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Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:50 a.m. on October 26 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to the African Growth and Opportunity Forum

October 29, 2001

Well, thank you very much for that warm welcome. Many of you have traveled half a world for this gathering, and I'm honored to be with you. I want to thank you all for coming.

This conference was delayed by the events of September the 11th, but our common goal will not be delayed or denied. We have a unique opportunity to build ties of trade and trust that will improve the lives on both our continents. And we will seize this opportunity.

I appreciate so very much the leadership of our Secretary of State. He has done a fabulous job of assembling a coalition of people from all around the world to fight terror. I picked the right man for this time in history.

I want to thank the Ministers and Ambassadors from the 35 African nations who are represented here. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate the three members of my Cabinet who are on the stage with us today, members who represent trade and economic activity and economic development, people who join me in my commitment for a freer world and a prosperous Africa. I want to thank Secretary of Treasury O'Neill, Secretary of Commerce Evans, and U.S. Trade Representative Zoellick for being here, as well. Thank you all for coming.

I appreciate USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios for being here, as well. Andy, thank you for coming. And I, too, want to thank Members of the United States Congress, Republican and Democrat, who have come to join on this important effort. Senator Lugar, Congressman Royce, Congressman Levin, and Congressman Jefferson, I'm honored you all would take time to be here to represent the solidarity of our entire Government in promoting what's right and responsible on the African continent.

And I want to thank members of the business and NGO communities who are here, as well. And thank you for working so hard to put together the coalition that enabled the passage of one of the most hopeful acts that Congress has passed. I appreciate your time; I appreciate your efforts; and I appreciate your concern.

Let me begin by thanking the nations of Africa for their support following September the 11th. America will never forget the many messages of sympathy and solidarity sent by African heads of state. Ambassadors from southern Africa presented a check to the American Red Cross to assist the families of the victims. One Rwandan journalist wrote in a condolence book at the U.S. Embassy, "We feel and understand what the Americans must be experiencing. The forces of evil must be fought and defeated wherever they are." That's represents exactly the firm resolve of the American people. We will fight and defeat the forces of evil wherever they are.

Over 80 countries, including Ethiopia and Egypt, Ghana and Gambia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Togo, and Zimbabwe, lost citizens along with the Americans on September the 11th. The United States is deeply grateful to all countries and all African countries that have now joined in a great coalition against terror.

We are grateful for the political support offered by the Organization of African Unity and by many African regional organizations. We appreciate the basing and overflight rights offered by African countries and the growing number of African nations that have committed to cracking down on terrorist financing.

We are encouraged by the strong declaration issued at Dakar by 28 African countries calling on all African nations to ratify the 1999 Algiers Convention Against Terrorism. I spoke to Senegal's President Wade, to thank him for his leadership in convening the Dakar meeting. The Algiers Convention was developed following the 1998 Embassy bombings by Al Qaida, which took 12 lives and over 200 African lives, including many

Muslims. Now it is critically important that this convention be ratified so that African nations have additional judicial, diplomatic, and financial tools to root out terrorism. And as nations begin to put these measures in place, the United States will look for ways to work together.

In an era of global trade and global terror, the futures of the developed world and the developing world are closely linked. We benefit from each other's success. We're not immune from each other's troubles. We share the same threats, and we share the same goal: to forge a future of more openness, trade, and freedom.

Recent events have provided the world with a clear and dramatic choice. Our enemies, the terrorists and their supporters, offer a narrow and backward vision. They feed resentment, envy, and hatred. They fear human creativity, choice, and diversity. Powerless to build a better world, they seek to destroy a world that is passing them by. And they will not succeed.

We offer a better way. When nations respect the creativity and enterprise of their people, they find social and economic progress. When nations open their markets to the world, their people find new ways to create wealth. When nations accept the rules of the modern world, they discover the benefits of the modern world.

This vision of progress is not owned by any nation or any culture. It belongs to humanity, every African, every Muslim, every man or woman who wants to make it real. Good governments, of course, will look different from place to place. Cultures must preserve their unique values. Yet, everywhere—east and west, north and south—there is a model of successful development, a market economy trading with the world that respects human rights and the rule of law. Every nation that adopts this vision will find in America a trading partner, an investor, and a friend.

And it's for this reason that America welcomes and supports the new African initiative put forward by visionary African leaders. To fulfill this vision of progress, we must return to the steady, patient work of building a world that trades in freedom.

No nation in our time has entered the fast track of development without first opening up its economy to world markets. The African Growth and Opportunity Act is a roadmap for how the United States and Africa can tap the power of markets to improve the lives of our citizens.

This law is just over a year, but it is already showing its tremendous power. During the first half of this year, the total trade with sub-Sahara Africa rose nearly 17 percent, compared to last year. U.S. imports from the region now exceed $11.5 billion. Some individual countries have shown staggering increases in trade. Four countries—Senegal, Seychelles, Eritrea, and Madagascar—saw their exports to the United States grow by over 100 percent.

Behind these numbers are investments in projects that are making a real impact on people's lives. In Kenya, the Government projects that AGOA will create 150,000 new jobs over the next several years. Propose new projects—in Lesotho, textiles sectors alone are expected to inject $122 million of investment into that country's economy, 4 times the amount of all official development assistance the country received in 1999.

We need to build on these successes. Across the continent, African governments are reforming their economies and their governments in order to take advantage of AGOA. These nations are working hard to fight corruption, improve labor standards, and reform their customs regimes. The United States will work in partnership with African nations to help—to help them build the institutions and expertise they need to benefit from trade.

Today I'm pleased to announce the creation of $200 million Overseas Private Investment Corporation support facility that will give American firms access to loans, guarantees, and political risk insurance for investment projects in sub-Sahara Africa.

I've asked our Trade and Development Agency to establish a regional office in Johannesburg, to provide guidance to governments and companies which seek to liberalize their trade laws, improve the investment environment, and take advantage of the free trade act between our two continents.

I'm also announcing today the launch of the Trade for African Development and Enterprise Program. With $15 million in initial funding, the trade program will establish regional hubs for global competitiveness that will help African businesses take advantage of AGOA, to sell more of their products on the global markets.

Countries gathered here today have seen the benefits of trade. And we have an obligation to make the case for more open trade throughout the entire world. I hope that African nations will be a powerful voice for the launch of a new round of global trade talks in Doha, beginning next month. Trade and sound economic policies are essential to growth and development, but they are not, themselves, sufficient to seize the hopeful opportunities of markets and trade. Nations need citizens that are educated and are healthy.

My Government will continue its strong support for responsible debt relief, so that nations can devote more resources to education and health. We will continue to press multilateral development banks to provide more assistance in the form of grants, instead of loans. We are moving forward on an initiative I announced in July to improve basic education and teacher training in Africa. And the United States is ready to commit more resources to the new global fund to combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, once the fund demonstrates success.

And finally, as AGOA makes clear, economic freedom and political freedom must go hand in hand. People who trade in freedom want to live in freedom. From Nigeria to South Africa, African nations have made great strides—great strides—toward democracy. The democratic transitions of the last decade mean that a majority of Africans now live in democratic states. That is progress we will praise and progress we must work hard to continue.

Our times present many challenges. Yet, I'm optimistic about our shared future. I know we can build a world that grows in prosperity and trades in freedom. I know we can bring health and education to more people. I know we can defeat terror—defeat terror now, so that our children and grandchildren can grow up in free societies.

Out of the sorrow of September 11th, I see opportunity, a chance for nations to strengthen and rethink and reinvigorate their relationships. We share more than a common enemy; we share a common goal: to expand our ties of commerce and culture, to renew our commitment to development and democracy. And together, we will meet that goal.

May God bless Africa, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:17 a.m. in the Loy Henderson Conference Room at the Department of State headquarters building. In his remarks, he referred to President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Homeland Security Council and an Exchange With Reporters

October 29, 2001

The President. Today I had the first official meeting of the Homeland Security Council—Governor—that has been chaired by—when I'm not here, by Governor Ridge. And as you can see, I've assembled many of the members of my administration here, senior members of the administration, because our task is to do everything we can to protect the American people from any threat whatsoever.

The American people are beginning to understand that we fight a two-front war against terror. We fight in Afghanistan, and I appreciate so very much the efforts of our men and women who wear the uniform. And we fight it at home here, to make sure America is as safe is possible.

Along these lines, we've set up a Foreign Terrorist Tracking Task Force to make sure that the Land of the Free is as safe as possible from people who might come to our country to hurt people. We welcome legal immigrants, and we welcome people coming to America. We welcome the process that encourages people to come to our country to visit, to study, and to work. What we don't welcome are people who come to hurt the American people. And so, therefore, we're going to be very diligent with our visas and