African continent.

E. Famine in Africa

Droughts, civil conflicts, natural disasters, over population, inadequate and inappropriate agricultural technology, locust infestations, and the lack of water have all played a major role in producing recurrent famine problems in Africa. This has been especially true for the Horn of Africa,

including Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia, but it has also had an impact on various countries in southern Africa including Zimbabwe, Zambia and Northern Kenya. In addition, there have been major recurrent problems of food shortages in West Africa, especially in the Sahelian region, including Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad. Some 65% of Africa's total land area is arid land and half of the continent's total population live in these arid conditions. Farm production has risen by less than 2% since 1965 which is about 1% less than the population growth rate.

F. Corruption

Another problem that has plagued Africa in the past and will continue to plague Africa in the future is the problem of corruption. In the past, corruption has not only ciphared off funds that could have been utilized for infrastructure and human development, but it has also inflated the cost of doing business in Africa and has scared off foreign investment. Over the years, billions of dollars have been diverted into secret bank accounts, representing a significant share of the continent's stock of flight capital that is estimated at some \$148 billion.

G. Debt

Africa's foreign debt in 2002 stood at \$311 billion. Sub-Saharan Africa debt accounted for some 71% of this total. For every dollar received in

aid grants in 1996, Africa paid back \$1.31 in debt servicing and the IMF took out some \$600 million more than it put in 1997.

IV. Prospects for Africa in the New Millennium

The picture that I have painted thus far of Africa is very pessimistic, but there have been major changes occurring in Africa since the start of the New Millennium that give me a great deal of optimism about the future of Africa.

A. Population Trends

Currently, the African population is just under some 800 million people, but it is expected to grow to over 2 billion by 2050 in spite of the fact that some one out of every five children under the age of five die every year. In this century, Africa will have one of the world's youngest populations. By 2050, only 10% of its citizens will be over the age of 60 compared to 37% in Europe, 27% in North America, 23% in Asia and 22% in Latin America. This young population could offer the global business community a very young and talented labor force and a much lower tax burden than the ratios offered in the more advanced countries in the northern hemisphere. Hopefully, these trends will result in higher investments on the African continent and will generate the employment and income needed to help African countries to grow their economies.

B. Growth Trends

Recent economic growth rates in Africa have been much better than they have been in previous years. In 2003, the growth rate in 24 separate African countries exceeded 5%. In the last decade, 10 countries had an annual growth rate over 5% with three states over 7%. One of the countries that stand out as a success story is Botswana. Thirty years ago this country was considered one of the poorest countries in the world. Over the past 30 years this country has achieved such a consistent economic growth rate that it is now classified as a middle income country.

The investment firm Goldman Sachs recently produced a report on the long term outlook for Africa, which examined the continent's improving economic growth prospects. The report predicts that Africa's real growth output for the continent as a whole could accelerate to 5% during the next 10 years, decline to 4.6% for 5 years and then have close to a 4% growth rate until after 2030. If these predictions prove to be correct, this projected growth rate will have a major impact in reducing poverty and in improving the quality of life for the Africa people.

C. Democracy and Governance

As pointed out earlier in my remarks, 30 to 40 years ago many African governments were run by dictatorships or military governments. Now

such governments in Africa are in the minority and more than two-thirds of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa are considered to be democratic and have had multi-party elections. The growth of democracy in Africa is one of the best signs that real changes have taken place on the African continent.

Democratically elected Presidents are in the forefront of African leaders who are upholding the principals of constitutional rule, resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner, advocating good governance and developing sound economic policies. Some of the countries which stand out in this regard include South Africa, Botswana, Tanzania, Kenya, Senegal, Benin, Ghana, Mali, Namibia, Malawi, and Zambia. Some of the remaining less than democratic countries include Equatorial Guinea, Togo, Zimbabwe, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

D. African Union

Another one of the hopeful signs occurring in Africa has been the changes that have been brought about in African regional matters by a new generation of leaders. This has included the abolishment of the old Organization of African Unity which achieved very little as an organization and had as one of its cardinal principals the non-interference in the internal affairs of its member states. This organization has now been replaced with a new organization called the African Union which has undertaken a much more positive and proactive role in economic and political matters impacting on the African region. One of its new initiatives adopted by this organization

has been the adoption of a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which proclaims better governance as an essential precondition for Africa's progress. This partnership has also adopted a peer review mechanism to enable African states to compare their achievements and failures with those of their neighbors. Some 23 countries have already signed up to be judged by this new peer review body. Another hallmark of the African Union is that Africans are saying that they want to take on much more responsibility for what happens on their continent and in the African region as a whole. The results of this change can be seen in the willingness shown by African countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal and South Africa, to take on peacekeeping operations on the African continent under the auspices of the new African Union or sub-regional organizations. This would not have happened under the Organization of African Unity.

E. Strategic Importance

Let us now turn to a discussion of Africa's strategic importance. Currently, Africa supplies the US with about 15% of its oil imports. It is expected that Africa's production of oil will double in the next decade and its capacity to produce natural gas exports will grow even more. It has been predicted in the same time frame that Africa could be supplying the US with as much energy as the entire Middle East. Africa's current proven resources of oil total some 60 billion barrels from current sources such as Nigeria, Angola, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, CAR and other countries in the Gulf

of Guinea. New exploration is also underway in Ethiopia, Kenya, Namibia, and Liberia. Investments in this sector alone have totaled some \$50 billion in this past decade.

In addition to oil, Africa has a treasure chest of other mineral and natural resources of importance to the US and the industrialized world. South Africa alone has some 88% of the world's Plutonium, 72% of the Chromium, 80% of the Magnesium, 30% of the Titanium, 40% of the Gold, and 44% Vanadium. Other mineral rich countries include Guinea with 1/3 of the world's Bauxite, Botswana with 25% of the Diamonds, Zimbabwe with 12% of the world's Chromium and a large supply of Plutonium. Niger is the world's third largest supplier of Uranium and the Democratic Republic of the Congo has large deposits of Cooper, Cobalt and Gold.

The presence of an abundance of these important resources and the emergence of China and India on the world market have brought about major changes in the character of the global commodity market and this could give Africa an opportunity to enjoy a sustained period of high commodity prices for the first time in its modern history. In 2003 China displaced the US and Europe as the world's largest consumer of most industrial raw materials, including cooper and aluminum. In 2005, China displaced Japan as the world's second largest consumer of petroleum products and by the end of 2006 it consumed over seven million barrels a day of oil, nearly half of this was imported and one-quarter of which came from Africa. By 2015 China is

expected to import some 10 billion barrels of oil per day. In 2006 China's trade with Africa totaled some \$36 billion, three times what it was in 2002. India is following China's lead and has already invested about \$100 million in Africa and plans to triple this in the next three years.

As a result of all this investment and trade activity in Africa, China is emerging as a major power on the African continent and will challenge Europe's traditional dominance. India is not far behind China in its need for Africa's resources in an effort to try and develop and expand its own industries. This competition for resources will give Africa more financial resources and political leverage, as well as an opportunity to increase its economic growth rate, trade and investment opportunities.

V. The US and Africa

Over the past decade, the US has increased its interest in and assistance to Africa. One of the little known achievements of the Bush Administration in foreign affairs has been the dramatic increase in US aid to Africa. In fact, the Bush Administration has tripled foreign assistance to Africa during the past six years and has raised these levels from \$1.4 billion in 2001 to \$4 billion in 2006 according to the Paris based Organization for Economic Cooperation. Nevertheless, to meet the promises made at the G8 Summit held in Gleneagles Scotland, the US would have to provide some \$8.8 billion a year by 2010. The large increase in past funding has come from various Presidential

initiatives such as the Millennium Challenge Account, the \$15 billion five year plan known as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the \$1.2 billion malaria initiative. The countries receiving the greatest share of these resources include Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Congo, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia and Nigeria. While the US had done well in increasing its assistance flows, much more needs to be done if the promises made at the Gleneagles G-8 Summit are to be met and if the US is to have a meaningful role in helping to reduce poverty in Africa. These substantial increases in aid reflect a genuine humanitarian interest in helping Africa, the growing strategic importance of Africa on the resource side (oil) and the problems associated with failed states emerging on the African continent and the possible ties developing in these states to various terrorist groups.

VI. Africare's Response

I would be remiss if I did not briefly mention the work of the NGO that I head, Africare, and what it is doing to help Africa. Since the founding of Africare in the Republic of Niger in 1970 it has had development programs in some 35 countries in Africa, stretching from Egypt to South Africa from Senegal to Zanzibar. Africare has also provided Africa with more than \$590 million in economic assistance over the past 36 years. The assistance has been in the areas of health/HIV/AIDS, agricultural and food security, emergency and humanitarian assistance, education, water and sanitation,

micro-credit, community development, environment and resource conservation and democracy/governance. The basic mission of Africare is to help Africans to help themselves. Currently, Africare has programs in some 26 countries throughout the African continent and provides approximately \$45-50 million in development assistance annually to the African continent. It also employs some 1,000 people, 90% of whom are African.

Africare's Philosophy

- Africare works in partnership with African community to achieve healthy and productive societies.
- Our approach places communities at the center of development activities.
- We believe that only through strong communities can Africa develop and have self sustaining growth itself, appropriately exploit its natural resources, educate and care for its children and live in peace.

VII. Conclusion

As this talk has pointed out, Africa is the poorest region of the world with some 210 million people out of the world's 1.2 billion people living in desperate poverty or on less than one dollar a day. If we measure US foreign assistance as a percentage of total national income, the levels of economic

assistance we are currently providing the world total only 1/5 of 1%. It should be pointed out that some European countries, Norway and Denmark, give six times as much economic aid on a per capita basis. Dr. Jeffrey Sachs has pointed out in his book, *The End of Poverty*, that: “in 2002 the US gave \$3 per sub-Saharan African. Taking out the parts for US consultants and technical cooperation, food and other emergency aid, administration costs and debt relief, the aid per African came to the grand total of 6 US cents.” I believe that we as Americans can and should give more to help those less fortunate people in the world and on the continent of Africa.

I would like to conclude my remarks with a statement made by President John F. Kennedy which I believe is very appropriate for this occasion.

“If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.”

Thank you again for the opportunity to address you today.