

**Remarks at the White House Summit on Global Development**  
*July 20, 2016*

*The President.* Thank you! Thank you, everybody. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you so much. Well, thank you, Strive, for those kind words and your great work to promote opportunity in Africa and across the globe. I should point out, by the way, Strive just told me he was in the middle of a board meeting, he flew here, he's got to go back. He hasn't gotten any sleep. That's how committed he is to the work that we're doing. So give Strive a big round of applause.

So this is quite a group. [*Laughter*] Just a lot of do-gooders in one room. [*Laughter*] That's good. Just own it. [*Laughter*] You should be proud of it. I want to welcome our partners from around the world. We've got leaders from government, from the private sector, civil society, faith communities who are doing great work, and so many inspiring young people. And I want to thank our partners in Congress from both sides of the aisle who prove that every once in a while, in a city that doesn't agree on much—[*laughter*—]—we can all agree on the imperative of smart development. So thank you. Thank you.

Obviously, this has been a tough couple of weeks, not just here in the United States, but around the world. And that's being amplified to some degree during political season. So I think maybe it's worth stepping back for a moment. This is a challenging time, with threats of terrorism, an international order that is buffeted by all kinds of different events, a sense that globalization is leaving too many people behind, and expanding inequality within countries, even if we are seeing progress in the aggregate.

And all of this creates legitimate fears and anxieties that have to be addressed and, at least a feeling, a perception that people don't have full control over a rapidly changing world. So it is worth reminding ourselves of how lucky we are to be living in the most peaceful, most prosperous, most progressive era in human history.

Now, that's hard to absorb if we're watching the newscasts every night, because there's heartbreak and terrible things taking place at any given moment across the globe. But it's important for us to remember, not so that we become complacent, but so that we understand that good works can make a difference. Think about it. It has been decades since a war between major powers. More people live in democracies. More people are linked by technology. Thanks in part to the dedication and passion and hard work of so many of the people who are gathered here today, in recent decades, the world has achieved incredible advances in development and human dignity.

We've saved over 60 million lives from measles and malaria and tuberculosis. We've slashed HIV/AIDS infections and deaths. Across the developing world, incomes have gone up. Tens of millions of boys and girls are in school. Millions have gained access to clean energy, helping to mitigate the threat of climate change. In just the past 25 years, more than 1 billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty—1 billion. Michael Elliott, the former head of the ONE Campaign, who we remember today—he liked to say that we're living through an "age of miracles." And he's right.

And sometimes, when I'm talking to young interns at the White House who are still immunizing themselves from the cynicism that's so chronic in this town—[*laughter*—]—I remind

them, if you had to choose a moment in history to be born and you didn't know ahead of time who you were going to be, you'd choose now. [*Laughter*] Because the world has never been less violent, healthier, better educated, more tolerant, with more opportunity for more people, and more connected than it is today.

And all of you can take great pride in these historic achievements. It's a testament to what's possible when we work together: governments, multilateral institutions, the private sector, and civil society. And it is a testament to our shared commitment to the dignity of every human being. This is something I was nursed on. Some of you know my mother worked with USAID and the Ford Foundation, traveling places like Indonesia and Pakistan, working to help lift up the rural poor, particularly women. It's something that I tried to apply myself as a young grassroots organizer on the South Side of Chicago, working with people who wanted to expand hopes and opportunity and jobs in forgotten neighborhoods.

I've seen the possibilities of progress, and so have all of you. And yet we are humbled by the work that remains. When some 800 million men, women, and children subsist on less than \$1.25 a day, when 11 boys and girls are dying every minute from mostly preventable causes, when hundreds of women are dying every day from having a baby—when all this is happening right before our eyes, we know we've got a lot of work to do.

And so today we reaffirm our belief that in the 21st century, no child should go to bed hungry and no child should die from a mosquito bite and no one should be denied opportunity because of where they're born or what gender or religion they are or the color of their skin or who they love. All of us are born equal, and we're all connected. And if a schoolhouse door is closed to a young girl, then we're all diminished. And when a mother can't buy medicine for her sick child, or a family flees violence, whether in Syria or El Salvador, in a sense, that makes us all poorer and all less secure. That's what we believe; that's what brings us here together.

And just as our values compel us to act, so do pragmatism, so does self-interest. When there are no roads to take goods to market, and when corruption steals from an entrepreneur or siphons off billions that could be going to schools and hospitals and infrastructure, that keeps too many people in too many countries from joining our global economy.

And there's a reason why Susan Rice, my National Security Adviser, is with us here today. There's a reason why our USAID Administrator, Gayle Smith—she of the spectacular hair—sits—[*laughter*]*—there's a reason that Gayle sits alongside generals in the Situation Room when we're talking about critical national security issues. Because we know there is a correlation between no education, no jobs, no hope, the violation of basic human dignity, and conflict and instability. So development isn't charity. It's one of the smartest investments we can make in our shared future: in our security and our prosperity.*

And sometimes, that's a tough argument to make here in the United States, where we have big needs and there are kids going hungry in this country and don't have good enough schools in this country and have insufficient shelter in this country. Sometimes, people feel like, well, why are we making investments anyplace else? And yet we don't question hundreds of billions of dollars of investment in our military. And I could not be prouder as Commander in Chief to have the world's best military and the best military in human history, and it's needed. And sometimes, we have to make sure that we're addressing those who would do us harm.

But for us to make a fraction of that investment in schools and clean water and health care—that's why we do it. It's not because we're not mindful of the needs here in this country;

it's because if we make those investments, we're also going to be in a better position to protect our country and improve our country. And this is why, as President, I've elevated development as a key pillar of American foreign policy. With the help of many of you, we've established our new global development policy, and we've transformed the way we do business.

We changed how we measure development, not just by the dollars we invest—although, we still invest a lot of dollars—but by whether people and nations are actually better off as a consequence of those investments. Instead of government going it alone, we've deepened partnerships with multilateral organizations and civil society and the private sector and faith communities and, most importantly, people on the ground. Instead of just sending foreign aid, we're leveraging new sources of funding, committing and mobilizing more than \$100 billion from the private sector and other partners to promote development and save lives.

And in the fight against poverty, we're treating governments as partners, not charity cases. Instead of top-down approaches, we're building local capacity, because local partners have to be in the lead.

So the United States continues to be the world's largest donor of humanitarian aid—and it will remain so as long as I'm President, and—[*laughter*]. And it will remain so, I'm confident, in the next administration. But instead of just responding after crises happen, what we've been focused on is helping communities and countries build resilience to shocks and to be in a position to avoid crises, because we have to be hardheaded and big hearted at the same time. And in doing so, we've ushered in a new era of accountability and results. For donor nations like the United States and for all of us who believe passionately in development, we've got to make every penny count. So we're holding our partners in developing nations to the same standard, no excuses. Waste, fraud, corruption—those are anathema to development.

And today we're here to celebrate the progress that we've made. We're here to keep the momentum going, guided by the new sustainable development goals, including our goal to end the outrage of extreme poverty.

So I may only have 6 months left in office, but I'm here to say that whoever the next President is, development has to remain a fundamental pillar of American foreign policy and a key part of our work to lift up lives, not just overseas, but here in the United States. If you care about human dignity, if you care about reducing violence and terrorism, if you care about fighting climate change, if you care about addressing inequality and creating trade and prosperity that works for all and not just some, then you're going to have to pay attention to development, and you're going to have to make an investment.

So that's what all of you have been doing. [*Laughter*] And I'm here to tell you, let's keep going. Let's keep unleashing broad-based growth that transforms economies and lifts people and nations from poverty and [to]<sup>\*</sup> prosperity. People tell me around the world when I travel, developing nations, they do not just want aid, they want trade. They want capacity building. As we've seen from South Korea to Chile to Botswana, the developing nation of today can end up being the engine of global growth tomorrow.

So having renewed the African Growth and Opportunity Act, moving ahead with the Trans-Pacific Partnership, we can make sure that trade and globalization delivers progress, not just for those at the top, but also for the many. We'll continue to partner with countries that embrace reforms and attract investment. And in November—in September, in New York,

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<sup>\*</sup> White House correction.

we're going to host the second U.S.-Africa Business Forum to keep promoting growth and innovation and investment across the continent.

Working with over 40 countries, we're bringing the wonders of technology to far corners of the globe, accelerating access to the Internet, bridging the digital divide. We've mobilized governments and multilateral institutions and more than 100 private sector partners around our Power Africa initiative, funding everything from big power plants to off-the-grid and small, renewable energy projects. And we are proving that countries don't have to choose between expanding access to power and combating climate change. These projects are expected to generate up to 29,000 megawatts of cleaner electricity so that students can study at night and businesses can stay open and farmers can use mechanized tools. And I believe that by 2030, we can bring electricity to over 60 million African homes and businesses. And that will be transformative for the entire continent.

And because economies can't thrive without rule of law, together let's keep fighting for good governance and strong, accountable institutions. That's the bedrock of sustainable development. You wouldn't know it sometimes, because in advanced countries sometimes, there's such antigovernment rhetoric. *[Laughter]* But it turns out, like, having functioning governments are really important. *[Laughter]*

So that's one of the reasons I committed the U.S. Government to more transparency on my very first day in office. And with our Open Government Partnership of 70 countries, representing some 2 billion people, we've continued to empower reformers and civil society, from Sierra Leone to Ukraine to Uruguay. Because governments should serve the people and not the other way around.

And by the way, progress is not in a straight line. It's not overnight. Just as here in the United States we've still got more reforms to make, that's true of a lot of countries that are participating. But we have seen this tool prodding governments in new directions, opening up, creating greater mechanisms of accountability, setting new norms that, over time, make a difference.

Together, let's keep strengthening food security and nutrition. No society can flourish—children can't flourish—if they're going hungry. We can't ask a child to feed her mind when she can barely feed her stomach. So with our alliance between government and private sector and NGOs, we need to keep empowering farmers with new seeds and new technologies and new techniques that are scaled appropriately and sustainable. And it works.

Last year alone, we reached over 9 million farmers across the globe, reducing hunger, boosting yields, increasing incomes by more than \$800 million. In many of the areas where we work, poverty has been cut by up to a quarter. Stunting is down by as much as a third. Nearly 18 million more children are getting better nutrition. And right before coming here, in the Oval Office, I signed into law the Global Food Security Act, which is a bipartisan bill. So the—*[applause]*. I—thank you. Thank you. I—you're not surprised I signed it, right? *[Laughter]* I mean, I—I mean, you guys are all excited about it. *[Laughter]* We've been working on this for a while. We got it passed, so it's my job to sign it. *[Laughter]* But this is a bipartisan bill that authorizes more than \$7 billion so that initiatives like Feed the Future endure well into the future. So let's sustain this progress. Let's make hunger history.

Together, let's keep advancing global health and keep reforming health systems, empowering local communities, investing in new treatments and prevention. Building on the fine work of my predecessor, President George Bush, we've saved an estimated 6 million lives

from malaria since the year 2000. In our fight against HIV/AIDS, we've nearly quadrupled the number of people receiving treatment since 2009. We're supporting 9.5 million people with lifesaving therapies. And I believe we can meet our goal of treating nearly 13 million people by the end of next year.

Our vision is within reach: the first AIDS-free generation. And with our commitment to infant and maternal health, we've helped save the lives of more than 4.5 million children and 200,000 mothers. Together, we beat back Ebola in West Africa. And with nearly 50 countries united around our Global Health Security Agenda, we're going to keep boosting our ability to prevent and detect and respond to outbreaks. And here, I do have to just add a little editorial. [Laughter] Republicans in Congress can help: Pass that bill that treats Zika like the serious threat that it is. Fully fund our response. That's an example of protecting America and helping other countries too. We can get that done.

And maybe, most of all, together, let's keep empowering our young people whose energy and enthusiasm and optimism can lift up countries, no matter how tough the circumstances. I have met so many young people all over the world that just inspire me. We joke sometimes that with all the grim stuff I have to deal with every day, get me in a room with some young people. [Laughter] The old heads get me depressed sometimes. [Laughter] Because they're ready to go to work. They need support, they need the skills, but we've already brought together nearly half a million young people through our Young Leaders Initiatives, from Africa and Southeast Asia and Europe and the Americas. And we want to keep helping them connect and exchange ideas and expertise and best practices; keep giving them the tools to be the next great entrepreneurs, doctors, scientists; the next civil society leaders, maybe even future Presidents and Prime Ministers.

And as we're empowering young people, we've got to continue lifting up all our people, and that means men and women, boys and girls. I've said this before, I will keep repeating it: One of the best measures of a nation's success is how it treats its women. And earlier this month, we had a—the Obama women—[laughter]—Michelle and Sasha and Malia, they went and traveled with young women in Liberia and Morocco. Dr. Jill Biden is in Africa this week. And all—in all these trips, their message is simple: Let girls learn. Let girls learn so they can help start new ventures and drive economies. Let girls learn so that they can invest in their communities. Let girls learn so they can be safe from violence and abuse. Let girls learn so they can realize their dreams. Because when women have equal futures, families and communities and countries are stronger. When they get an education, that means their children are getting an education. This is a fact.

And we haven't made enough progress on this front. We've got to do more. Now, none of this is going to be easy. One of the messages I've been trying to deliver at commencements and other appearances around the country, as my Presidency comes to a close, is just reminding people, stuff is always hard. In fact, I have a plaque on my desk that says "hard things are hard." [Laughter] This was advice that was given to me by one of my senior advisers when we were in the middle of some big fight. [Laughter] He said, you know, here's the thing, Mr. President, hard things are hard. [Laughter] I said, that is profound. You're right. [Laughter]

But sometimes, we get disappointed in this age of instant gratification when we don't feel as if everything is solved. Well, we're here on this Earth just a blink of an eye, each of us. We take the world that's been given to us, and we try to make it just a little bit better, and then somebody else picks it up, and they do their part. And there are people who are trying to impede progress. And—but the good news is, is that the general trajectory of humanity is, is

that the folks who have been trying to make progress have outnumbered those who haven't. And over time, things just get a little bit better, and it adds up.

But it's hard. And when President Kennedy said we'd go to the Moon, he said we chose to do it because it's hard. There's no point in doing easy stuff. *[Laughter]* Nearly 50 years ago today, a man first walked on the Moon. That was hard. And JFK once said that "The conquest of poverty is as difficult, if not more difficult, than the conquest of outer space." So we can't get discouraged. We can get frustrated sometimes. We may—at least if you're in the Oval Office—occasionally utter a curse word or two. *[Laughter]* But——

*Audience member.* Four more years! *[Laughter]*

*The President.* But we've got to stick with it. Because it's going to take years to reach our goals. But whenever the task seems too great, I am reminded—and I'm sure you are too—of all the people that I've met these past 8 years, the odds they've faced that pale in comparison to the challenges that we face, the promise they hold.

The young farmer in Senegal, who started with 1 hectare of land, grew that to 16, and boosted her incomes, and brought a tractor and suddenly was a employer and small-businessperson. And just hearing her talk about what had happened to her in a few years as a consequence of some of the work that the people in this room had done, that gives me hope. She gives me hope.

Or the young entrepreneur in Peru who is teaching rural women digital skills, and suddenly, they're employable, and they've got a whole new set of possibilities in front of them. Or the health care workers in the Bishop Tutu HIV/AIDS clinic in South Africa and the incredible work that they do with good cheer and unbelievable effort. And all the brave men and women with the virus who have overcome despair and are now living full and long lives and are giving something back—they give me hope.

And I think of all the citizens at the grassroots in countries around the world, in places where it's dangerous sometimes, who are pushing to hold governments accountable—lawyers who are monitoring elections and activists in civil society and innovators building platforms to enhance transparency—they give me hope.

All of you coming together from across sectors, working together: government, private sector, civil society, faith groups. Because you understand that despite whatever differences of religion or background or race or region, we are united as one human race and by our abiding commitment to the inherent dignity of every human being. All of you give me hope.

Just as you've had a partner in me and my administration, I'm confident that as we work for the prosperity and justice and peace that all of us seek in the world, as we reach people who may feel forgotten and bring hope to remote corners of this planet, I am absolutely convinced that you'll have a strong partner in the United States of America. We've shown this can work. Now we've just got to keep it up. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:35 p.m. in Atrium Hall at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to Strive Masiyiwa, founder and group executive chairman, Econet, who introduced the President; Jill T. Biden, wife of Vice President Joe Biden; former White House Senior Adviser David M. Axelrod; Nimna Diayté, president, Saloum Federation of Corn Producers; and Mariana Costa Checa, cofounder and executive

director, Laboratoria. He also referred to S. 1252, which was approved July 20 and assigned Public Law No. 114–195; and H.R. 5243.

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*Names:* Axelrod, David M.; Biden, Jill T.; Bush, George W.; Costa Checa, Mariana; Diayté, Nimna; Masiyiwa, Strive; Obama, Malia; Obama, Michelle; Obama, Natasha "Sasha"; Rice, Susan E.; Smith, Gayle E.

*Subjects:* Africa : Energy infrastructure, improvement efforts; Africa : U.S.-Africa Business Forum; Africa : West Africa, Ebola epidemic, response and containment efforts; African Growth and Opportunity Act; Civil rights : Freedom of religion; Civil rights : Racial equality; Civil rights : Women's rights and gender equality; Commerce, international : Free and fair trade; Developing countries : Democratic governance and rule of law; Developing countries : Economic growth and development; Developing countries : Health and medical care, promotion efforts; Developing countries : Poverty; Development, U.S. Agency for International; Diseases : Zika virus in Western Hemisphere, containment and prevention efforts; Economy, national : Economic concerns; Education : Foreign exchange programs; El Salvador : Political unrest and violence; Environment : Climate change; Foreign policy, U.S. : Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA); Foreign policy, U.S. : Foreign aid policies and funding; Foreign policy, U.S. : Humanitarian assistance programs; Foreign Policy, U.S. : Open government and transparency, promotion efforts; Foreign policy, U.S. : Poverty, efforts to combat; Government organization and employees : Accountability and transparency, strengthening efforts; HIV/AIDS : International prevention and treatment efforts; Legislation, enacted: Global Food Security Act of 2016; Open Government Partnership; Syria : Civil war and sectarian conflict; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : Global threat; Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP); White House Office : Assistants to the President :: National Security Adviser; White House Summit on Global Development; Women and girls : "Let Girls Learn" initiative, White House.

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