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balance years before our target date. We now enjoy low unemployment, modest inflation, sustained economic growth and a level of prosperity that is a model for other countries.

Our economic policy has always demonstrated our commitment to public investments in our people to complement our commitment to private investments, fueled by successful deficit reduction. Our priorities have always included a combination of vital investments in education and training, environment, community empowerment, research, infrastructure and transportation.

Certainly investing in a reliable, efficient, and a well-constructed system of highway and mass transit is an important domestic priority and critical to our economic success. In fact, the budget I submitted this year asks for 40 percent more for transportation than the average annual expenditure in the previous administration.

However, I have serious concerns that the extent of proposed new spending in this transportation bill goes too far and could threaten both our fiscal discipline and our commitment to education and other critical investments in our future. Transportation is an important domestic priority, but we must strike a balance so that we do not allow one priority to squeeze out other critical investments such as education or undermine our fiscal discipline.

We should not and need not reject fiscal discipline or force cuts in critical programs on which our citizens and country rely to build a strong America in the 21st century. If we show a balance of our values as we reach a truly balanced budget, we can maintain fiscal discipline while maintaining strong investments in both our people and our physical infrastructure.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker, and Richard A. Gephardt, minority leader, House of Representatives, and Trent Lott, majority leader, and Thomas A. Daschle, minority leader, United States Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

## Remarks at the Opening of the Ronald H. Brown Commercial Center in Johannesburg, South Africa

*March 28, 1998*

Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Motlana, for the wonderful introduction, for the extraordinary example of your career—physician to President Mandela, leader in the struggle for South Africa's freedom, and most recently, one of the most successful businessmen in the new South Africa.

Thank you, Secretary Daley, Congressman Rangel, Secretary Herman, Secretary Slater. To our ambassadors, Mr. Berger, Reverend Jackson; to the Members of Congress and the American business leaders here today. Minister Manuel, to Millard Arnold, thank you for all the work you did on this. And to all the members of the South African community who are here, thank you for what you're doing to build a strong South Africa and to build the bonds of commerce between our two nations.

Let me also say I'm pleased that a young member of my White House staff, born in Johannesburg, Russell Horwitz, is here today with his grandparents, Maurice and Phyllis Goldstein. But I'm especially pleased that Alma Brown is here.

This has been an incredible trip to Africa, a trip which I was urged to make by Ron Brown, starting before I became President. And I was just sitting here thinking that after all this time, Ron Brown can still draw a crowd. [*Laughter*]

This has been a magical tour of this magnificent continent, and in each place, I've thought about Ron and how he would have reacted to seeing a half a million people in Ghana; to talking to the President of Uganda, first, about the possibility of an American investment running into the hundreds of millions of dollars, and then walking into a little village and talking to women who got loans of $50 to start their own business; meeting with the survivors of the Rwandan genocide; coming here, and all the

magnificent things that have happened at the Maphanzela School today and at the Peterson Memorial in Soweto. This has been an incredible trip.

And in so many ways, it was inspired by the vision that Ron Brown had. Ron said that in this new era, and I quote, "Business opportunities in South Africa, once constricted by politics and struggle, will expand. If we are fortunate, we will see the rooting of democracy and free economy whose branches will soon spread, so that other African nations would also benefit." We are here to dedicate a center in honor of Ron Brown, to commerce, but also to bear witness that his vision is coming true.

As Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown relentlessly promoted the idea that American businesses could help themselves while helping to support growth and opportunity and freedom in the rest of the world. He believed that assistance was still needed for developing nations but that self-perpetuating prosperity would never occur until we also had substantial amounts of trade and investment. Five times Ron Brown came to Africa to do business, to create opportunities for Americans and for Africans. He came at the right time, South Africa emerging and all around the continent a new Africa taking shape, increasingly open to free markets, democracy, human rights.

Today, enterprising governments and entrepreneurs are taking Africa's future into their own hands, opening markets, privatizing industry, stabilizing currency, reducing inflation, and creating jobs. Small businesses are sprouting in cities and villages. Modern telecommunication systems are spreading. There are now 15 African stock markets, and 5 more in the works. Average economic growth on this continent has been 5 percent, with some countries as high as 10. Our trade with Africa is 20 percent greater than our trade with all the former Soviet Union. It supports 100,000 American jobs. The average annual return on investment—I hope they're listening back in America—the average annual return on investment is 30 percent. This is a good deal, folks.

But there is more to do. Nearly 700 million people live in sub-Saharan Africa, but only about one percent of our trade and one percent of our direct foreign investment is in Africa. There is new thinking in America and in Africa about how we can do better by building genuine partnerships, partnerships with business owners who respect workers and workers who respect their companies; with governments that respect entrepreneurs and businesses that accept laws necessary to protect workers, consumers, and the environment; and businesses that increasingly will accept responsibility for playing a role in solving the social problems of their nations; and trade and investment across borders built on common interests and mutual respect. Mutual respect and shared benefit, these are the foundations Ron Brown laid for our partnership.

As he well understood, and I reaffirm today, a new partnership in trade and investment should not come at the expense of development assistance when it is plainly still needed. Trade cannot replace aid when there is still so much poverty, flooding, encroaching deserts, drought, violence, threatened food supplies, malaria, AIDS, and other diseases, with literacy below 50 percent in many nations, because economies and businesses and individual workers cannot fulfill their potential when too many people cannot read or are hungry or ill. I will work with our Congress to restore our development assistance to Africa to its historic high level, but we must build on it with trade and investment.

Nine months ago in Washington I announced our new plan, the Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity With Africa, intended to leverage the work of other industrialized countries, international institutions, and the nations and people of Africa, itself. Our Congress is now moving forward with legislation to forward that initiative. Already it has passed our House of Representatives; soon, I hope, our Senate will pass it as well. Among the Members of the congressional delegation with me today, there are four of the bill's greatest proponents: Congressman Rangel and Congressman Royce, Congressman McDermott, Congressman Jefferson, along with Congressman Crane, who is not here, and the other Members of the congressional delegation that are here. Let me thank them for their hard work and urge them to go get the Senate to follow suit.

The plan we bring has five elements. First, we offer all African nations greater access to our markets. African countries aggressively pursuing economic reforms will be able to export almost 50 percent more products to America duty-free. In the future, we're prepared to negotiate free-trade agreements with strong-performing, growth-oriented economies, including

at appropriate times with the countries in this region.

Under our plan, all African nations will benefit. Those with the greatest commitment to reform to unlocking the potential of their people will benefit the most, whether they are the richest in Africa or the poorest. Our bonds will grow based not on wealth but on will, the will to pursue political and economic change so that everyone may have a role in the progress of tomorrow.

Second, we will target our assistance so that African nations can reform their economies to take advantage of the new opportunities. This means helping countries with creative approaches to finance, supporting the progress of regional markets, encouraging African entrepreneurs to look for new opportunities.

In conjunction with the Ron Brown Foundation, we will help to establish an endowment through the Ron Brown Center to help young Africans to pursue internships with American companies to gain technical expertise in commerce, trade, and finance. We've named a new high-level trade representative whose only job is to deepen trade with Africa, Rosa Whitaker. Rosa, where are you? Stand up there. Thank you. [*Applause*] And I've asked Congress for another $30 million this year to fund support programs for this endeavor.

Third, we are working to spur private investment. Our Overseas Private Investment Corporation has established three funds to help ventures be financed in Africa. The newest of these will provide up to $500 million for investments in roads, bridges, and ports, as well as microenterprise and women-owned businesses, to facilitate economic opportunity. And to serve as the hub for American investors interested in Africa, there is a new commercial center in which we are gathered. That's what we're here for. And let me say it again: The only name that this center could have is the Ron Brown Center.

Fourth, with our wealthy partners in the G–7, we have secured a commitment from the World Bank to increase lending to Africa by as much as $1.1 billion in the coming year, with a focus on reforming countries. We want to speed debt relief to the Highly Indebted Poorest Countries program, which is now helping countries get out from under the crushing debt burdens that prevent growth. And I'll raise at the next G–7 meeting in England early in May the concerns that I've heard on this trip from African leaders about the debt issue. I've also asked our Congress for enough debt relief funding this year to wipe out all bilateral concessional debt for the fastest reforming poor nations.

In total, our budget request this year would permit up to $1.6 billion in bilateral debt relief for Africa. I challenge others in the industrial world to offer more debt relief so that we can free up resources for health, education, and sustainable growth. And let me say again to the Americans back home, this is not charity; this is enlightened self-interest. It is good for American business, the American economy, and American jobs to have a sensible growth policy.

Finally, because of the growing importance of our economic ties to Africa, I intend to invite leaders of reforming nations to a summit meeting in Washington so that we can lay specific plans to follow up on this trip and the announcements I have made on it. We will also invite the trade, finance, and foreign ministers to meet with their American counterparts every year to advance the cause of modernization and reform.

Ron Brown understood and the leaders of democratic Africa understand that nations cannot become economic powers unless their people are empowered, unless citizens are free to speak their mind and create, unless there is equality and the rule of law and what the experts call transparency. The African leaders have put a premium on improving government accountability and attacking corruption and other barriers to doing business. Those who have done that will be richly rewarded in the global marketplace. The United States shares these goals, and we intend to work with African leaders who want to make progress on them.

Taken together, the provisions of our plan—trade benefits, technical and continued development assistance, support for private investment, increased financing and debt relief, and high-level consultations to make sure there is followup—and this trip is not a one-shot event—these will provide an environment in which private enterprise, African and American, will thrive, creating jobs and prosperity. This is a good thing for the American people and for American business. It is a good thing for Africa.

Let me also say that nothing we do can supplant the important, essential efforts that African leaders—not just political leaders but business

leaders—take for themselves. We must do more to educate all the children, to provide decent shelter, to provide decent health care. We must do more to work together to solve the continuing problems in every society on this continent.

Nothing the American people can do will replace your efforts, but I have seen the energy, the determination, and the courage of the people in every country I have visited. They are worthy of our best efforts at partnership, and we intend to give it to them.

The progress we make together is the best way possible to honor the legacy of Ron Brown. He died in the service of his country on one of these missions to a war-torn country in the hope of making peace. He believed that economic progress was a moral good if it was fairly shared and everyone had a chance to live out their dreams and fulfill their aspirations. He understood that the economy was about more than a few people making money. It was about organizing free people so that they could put their talents to work to help a society lift itself up, to solve problems and seize opportunities, and make life more meaningful and more enjoyable.

He was a bold thinker, a brilliant strategist, a devoted public servant, a good father and husband, and he was a terrific friend. I miss him terribly at this moment. But I cannot imagine a more fitting tribute to a man who proved that the Commerce Department could be an engine of growth and opportunity at home and abroad, who accepted my challenge to take a moribund agency and put it at the center of our economic policy, of our foreign policy, and of America's future in the world. He did his job well. I hope that when we leave here, we can do our job just as well so that this center will be a fitting, lasting legacy.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:42 p.m. in the courtyard. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Nthatho Motlana, who introduced the President; Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel of South Africa; Rev. Jesse Jackson, President's Special Envoy for Africa; Millard W. Arnold, Minister-Counselor, U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service; Alma Brown, chair, Ronald H. Brown Foundation, and widow of Ron Brown; and Rosa Whitaker, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks at a Church Service in Soweto, South Africa

*March 29, 1998*

Thank you, Father, Bishop, Mrs. Mathlata; to all of my friends in the American delegation, our Ambassador, the South African Ambassador; to the AME bishops getting a little instruction in Roman Catholicism today. Reverend Jackson, thank you for your prayer. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for making Hillary and me and our entire group from America feel so very welcome.

And especially, I want to thank the children. Now, we're about to leave South Africa, and we're going to the airport. And maybe we'll be like the birds; we can fly. [*Laughter*] It takes a little more to get me in the air. [*Laughter*] But we're going to practice that.

I am profoundly honored to be in this great house of God, which is also a great shrine of freedom, for it was here that you and people before you gathered to stand for the freedom of the people of South Africa when it was denied you. I came to South Africa, first, to thank God you have your freedom now, to thank God for the life and work of President Mandela and so many others, known and unknown, who walked the long road for so many years so that the people of this great nation might be free. But also I came here resolved to work with the people of South Africa as a friend and a partner, to help you make the most of your freedom. It is one thing to be free, and another thing to do the right thing with your freedom.

Yesterday evening we dedicated a commerce center here to try to help bring American investment here, to create jobs for the people of South Africa, and to have more trade between our two countries. The center was named after