

WEST AFRICA'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND UNITED STATES ENERGY SECURITY INTERESTS

**HOPE MASTERS
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Good afternoon. I am Hope Masters, and I am president and CEO of the Leon H. Sullivan Foundation. The Sullivan Foundation was created 3 years ago to carry on the legacy of my father, the Reverend Leon H. Sullivan. Reverend Sullivan was dedicated to many causes and many people, but they all revolved around helping the "little guy," as he put it on so many occasions. He dedicated his life to advocating for more resources and opportunities for the disadvantaged here in the United States, in Africa and in other parts of the world.

Africa was a passion for my father, and a significant part of his life was devoted to building a bridge between our great country and the rich, diverse continent of Africa. One of his best known contributions were the Africa- America Summits, of which there have been six and which have been renamed as the Leon H. Sullivan Summits. In fact, we are actively working on plans for the seventh summit, and in the next several weeks will be able to share information about it.

Today's briefing on West Africa's Sustainable Development and the United States Security Interests is a reflection of the mission of the Leon H. Sullivan Foundation. We exist to bring people together to discuss and debate the most important issues that impact our two continents and to look for answers and solutions to the most pressing problems. The Foundation is not a political organization, but we are wholeheartedly committed to facilitating constructive discussions on issues such as this, ones that maybe

politically contentious and controversial. We trust that the panelists here, representing a range of perspectives, will look to this as a forum to influence and challenge each other with the goal at arriving a step closer to a common solution.

Today, in partnership with representatives Sheila Jackson Lee, William Jefferson, Gregory Meeks, Donald Payne, Charles Rangel and Diane Watson, we are please to provide a forum for the exchange of your ideas on how countries in the Gulf of Guinea can turn the richness of their resources into the well- being of their people. We hope that many focused discussions will follow this one and look forward to working with of you on developing a strong, sustainable American policy toward the Gulf of Guinea.

Please allow me now to thank our Congressional hosts for their initiative on this very important issue and kindly welcome their remarks.

(Remarks by Reps. Sheila Jackson Lee, Donald Payne, William Jefferson.)

Thank you again Congressmen for your initiative on this issue; we at the Foundation look forward to working with you on this matter in the future.

Now please allow me to turn the proceedings over to my friend and colleague Ambassador Howard Jeter, our moderator today. Ambassador Jeter's service as US Ambassador to Nigeria, and more recently as executive vice president of Goodworks International, has given him a unique experience with and perspective on these issues. Ambassador Jeter.

