

PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON  
DOING BUSINESS IN AFRICA (PAC-DBIA)

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MEETING

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WEDNESDAY  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2018

The PAC-DBIA met in Room 430,  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building, 1650  
Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC, at 9:30  
a.m., Jay Ireland, Chair, presiding.

PAC-DBIA

JAY IRELAND, President and CEO, GE Africa, Chair  
LAURA LANE, President of Global Public Affairs,  
UPS, Vice Chair

KIMBERLY BROWN, CEO, Amethyst Technologies  
KEVIN KACERE, President and CEO, Insta-Pro  
International

BARBARA KEATING, President, Computer Frontiers,  
Inc.

BILL KILLEEN, Chairman and CEO, Acrow Bridge  
ANDREW PATTERSON, President for Africa, Bechtel  
Overseas Corporation

FRED SISSON, CEO, Synnove Energy

PETER SULLIVAN, Managing Director and Head of  
Public Sector Group for Africa, Citi

ANDREW TORRE, Regional President for Central  
Europe, Middle East & Africa, Visa Inc.

BOB WETTA, President and Chief Executive  
Officer, DSC Dredge LLC

SEAN WILCOCK, Chief Commercial Officer, APR  
Energy LLC

DOW WILSON, President and CEO, Varian Medical  
Systems

RAHAMA WRIGHT, Founder and CEO, Shea Yeleen

**U.S. GOVERNMENT**

**WILBUR L. ROSS**, Secretary, U.S. Department of  
Commerce

**GILBERT KAPLAN**, Under Secretary for  
International Trade, U.S. Department of  
Commerce

**SKIP JONES**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Middle East and Africa, U.S. Department of  
Commerce

**AMBASSADOR JEFFREY GERRISH**, Acting President and  
Chairman, Export-Import Bank of the United  
States

**BROCK BIERMAN**, Acting CEO, Millennium Challenge  
Corporation

**C.D. GLIN**, President and CEO, U.S. African  
Development Foundation

**THOMAS HARDY**, Director of Public Affairs and  
Congressional Relations, U.S. Trade and  
Development Agency

**ROBERT PEREZ**, Acting Deputy Commissioner, U.S.  
Customs and Border Protection, Department  
of Homeland Security

**STEPHANIE SULLIVAN**, Principal Deputy Assistant  
Secretary for African Affairs, U.S.  
Department of State

**CHERYL ANDERSON**, Deputy Assistant Administrator  
for the Bureau for Africa, U.S. Agency for  
International Development

**ERIC MEYER**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Africa and the Middle East, U.S.  
Department of the Treasury

**DAVID SHORT**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Aviation and International Affairs, U.S.  
Department of Transportation

**WORKU GACHOU**, Managing Director for Africa,  
Overseas Private Investment Corporation

**BENNETT HARMAN**, Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade  
Representative for Africa, Office of the  
U.S. Trade Representative

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## P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(9:30 a.m.)

CHAIR IRELAND: Good morning, everybody. I'll call the session to order. I'll give a few opening remarks. Obviously this is our last meeting for this iteration of the PAC-DBIA. And we're going to focus in on our trip that we took in the end of June/July. And then on the recommendations from that trip.

Just from a standpoint from our perspective in the private sector, Mr. Secretary, thanks for your support and your team's support and the government's support around the trip. We had four countries we visited that things went very well with the exception of showers in Kenya and airplane rides from Ethiopia. But other than that, it was a very good trip.

I think one of the key things is the focus that we had talked about when we wrapped up in Accra was the U.S. government's support of the private sector across Africa as we try to work together in bringing more business to a number of

1 American companies. And I thought I'd just give  
2 a couple of anecdotes from the last week and a  
3 half, which I think still underscores the  
4 importance of doing that.

5 I met with President Kenyatta in Kenya  
6 last week when I was in Nairobi. And you know,  
7 again he's got a number of initiatives tied in  
8 with the Chinese. He very much supports and is  
9 supportive of the U.S. business and activities in  
10 Kenya. But again, the financing issue becomes an  
11 issue for all the countries, especially as now  
12 they're looking at debt ceilings, et cetera.

13 The second one is yesterday -- No,  
14 Tuesday, I was in -- Oh yes, that was yesterday.  
15 I was in New York at the U.N. meetings and we had  
16 the Chamber of the U.S.- Africa Business Center  
17 which I also co-chair, had a session with the  
18 President of Ghana. And he sat there with a  
19 bunch of American businesses around, and this was  
20 after our trip, and talked to us about how China  
21 was approaching them. And he hasn't seen  
22 anything from the United States. And I wanted to

1 kind of challenge him on the MCC compact and a  
2 few things, but I didn't think it was quite the  
3 appropriate thing. But that just shows the focus  
4 that we need to do to continue to push. And more  
5 importantly, continue to publicize and be  
6 proactive from that standpoint to make sure that  
7 people know where support is coming from.

8 And then the third one, and you were  
9 speaking in Ghana and you talked quite a bit  
10 about the Chinese and all, which was very  
11 supportive. But it's not just the Chinese and we  
12 are right -- We, being GE, are right now in a  
13 battle in Iraq, and some of you may have seen it  
14 in the newspapers, for a \$10 to \$15 billion power  
15 order and we're battling against the government  
16 of Germany who's coming in very supportive of our  
17 competitor. And so it's not just -- it's not  
18 just the Chinese, it's also the Europeans.

19 And I think again, a lot of the  
20 recommendations around financing and what we can  
21 do will really continue to focus in on what the  
22 U.S. government can do tied in with the private

1 sector. So I think this very apropos and very  
2 good timing from that standpoint. And I look  
3 forward to having all of the recommendations be  
4 presented. So thank you.

5 Laura, you want to --

6 VICE CHAIR LANE: Before we begin,  
7 just one other housekeeping order. It's  
8 important that when you're speaking, the red  
9 light will come on. It's important that you turn  
10 it off after you're speaking so that it doesn't  
11 affect the next person being able to speak the  
12 way the microphone system is set up. So if I  
13 have to interject, I'll remind you. But we want  
14 to be able to capture all of this on a recording.  
15 And it's important that we follow the guidelines  
16 that we've been given on that.

17 I want to begin by saying thank you,  
18 Jay and Mr. Secretary and Under Secretary Kaplan.  
19 I'm really pleased to be back here with the rest  
20 of the council. We had what Jay introduced was a  
21 phenomenal trip that was really enlightening and  
22 really helped us see a lot of the challenges and



1 opportunities that exist on the continent.

2 And Mr. Secretary, we're very pleased  
3 to be providing you with the report from that  
4 fact-finding trip, as well as the important  
5 recommendations coming out of it. Because we  
6 think it's going to provide some really concrete  
7 additional steps that can be taken beyond the  
8 ones that we specifically took during the trip.

9 And so this wasn't just a trip to go  
10 and see. This was a trip where we went and made  
11 things happen and we're building on them going  
12 forward. And so we're going to begin with going  
13 through specific aspects of the trip. And I  
14 really look forward to having the input from the  
15 council members on many of the observations we  
16 saw on the ground. As well as providing you, Mr.  
17 Secretary, with the good recommendations for  
18 going forward.

19 And finally, thank you for your  
20 leadership in bringing this to the attention of  
21 the President, keeping the momentum going. And  
22 making this something that is going to produce

1 some concrete results for U.S. investment and  
2 export opportunities across the continent.

3 MR. KAPLAN: Thank you, Laura. I was  
4 honored on behalf of Secretary Ross to lead the  
5 council members on the first three stops of the  
6 historic trip to Ethiopia, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire,  
7 and Ghana. Before I introduce the secretary who  
8 will highlight the significant outcomes of the  
9 trip, I'd just like to note that I believe it was  
10 an exciting experience for us all and a real  
11 adventure. I valued the time that I spent with  
12 all the PAC-DBIA members. Your commitment to the  
13 council and to the work of advancing the U.S.  
14 commercial relationship with Africa was evident  
15 throughout our journey. We thank you for it.

16 It is now my privilege to introduce  
17 the Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross. In this  
18 role, he serves as the principal voice of  
19 business in the Trump administration ensuring  
20 that U.S. entrepreneurs and businesses have the  
21 tools they need to create jobs and economic  
22 opportunity.

1                   The former chairman of W.L. Ross &  
2 Company, Secretary Ross has over 55 years of  
3 investment banking and private equity experience.  
4 The secretary on behalf of President Trump  
5 administers the council and has a very keen  
6 interest in leveraging the work of the PAC-DBIA  
7 to help even trade and investment relationships  
8 between the United States and African countries.

9                   We at the Department of Commerce are  
10 very fortunate to have a leader at the helm with  
11 the character, experience, and intellect as  
12 Secretary Ross. Secretary Ross?

13                   SECRETARY ROSS: Well thank you, Gil  
14 for that very kind introduction. And thank you,  
15 Jay and Laura for leading the PAC-DBIA for the  
16 past two years. And to all the members of the  
17 council, for the time you've devoted to improving  
18 the business prospects in Africa for many other  
19 American companies and their workers.

20                   Thanks also to the individuals from  
21 the federal enterprise who are engaged in these  
22 efforts. After all the work you have done over

1 the past two years, PAC-DBIA has proven to be a  
2 successful model of collaboration between the  
3 public and private sectors. You have created  
4 tangible and lasting results. And we pledge to  
5 continue the progress you have made.

6 Successes come through your dedication  
7 to civic service and the central component of our  
8 democracy. Successes also come through your  
9 commitment to being on the ground in Africa in  
10 developing the recommendations we will be  
11 discussing today. I look forward to those  
12 deliberations.

13 Last year as you remember, I asked the  
14 council to identify the most pressing challenges  
15 American companies face when approaching  
16 competing and operating in African markets. In  
17 response, you've produced a clear and insightful  
18 report that led to the trip to Ethiopia, Kenya,  
19 Cote d'Ivoire, and Ghana.

20 I know there's a lot more to do, but  
21 you should take pride in the fact that your  
22 devotion to this cause has already yielded

1 beneficial results for many people who are not  
2 even aware of the work you've done. For example,  
3 across the four countries visited on the two week  
4 trip, \$1 billion of commercial deals and  
5 government engagements were signed. To put that  
6 into perspective, total U.S. exports to the four  
7 countries in all of 2017 were only \$2.5 billion.  
8 So the trip continues to pay dividends.

9 Last month during the state visit to  
10 Washington, the Kenya President, Uhuru Kenyatta,  
11 another \$850 million of deals were signed with  
12 Kenya alone. That included a \$500 million  
13 project to develop an integrated nationwide  
14 information and telecommunications network for  
15 the government of Kenya.

16 Another major achievement of the trip  
17 was the signing of the memorandum of  
18 understanding with the governments of Ethiopia,  
19 Kenya, and Ghana. I think the only reason there  
20 wasn't one with Cote d'Ivoire is the government  
21 failed the night the group was leaving there. So  
22 it was a little bit of a difficult circumstance.

1 But we are developing a similar MOU with Cote  
2 d'Ivoire.

3           These agreements identify priority  
4 projects upon which American companies can build.  
5 They also provide the U.S. government with the  
6 guidance needed to support those projects.  
7 Furthermore, the MOUs address barriers that  
8 hinder U.S. investment and trade in each of the  
9 countries visited. Eliminating these barriers  
10 will not only help all U.S. companies interested  
11 in expanding in Africa, but the indigenous firms  
12 located in those countries, allowing them to grow  
13 with an improved business plan. When those  
14 companies add employees and wealth to their  
15 societies, our companies can grow with them.  
16 These MOUs have set a new precedent for our  
17 bilateral commercial engagements in Africa.

18           To reflect what was heard repeatedly  
19 in all of the countries that were visited, that  
20 there was a steadfast preference to do business  
21 with American companies. African business  
22 executives, government officials, and ordinary

1 citizens prefer to work with Americans due to our  
2 transparency, our customer service, the  
3 durability and reliability of our products, the  
4 dedication to local skill development in  
5 employment, and a common cultural heritage.

6 They also expressed a desire to  
7 address the challenges that American companies  
8 face in Africa. Such as corruption, poor  
9 infrastructure, and the inequitable business  
10 practice of competitors. They're prepared to  
11 work with us to resolve those obstacles and we're  
12 ready to work with them.

13 Finally, thank you Under Secretary  
14 Kaplan for your outstanding leadership and the  
15 manner in which you led the PAC-DBIA delegation  
16 throughout Africa. Thank you also for your  
17 dedication to following through on the  
18 initiatives that were stated on the ground in  
19 Africa and by the PAC-DBIA.

20 By the time I joined you in Ghana, I  
21 was astonished by the amount of buzz that had  
22 been generated by the trip and by how much had

1 already been accomplished. With that, I look  
2 forward to the discussions about the report and  
3 its recommendations. Thank you.

4 CHAIR IRELAND: Thank you, Mr.  
5 Secretary. We are going to go through now the  
6 presentation of the trip summaries and then into  
7 the recommendations, so we've got quite a few.  
8 And so we'll keep it moving along. The first one  
9 will be about Ethiopia, with Fred Sisson. Here  
10 you go.

11 MR. SISSON: Thank you, Jay. Mr.  
12 Secretary, the council was warmly greeted by the  
13 Ethiopian government when we arrived. We see  
14 significant opportunities as we went through the  
15 trip. We saw significant opportunities for U.S.  
16 businesses in Ethiopia, especially given its  
17 growth rate and the young population that exists  
18 there. Even though the government is encouraging  
19 private sector investment, one of the things that  
20 we did pick up was that there is some skepticism  
21 within some in the government around private  
22 sector investment and controls from the controls



1 the government will have over private sector  
2 investment. We believe that good partnerships  
3 will overcome these.

4 The two MOUs that were signed in  
5 Ethiopia were a great base for starting to  
6 establish a long-term partnership with the  
7 government of Ethiopia, as well as establishing  
8 new business in Ethiopia. The MOUs were signed  
9 around the strategic projects in Ethiopia, as  
10 well as the Power Africa 2.0 objectives. Coming  
11 from the energy sector, we're encouraged by both  
12 of these. And we look forward to participating  
13 in Ethiopia.

14 CHAIR IRELAND: Thanks, Fred. Tom  
15 Hardy?

16 MR. HARDY: Thank you, Jay and thank  
17 you, Mr. Secretary. It's a pleasure to be here.  
18 Thinking back on the trip, I think it was so  
19 fortuitous that the business council identified  
20 Ethiopia. But at times, it's going through kind  
21 of a political and economic renaissance. And to  
22 be on the ground at the beginning stage was

1 important I think for not only the U.S.  
2 government, but U.S. companies to see it.

3 As USTDA, we're encouraged by what  
4 Ethiopia is doing. The efforts they are taking  
5 to encourage private sector investment to  
6 privatize state owned enterprises. And we are  
7 jumping at that opportunity even since returning  
8 from the visit.

9 We just recently concluded a project  
10 in a geothermal power project for 50 megawatts  
11 with a private Ethiopian company. And are  
12 continuing to work with the Ethiopians in the  
13 aviation sector, as well as further expansion of  
14 energy. And I think that the visit that we spent  
15 -- the time we spent in Ethiopia really has  
16 spurred us to recognize opportunities that exist,  
17 not only for the companies on this council, but  
18 for U.S. businesses across the country. Thank  
19 you, Jay.

20 CHAIR IRELAND: Thank you, Tom. Eric?

21 MR. MEYER: Thank you, Jay. As others  
22 here, we welcome Prime Minister Abiy's commitment

1 to making Ethiopia's economy more dynamic and  
2 welcoming for private sector investors. We see  
3 this as an important window of opportunity for  
4 engaging in Ethiopia. Moving forward, a strong  
5 macroeconomic reform and business climate  
6 framework will be important to sustaining growth,  
7 addressing the current debt burden, and  
8 increasing space for private sector growth and  
9 investment in Ethiopia.

10 Of course, financial sector  
11 modernization and reform are similarly important  
12 and we saw this on the trip with the discussions  
13 around the shortages and foreign exchange  
14 availability. And this is going to be critical  
15 to attracting investors in supporting productive  
16 and job creating firms in Ethiopia.

17 So going forward, Treasury is  
18 deepening its policy dialogue with Ethiopia. And  
19 we are engaging the government regarding  
20 potential for technical assistance to support the  
21 government's reform goals in a number of these  
22 areas. And we will look forward to continuing

1 that dialogue. Thank you.

2 CHAIR IRELAND: Thanks, Eric. Bennett  
3 Harman?

4 MR. HARMAN: Good morning. We were  
5 pleased to hear that the Ethiopian government  
6 during the trip signaled a renewed -- Okay. We  
7 were pleased to hear that during the trip, the  
8 Ethiopian government signaled an interest in  
9 renewing their WTO session process. The WTO  
10 session process is fundamentally domestic reform  
11 process because it requires undertaking  
12 significant changes and market opening. But  
13 those trade liberalizing reforms would in fact  
14 advance significant long-term benefits to  
15 Ethiopia's economy. So we think it's very  
16 important that they pursue that. Thank you.

17 CHAIR IRELAND: All right, thank you.  
18 We'll now move on to Kenya, my home for the last  
19 7-1/2 years. And we'll hear what you guys are  
20 going to do. So Kimberly?

21 MS. BROWN: Excuse me. Good morning.  
22 Thank you, Jay. Good morning. Thank you,

1 Secretary Ross, Under Secretary Kaplan, and  
2 Laura.

3 The fact-finding trip to Kenya  
4 included a series of meetings with the President  
5 of Kenya, numerous cabinet secretaries, and Kenya  
6 business leaders. President Kenyatta  
7 demonstrated a strong commitment to attracting  
8 U.S. business investment in Kenya. He held  
9 several meetings, supported the signing of the  
10 MOU, and also announced progress towards  
11 launching the Kenya airways nonstop flight to New  
12 York.

13 Highlights of this trip included the  
14 MOU, which focused on increasing U.S. private  
15 sector participation and priority infrastructure  
16 development and other projects intended to  
17 achieve the goals of President Kenyatta's Big  
18 Four Agenda.

19 Kenya has annual economic growth of 5  
20 to 6 percent and President Kenyatta's Big Four  
21 Agenda provides the potential for increased U.S.  
22 business investment in Kenya, particularly in

1 infrastructure housing, healthcare, and  
2 agriculture.

3           During the meeting between Under  
4 Secretary Kaplan and Kenya's Cabinet Secretary  
5 for Agriculture, the two agreed to explore ways  
6 to support agriculture development, cooperation  
7 to enhance food security in Kenya, which is a  
8 priority area of the Big Four Agenda. Also the  
9 MOU signed by Under Secretary Kaplan and Kenya's  
10 Treasury Cabinet Secretary provides a roadmap of  
11 framework for driving U.S. private sector  
12 participation and investment in all of the Big  
13 Four priority areas.

14           And specifically, the MOU lays out a  
15 new overarching level of collaboration between  
16 the two countries to ensure transparent and  
17 timely procurement in accordance with applicable  
18 laws, support for commercial advocacy for U.S.  
19 businesses, technical assistance for U.S.  
20 businesses pursuing priority projects, and  
21 consideration by the U.S. government for  
22 prioritizing the financing requests for these

1 projects. Thank you.

2 CHAIR IRELAND: Thanks, Kimberly.

3 SECRETARY ROSS: Thank you, Kimberly  
4 for that presentation. I recall that in  
5 selecting the countries for the fact-finding  
6 trip, Kenya was ranked highest by the PAC-DBIA as  
7 a potential destination. And there was a good  
8 reason for that ranking. In my view, the  
9 Kenyatta administration's commitment to our  
10 bilateral commercial relationship could not have  
11 been more clearly demonstrated during the trip.

12 As Kimberly noted, President Kenyatta  
13 himself met with Under Secretary Kaplan and other  
14 members of the delegation twice in two days. The  
15 director from President Kenyatta to his cabinet  
16 allowed us to finish and sign the MOUs before the  
17 delegation left the country. President Kenyatta  
18 presided over the signing of \$100 million in  
19 commercial deals and engagements. And just last  
20 month when President Kenyatta came to Washington  
21 to meet with President Trump, he took time to  
22 meet with myself, other members of the

1 administration, and with a large group of U.S.  
2 business executives.

3 The Kenyatta administration is seeking  
4 a greater American business presence in Kenya.  
5 The PAC-DBIA trip may well be a turning point in  
6 American business activities with Kenya. The MOU  
7 with Kenya provides us with a mechanism to work  
8 with the Kenya government on improving their  
9 business and contracting practices. It allows us  
10 to address barriers to American trade and  
11 investment. It will also provide opportunities  
12 for American companies to work the U.S.  
13 government on winning public procurement award.

14 Given the initial success with Kenya,  
15 we're pursuing similar MOUs with other countries.  
16 The Commerce Department hopes to work with Kenya  
17 to promote business opportunities for American  
18 companies that will come from the opening of  
19 direct flights from Nairobi to New York at the  
20 end of October.

21 Finally, in the fall of 2019, Commerce  
22 Department will host a major trade promotion



1 event called Discover Global Markets. The focus  
2 will be on new business opportunities in Africa  
3 and the Middle East. Kenya will be highlighted  
4 as being a great market opportunity at that  
5 event. Thank you.

6 CHAIR IRELAND: Thank you, secretary.  
7 Barbara, do you have comments?

8 MS. KEATING: Thanks, secretary and to  
9 all the leadership of the PAC-DBIA. I really  
10 appreciated it on this trip. I found that the  
11 leadership really helped us in many ways.

12 I have two main comments. One is that  
13 I have been working on Africa for over 30 years.  
14 And the last 20 have been in some advisory role  
15 to our government on doing work in Africa. And I  
16 would like to say that in terms of the reception  
17 of the groups, we used to sit in back rooms in  
18 the Commerce Department. And I find that the  
19 elevation of Africa to the level of the White  
20 House is very insightful and where it needs to  
21 be. And so I thank the current administration  
22 for this.

1           The second point is that when we go to  
2 Africa, we meet other companies, countries as  
3 teams. They come in as teams. They have their  
4 government, the private sector, and their civil  
5 society together -- working together. In the  
6 past, the private sector has gone in alone. And  
7 so I really find from this trip that there was a  
8 concerted effort for us to work together as a  
9 team. And I think that's very important. And I  
10 really felt that on this trip. And it has opened  
11 other things for us as well and to engaging with  
12 the government. Thank you.

13           CHAIR IRELAND: Thanks, Barbara. I  
14 think those are great points. We're now going to  
15 turn to Cote d'Ivoire. Even though we spent a  
16 day or two there and have recommendations and  
17 then the government changed the next day, I think  
18 there will still be apropos. So we'll turn to  
19 Andrew.

20           MR. TORRE: Thanks, Jay and Mr.  
21 Secretary. I'm happy to share our highlights and  
22 reflections on behalf of the council on our fact-

1 finding trip to Cote d'Ivoire under Secretary  
2 Kaplan who had a delegation of representatives  
3 from nine U.S. government agencies and 27  
4 business leaders from 16 U.S. companies. We were  
5 greeted warmly by President Ouattara, his  
6 administration, the U.S. embassy, and local and  
7 Ivorian business community.

8 We had a full agenda during the two  
9 days in Abidjan. And one of the things that  
10 certainly bears out of that is that there's a  
11 strong mutual desire to strengthen U.S. Cote  
12 d'Ivoire bilateral ties. During the visit, Under  
13 Secretary Kaplan and Sharjah Safari Booker  
14 presided over a public signing ceremony for three  
15 deals.

16 The first was the U.S. Trade and  
17 Development Agency signed a grant agreement with  
18 a Ivorian company, the U.S. African Development  
19 Foundation and Bechtel formalized the  
20 partnership. And on behalf of Visa, I signed a  
21 memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of  
22 Finance for a government wide partnership to

1 bring millions of Ivorians into the formal  
2 financial system.

3 The PAC-DVIA also met with officials  
4 from the African Development Bank and we learned  
5 more about their priorities including High Five  
6 Priority Areas. The U.S. Trade and Development  
7 Agency and the AFDB signed an MOU that will  
8 strengthen collaboration on procurement,  
9 specifically in the areas of transparency,  
10 efficiency, and training.

11 As a council, we summarized our  
12 findings in three key take-aways. The first was  
13 around regional leadership. It's certainly not a  
14 coincidence that Cote D'Ivoire was selected as  
15 the first francophone country that the council  
16 visited. It's a natural entry point for U.S.  
17 companies trying to gain a foothold in an  
18 increasingly important region. And we believe  
19 more should be done to formalize the U.S. Cote  
20 d'Ivoire partnership.

21 The second is around infrastructure.  
22 The Ivorian government highlighted public-private

1 partnerships as the preferred model for  
2 infrastructure development. The U.S. government,  
3 AFDB, and the U.S. private sector should partner  
4 with the Ivorian government to identify other  
5 viable frameworks to secure investment,  
6 financing, and implementation opportunities.

7 And finally, the third is around  
8 global value change. Cote d'Ivoire continues to  
9 be very focused on the production of raw  
10 agricultural goods such as cashews and cocoa.  
11 And there's a real opportunity for U.S. companies  
12 to partner with Cote d'Ivoire to both expand  
13 industrial and technological production in  
14 agriculture. And also pursue other means to  
15 diversify their economy including through  
16 technology. Thank you.

17 CHAIR IRELAND: Thanks, Andrew. Under  
18 Secretary Kaplan?

19 MR. KAPLAN: Thank you, Andrew for  
20 that great readout. I want to take a moment to  
21 echo Secretary Ross' statements regarding the  
22 effectiveness of the Memorandum of Understanding

1 the council recommended. And to provide the  
2 council with an update on Cote d'Ivoire following  
3 the trip.

4 While we were working with our  
5 interagency colleagues represented here at  
6 today's meeting, to determine and prioritize  
7 followup for all of the fact-finding trip  
8 countries, an immediate followup for Cote  
9 d'Ivoire has been the start of negotiations of an  
10 MOU between the government of the United States  
11 and the government of the Cote d'Ivoire.

12 After the President, Prime Minister,  
13 and Vice President of Cote d'Ivoire heard of the  
14 MOUs we signed in Ethiopia and Kenya and intended  
15 to sign in Ghana, they approached us about  
16 signing an MOU with Cote d'Ivoire. This desire  
17 on the part of the government of Cote d'Ivoire  
18 for the MOU falls in line with its overarching  
19 message during the trip, Cote d'Ivoire is open  
20 for business.

21 Like the other three MOUs we signed  
22 with Ethiopia, Kenya, and Ghana, the MOU we are

1 finishing with Cote d'Ivoire will be constructed  
2 around a simple exchange. The host government  
3 intends to make available to the U.S. government,  
4 information such as a list of priority projects  
5 in the sectors targeted in the MOU. And the U.S.  
6 government then intends to promote awareness of  
7 these projects with U.S. companies that might be  
8 interested in participating.

9 Adding to this, the U.S. government  
10 intends to form deal teams to provide information  
11 to qualified companies regarding availability of  
12 potential financing, grants, advocacy, and other  
13 forms of U.S. government resources to help make  
14 U.S. company bids for projects more attractive.  
15 In return, the U.S. government is asking the host  
16 government to focus on improvements in the  
17 business conditions or "enabling environment" so  
18 that U.S. companies are not dissuaded from  
19 participating in these development projects by  
20 host government imposed barriers or policies.  
21 The MOU is expected to focus on agriculture,  
22 transportation, and energy.

1                   To finish the MOU, we are in the  
2 process of seeking advice from our industry trade  
3 advisory committees and interagency partners and  
4 are in ongoing discussions with the government of  
5 the Cote d'Ivoire. We also plan to reach out to  
6 the PAC-DBIA and the Trade Associations for  
7 input. We look forward to finishing this  
8 shortly. Thank you.

9                   CHAIR IRELAND: Thanks, Gil. Brock?

10                  MR. BIERMAN: Yes. Thank you, Mr.  
11 Chairman, Mr. Secretary. My team and I want to  
12 congratulate you on a successful trip across the  
13 continent including visits to MCC partner  
14 countries; Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. Your  
15 recommendations to strengthening the ties and  
16 commercial ties to the continent are thoughtful,  
17 well-written, and focused. And we are very  
18 pleased in the keen interest of the PAC members  
19 in our compact during the round table we held.  
20 And we hope that U.S. businesses do indeed  
21 leverage our investments with their own.

22                  As we previewed during the stop in



1 Cote d'Ivoire, I am pleased to announce that we  
2 have signed a partnership agreement with Bechtel  
3 to develop a national infrastructure master plan  
4 with MCC eligible countries in Africa. And  
5 Andrew and I actually signed that MOU this  
6 morning just across the hall. This innovative  
7 public-private partnership will leverage MCCs  
8 deep sector infrastructure experience on the  
9 continent with Bechtel's global experience and  
10 expertise, integrated master plan, development,  
11 and implementation. We are looking forward to  
12 working with Bechtel to develop this product and  
13 assess how infrastructure master planning can  
14 catalyze a private sector investment in MCC  
15 partner countries. Thank you.

16 CHAIR IRELAND: Thanks Brock. That's  
17 great news to hear. Andrew, you want to make a  
18 comment? Are you going to speak French now?

19 MR. PATTERSON: Unfortunately my  
20 French is not that good. I wanted to follow up on  
21 some of the comments that came back to us and  
22 feedback from this trip to demonstrate how

1 significant these trips can have. We got a --

2 The government of Cote d'Ivoire that  
3 we had been talking to over the last couple of  
4 years, reached out to us and said we really want  
5 to restart our conversations around a major  
6 infrastructure project that's worth over \$2  
7 billion there that's connected to two economic  
8 ports. So I went back into country the week  
9 after that trip. And the reception has  
10 significantly changed from what we had previously  
11 had from them.

12 Before it was, yes we want American  
13 companies. Oh yes, let's talk again. This was  
14 significant engagement to the point where the  
15 Prime Minister who had just gotten back from  
16 China that morning, understood that I was in town  
17 and made room in his schedule. And pulled  
18 together his key people to talk about this  
19 project to demonstrate. And they were very clear  
20 that they want to be able to show clear  
21 engagement with U.S. companies, especially  
22 following that trip. They also mentioned that

1 the MOU was something that they were very focused  
2 on and excited to talk about. And hoped to sign  
3 that soon. And that we would encourage that to  
4 be concluded and we think that would be great to  
5 support U.S. companies there.

6 As Jay mentioned, it's not just the  
7 east that are in Africa. There's strong  
8 competitions from of course, the French there,  
9 but the Turkish and other parts of Europe. And  
10 these type of MOUs and these types of engagements  
11 make a significant difference. A fact that will  
12 continue to look to expand our presence in Africa  
13 in looking in setting up a subregional office.  
14 And potentially we'd set this up in Cote  
15 d'Ivoire.

16 CHAIR IRELAND: Thanks, Andrew. For  
17 Ghana, Bob Watta please.

18 MR. WATTA: Thank you, Jay. IBM's  
19 Takreem El-Tohamy, who unfortunately at the last  
20 minute could not join us, prepared the following  
21 summary:

22 The PAC-DBIA delegation led by

1 Secretary Ross met Ghana government leaders,  
2 participated in a U.S./Ghana business forum and  
3 signed MOUs. Secretary Ross signed a G2G MOU  
4 outlining priority projects for U.S. companies  
5 wishing to do business in Ghana. And providing a  
6 forum for addressing any trade barriers that  
7 would limit U.S. companies abilities for taking  
8 advantage of these opportunities.

9 USTDA executed a grant agreement to  
10 conduct a feasibility study to bring American  
11 private sector expertise from the renewable  
12 energy sector to Ghana. IBM was pleased to  
13 execute an MOU with the Ministry of Lands to help  
14 the government explore and develop relevant  
15 Blockchain capabilities and use cases for land  
16 registration.

17 From our time in Ghana, we felt that  
18 U.S. investment was welcome and saw great  
19 opportunities for U.S. companies. However, some  
20 challenges remain. Looking at trade  
21 facilitation, as Ghana continues to implement  
22 USAID in custom and border protection

1 recommendations to improve U.S. processes, U.S.  
2 companies still seek swifter action to modernize  
3 transactions.

4 In energy and mining, Ghana is making  
5 significant progress which makes it a great  
6 interest to U.S. companies. Council members  
7 understand that mining industries are capital  
8 intense and require long-term commitments.

9 However, we hope that when it comes to policy,  
10 Ghana looks to the U.S. as a model to enable  
11 global competition.

12 Looking at procurement, we heard  
13 commitments to reform practices and bolster anti-  
14 corruption efforts. The government is appointing  
15 an independent special prosecutor. And is also  
16 looking to develop an electronic procurement  
17 registry and a web platform for inquiries. These  
18 tools can be helpful for U.S. companies looking  
19 to enter and compete in Ghana.

20 I'll close with technology more  
21 broadly. It was exciting to hear Ghana's Vice  
22 President speak highly of his trip to Silicon

1 Valley. He said that technology developed by  
2 U.S. companies like Blockchain can help to drive  
3 economic transformations. This creates  
4 opportunities for IBM and U.S. companies broadly.  
5 Thank you.

6 CHAIR IRELAND: Thanks, Bob. Bob  
7 Perez from Customs and Border?

8 MR. PEREZ: Thank you, Jay. Thank  
9 you, Mr. Secretary. Good morning, folks. It's  
10 my pleasure to be here and represent Secretary  
11 Nielsen and Customs and Border Protection. And  
12 speak to our interests, our ongoing support and  
13 gratitude that the folks that went on the trip  
14 were able to meet with our team in Ghana. So  
15 that we could showcase a little bit of what we've  
16 been doing by way of CBPs investment. Not just  
17 there, but really throughout the region for some  
18 time.

19 I think most of you know and  
20 appreciate the national security mission of  
21 Customs and Border protection is one of a  
22 complicated fine balance of both border security,

1 but also economic security. Enabling and  
2 facilitating trade in a way that could further  
3 strengthen international trade. Not just here of  
4 course, but when we're engaging with our  
5 international partners to help them find a path  
6 to not only border management and better border  
7 management, but the skill sets and the  
8 institutionalization of modern trade practices.  
9 Both by way of not only technological  
10 modernization but processes, policies, laws, and  
11 the like. And so again, we were just grateful to  
12 have the opportunity to showcase that to the  
13 group when they were there.

14 Our ongoing commitment is unwavering.  
15 You know, as you alluded to in your opening  
16 comments Jay, I think it's unquestionable.  
17 Certainly I think this group understands, but I  
18 want to share with you on behalf of CBP and DHS  
19 that the strategic importance of ongoing  
20 investment, again not just in Ghana, but  
21 throughout the sub-Saharan region is something we  
22 truly appreciate. And we're going to continue to

1 look for those opportunities to make a  
2 difference, alongside our interagency partners  
3 who work with us hand in hand to again, help  
4 folks along in these regions to really build a  
5 21st Century international trade construct.

6 So again, my pleasure to be with you  
7 all today. And to continue to invest our efforts  
8 in all the good work that the PAC-DBIA has done.  
9 So thank you, Jay.

10 CHAIR IRELAND: Thank you very much.  
11 We had a hard time figuring out who from our  
12 group would talk about customs. But we finally  
13 figured out that Laura would probably be the  
14 best.

15 VICE CHAIR LANE: So I have to say  
16 just picking up from what Mr. Perez said, it's  
17 really rare when a highly technical policy issue  
18 like customs modernization gets the priority  
19 attention that it really does deserve. And I  
20 really need to commend the Secretary of Commerce  
21 and Under Secretary Kaplan for making this a  
22 priority issue. Because that's how U.S.



1 companies are going to be able to export more and  
2 get into markets across Africa.

3 And Ghana was a great example of how  
4 a country had recognized the central importance  
5 of customs modernization to not only  
6 strengthening its development opportunities, but  
7 also positioning itself as a gateway to more  
8 regional integration. And so in all the meetings  
9 that we had with the government of Ghana, they  
10 repeatedly touted how important customs  
11 modernization was for its own market's emergence  
12 as a gateway to West Africa and ECOWAS, the  
13 Economic Community of West African States.

14 And so we had the opportunity to meet  
15 with the Deputy Commissioner of Ghanaian customs  
16 to really understand how they were moving to  
17 implement the WTO trade facilitation agreement.  
18 And that agreement -- that's a readymade  
19 blueprint for customs modernization. But was  
20 exciting is after that meeting, we had follow-on  
21 discussions with the Minister of Trade. And I  
22 think every customs official in Ghana saying what

1 more can we do to partner with the U.S.  
2 government because we want to be the best in West  
3 Africa on being an example to other countries of  
4 why customs modernization is so important.

5 And so in our April recommendation, we  
6 had said it was really important for companies to  
7 get that birds eye view about what was happening  
8 with respect to customs modernization in the  
9 continent. And then getting a better  
10 understanding of where greater partnership could  
11 occur. And we accomplished that on this trip.

12 And I'm really excited about the fact  
13 that since this trip, because of the attention  
14 that this administration has given this issue,  
15 we've had significant follow-on discussions not  
16 just with the government of Ghana, but all the  
17 other countries that we visited saying let's  
18 partner more together. And what's powerful is  
19 it's a public-private partnership. So we're  
20 working with CBP and other companies that are  
21 involved in logistic space to make sure these  
22 processes are powerful ones to drive U.S.

1 exports. And address some of the things that  
2 keep us out of these markets, which is the  
3 corruption challenges at the borders.

4 And so this was a powerful way to end  
5 the trip and recognize the central importance of  
6 customs modernization across the continent. And  
7 so I really have appreciated the partnership with  
8 CBP in particular, because that makes all the  
9 difference in the world. Thank you.

10 CHAIR IRELAND: Thank you, Laura.  
11 Next time, could you have a little more  
12 enthusiasm when you speak? Yes, yes. Mr.  
13 Secretary, my comments earlier on the President  
14 of Ghana, I neglected to mention that they had  
15 just received a \$2.5 billion line from China  
16 EXIM, which obviously they're going to look to  
17 enable a lot of infrastructure projects.

18 That wraps up our country trip portion  
19 of the meeting. Is there any other comments that  
20 anyone wants to make before we move to the  
21 recommendations of the PAC-DBIA? Okay, all  
22 right. Laura, I turn it over to you.

1                   VICE CHAIR LANE: So in terms of some  
2 of the specific recommendations, we wanted to  
3 start out with financing because in every single  
4 market, that was clear as one of the fundamental  
5 issues that we needed to strengthen the tools  
6 that companies had to use across the U.S.  
7 government spectrum. And so we were really  
8 honored. And I think it was so helpful to have  
9 Peter Sullivan from Citi with us because the  
10 perspectives that Citi and Mr. Sullivan were able  
11 to bring were so helpful in a lot of the  
12 discussions with the government. So I thought  
13 we'd start with you, Peter.

14                   MR. SULLIVAN: Great. Thank you,  
15 Laura. I'd also like to express my appreciation  
16 to Secretary Ross and Under Secretary Kaplan for  
17 all your leadership and support of the PAC-DBIA  
18 and its work.

19                   Africa has become a highly competitive  
20 region really due to its massive potential and  
21 growth. Now is the time to develop and execute a  
22 focused U.S. strategy that leverages our

1 advantage in the resources to not only be  
2 competitive in the region, but to really be a  
3 leading force on the continent.

4 PAC-DBIA's fact-finding mission, you  
5 know, helped crystalize our collective thinking  
6 on this strategy. As Laura said, financing risk  
7 mitigation was the top of the agenda for many of  
8 the meetings. And our recommendations are based  
9 on the outcomes of those meetings, as well as the  
10 years of experience in many of the principles  
11 that impact DBIA who operate and compete in  
12 Africa.

13 We have proposed several  
14 recommendations pertaining to finance that cut  
15 across three main themes. The first theme is  
16 really deployment of financial resources of the  
17 U.S. government in support of U.S. trade and  
18 investment close. The provision of financing and  
19 risk mitigation is critical in effectively  
20 competing and leveling the playing field in  
21 Africa. Our recommendations with regards to a  
22 fully functioning EXIM Bank, the passage of the

1 BUILD Act, and the provision of USD liquidity  
2 addresses this need. Shortly, my colleagues from  
3 Insta-Pro and Bechtel will expand on the  
4 essential nature and application of these  
5 resources.

6 The second theme highlights the  
7 opportunities to leverage the resource of the  
8 U.S. government through the close collaboration  
9 with the private sector. Collaborative deal  
10 structuring as evidenced by OPICs work in the  
11 region brings to the floor our nation's  
12 technical, financial, and operational strengths.  
13 This partnership should also be extended to the  
14 work with MCC in leveraging its compact to  
15 realize associated trade and investment  
16 opportunities. And I'm very happy to hear about  
17 the MOU with Bechtel. So it's a perfect example.

18 Following onto the third and final  
19 theme is really about creating a better enabling,  
20 transparent, and competitive environment for U.S.  
21 businesses in Africa. The collab approach needs  
22 to be extended to developing the technical and

1 financial capabilities and capacities within  
2 Africa. The U.S. private sector can work with  
3 U.S. Treasury, USTDA, and the likes of African  
4 Development Bank to develop more liquid local  
5 markets, better regulatory regimes, and more  
6 transactions.

7 We look forward to further discussion  
8 engagement on these proposed recommendations, but  
9 first let me call my colleagues from Insta-Pro  
10 and Bechtel to comment on the recommendation,  
11 particularly pertaining to employment of  
12 financial resources. Thank you.

13 VICE CHAIR LANE: So Andrew, let's  
14 turn it over to you first.

15 MR. PATTERSON: Thank you. Clearly  
16 the financing is critical to any of these  
17 projects going forward on the impacts of what  
18 U.S. companies can do. And being able to come up  
19 with innovative and creative financing solutions  
20 is going to be key to the success of U.S.  
21 companies operating in Africa, especially  
22 competing against our competition from the likes

1 of China and Turkey that are also being very  
2 aggressive in their approaches to that. Having  
3 the right tools in our toolbox is also key so re-  
4 highlighting the benefits of having U.S. EXIM  
5 fully engaged will help U.S. companies compete  
6 and be able to build our footprint in Africa.  
7 And deliver on our value proposition that is well  
8 recognized by these countries.

9 On recommendation number two around  
10 tapping into around some of the concessional and  
11 commercial financing, I've been able to bring the  
12 whole package of when we look at a project for  
13 road infrastructure, an oil pipeline, or a port,  
14 to be able to tie in MCC or USDAs, USAID program  
15 for training into that would bring a more  
16 compelling offer to that. And I think looking at  
17 how to be able to put together those deal teams  
18 that's going to be able to tie in those agencies  
19 to bring a better value proposition is going to  
20 be a key step that can help U.S. companies.

21 We're looking forward very much to  
22 working with MCC in Africa. And I think that



1 will be a great step of creating a foundation for  
2 future work in these countries. And potentially  
3 working with USAID -- sorry, to MCC.

4 And finally, on the BUILD Act, we  
5 support that and we think that it's a great  
6 program or a great step to broaden OPICs ability  
7 to bring different types of financing including  
8 equity. And to be involved in different parts of  
9 the project.

10 VICE CHAIR LANE: Kevin?

11 MR. KACERE: Thank you, Laura and  
12 Secretary Ross. To put in context my comments, I  
13 feel like our company, Insta-Pro International,  
14 represents smaller, privately held U.S.  
15 manufacturers. And I appreciate you having us on  
16 the council. And also what's unique is that we  
17 target the private sector; small to medium  
18 enterprises quite often in the private sector of  
19 Africa is growing.

20 And our pipeline in Africa is very  
21 significant. Opportunities are there. The  
22 greatest challenge for us is access to capital

1 for our customers, to put those purchases in  
2 place. By and large, by far, our biggest hurdle.  
3 And whether it's Ethiopia and looking for FOREX  
4 and waiting in line potentially for years, to  
5 being in Kenya and being faced with 150 percent  
6 collateral requirements to purchase our  
7 equipment, deals stop.

8 And so, we are very much a proponent  
9 of promoting EXIM as a solution for us. We  
10 compete against the Chinese every day, Secretary.  
11 And we win on equipment quality, know how,  
12 support. But when financing comes as part of the  
13 package, it's tough to compete with. And so we  
14 would encourage, not only supporting EXIM and  
15 reauthorizing it, but in encouraging it to grow.  
16 Encouraging creative financial solutions.  
17 Encourage more aggressiveness in the approach.

18 And with these signed MOUs, it's a  
19 great opportunity to jump in and work through  
20 creative risk mitigation processes that make our  
21 side comfortable, as well as bringing in these  
22 foreign governments that we now have this

1 momentum. So let's get after that.

2 And secondly, I want to talk about  
3 OPIC as well. I'm pleased to see the BUILD Act  
4 is progressing. And we've had plenty of  
5 conversations with OPIC. But with our customer  
6 set, the requirement of requiring 25 percent U.S.  
7 ownership stops projects in its track with OPIC.  
8 And creating the flexibility to fund different  
9 projects that don't require U.S. ownership of  
10 those customers that we have in Africa, will  
11 create opportunities for us in turning those  
12 opportunities into orders. Thank you very much.

13 VICE CHAIR LANE: So on this trip, it  
14 was so valuable to have the broad contingent of  
15 U.S. government agency representatives with us to  
16 be able to see firsthand, some of the challenges  
17 that we were facing on the financing side. And  
18 so I wanted to engage a few of the folks around  
19 the table, beginning with Mr. Brock Bierman from  
20 the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

21 MR. BIERMAN: I appreciate your  
22 recommendations to advance blended finance

1 solutions by combining MCC grants and private  
2 finance to increase the scale of targeted  
3 development projects. My team is currently  
4 developing models by which MCC can work more  
5 closely with OPIC to blend compact funding with  
6 private funding. As you recommend, MCCs recently  
7 granted regional authority is in fact a good  
8 opportunity to apply creative blending financing  
9 solutions.

10 MCCs collaboration with AFDB in  
11 financing off-grid energy solutions in Benin,  
12 which we announced during the PAC-DBIA trip, is  
13 just that. Bringing MCC grant financing  
14 alongside both debt and equity financing. Thank  
15 you.

16 VICE CHAIR LANE: Thanks. Let's turn  
17 to Eric Meyer from the Treasury Department.

18 MR. MEYER: Great. Thank you, Laura.  
19 We agree that access to financing in foreign  
20 exchange are critical for starting and growing a  
21 business in Africa. Successfully breaking down  
22 those obstacles ultimately depends on a

1 foundation of strong fundamentals. For example,  
2 the best, most sustainable solutions to access  
3 foreign exchange will emerge by focusing on the  
4 fundamentals of market-based mechanisms for  
5 purchasing foreign exchange. One-off approaches  
6 will generally not lay the foundation necessary  
7 for broadening and deepening the trade and  
8 investment relationship.

9 More broadly and as Peter noted, most  
10 African countries need to enhance capacity and  
11 develop deeper and well-regulated financial  
12 markets. Achieving these objectives requires  
13 long-term sustained reform commitment by African  
14 governments. Treasury is supporting these  
15 efforts through our ongoing policy engagement and  
16 our technical assistance activities in a number  
17 of African economies.

18 Africa currently represents a large  
19 share of our technical assistance work. And we  
20 anticipate continuing to work with African and  
21 other partners to improve and strengthen public  
22 financial management, to enhance and develop debt

1 markets, to build out more prudent financial  
2 regulations, to improve and make more efficient  
3 revenue generation, and to strengthen local  
4 financial systems against the abuse for money  
5 laundering and terrorist financing. And we're  
6 committed to continuing these efforts across the  
7 region. Thank you.

8 VICE CHAIR LANE: I want to turn it  
9 over to Mr. Worku Gachou from OPIC to provide  
10 some additional thoughts. You had a fantastic  
11 team on the trip with us --

12 MR. GACHOU: Great.

13 VICE CHAIR LANE: -- and it was  
14 valuable to have them with us.

15 MR. GACHOU: Thanks so much, Laura and  
16 Jay. I want to first start off by thanking the  
17 PAC members for their time and effort that they  
18 put into the council. I also want to recognize  
19 Secretary Ross and Under Secretary Kaplan and the  
20 great staff with the Department of Commerce for  
21 the support that they've provided the council.

22 OPIC notes and welcomes the council's

1 recommendation to push for the BUILD Act. And  
2 wanted to thank Citi, Bechtel, and Insta-Pro for  
3 their leadership in this particular section.  
4 This legislation recognizes America's ability to  
5 be a strong, innovative leader in using financial  
6 tools that foster economic growth and stability  
7 in frontier emerging markets.

8           The BUILD Act with its new  
9 flexibility, new modernized tools, and higher  
10 maximum contingent liability allows more  
11 financing offers to form American firms. By  
12 creating this new institution, we will help  
13 address the world's massive development needs and  
14 drive economic growth while advancing important  
15 U.S. foreign policy issues and our  
16 competitiveness. At a time when investments in  
17 these emerging markets are inundated by state-  
18 directed efforts with China, our U.S. model  
19 offers alternatives for advancing development in  
20 a manner that's financially sound and adheres to  
21 high standards and that avoids debt traps.

22           We appreciate the council's

1 recommendation. I'm excited to share the news  
2 that this afternoon, the House representatives is  
3 scheduled to vote on the BUILD Act included in a  
4 larger comprehensive piece of legislation. And  
5 should it pass this House this afternoon, we  
6 expect quick Senate consideration. So you guys  
7 are already influencing policy here, so thank  
8 you.

9 VICE CHAIR LANE: So on this trip, the  
10 importance of EXIM Bank came in strong and clear.  
11 There may have been a lot of political debate in  
12 Washington, D.C., about what role the bank should  
13 play. On this trip, we know we need a very  
14 strong institution in EXIM. And I want to turn  
15 it over to Ambassador Gerrish for some additional  
16 comments.

17 AMBASSADOR GERRISH: Thank you, Laura.  
18 And thanks to the council for its fine work and  
19 leadership in strengthening the U.S. commercial  
20 ties with Africa. EXIM appreciates the council's  
21 recognition of the importance of financing and  
22 doing business in Africa, and the importance of a



1 fully functioning EXIM bank. There is perhaps no  
2 other region in the world where government  
3 supported financing is as critical, and EXIM has  
4 a productive history there.

5           Before discussing Africa, I would like  
6 to address a larger point in the reports  
7 financing recommendation calling for EXIM to  
8 return to full functionality. EXIM Bank is  
9 America's official export credit agency. We  
10 continue to provide short and medium-term  
11 financing in support of U.S. exporters and their  
12 workers. However, the bank has not had a quorum  
13 of its Board of Directors since July 2015, for  
14 over three years.

15           Without a quorum, EXIM cannot  
16 authorize financing above \$10 million, which  
17 prevents the bank from providing long-term  
18 financing for U.S. exports. These projects are  
19 worth billions of dollars in sales and support  
20 hundreds of thousands of jobs throughout the  
21 United States. This hurts the competitiveness of  
22 U.S. exporters, as well as the thousands of small

1 and medium sized businesses in their supply  
2 chains.

3                   Meanwhile, foreign export credit  
4 agencies have taken advantage of EXIM's situation  
5 by enticing companies to shift production to  
6 their countries in exchange for government bank  
7 financing with little or no restrictions. The  
8 result has been the loss of opportunities and  
9 jobs in our country.

10                   EXIM is working with the  
11 administration and Congress to enable the bank to  
12 return to fully supporting our exporters  
13 including for projects in Africa. Africa remains  
14 an important region for business opportunities  
15 and job creation for American exporters. EXIM  
16 has a congressional mandate to support U.S.  
17 exports to Sub-Sahara and Africa. And throughout  
18 its history, EXIM has been active across the  
19 entire continent.

20                   Given that the level of U.S. exports  
21 to the continent has declined since 2014, we want  
22 to be as supportive and helpful as possible. In

1 fact U.S. exports to Africa have declined by 42  
2 percent from a high of \$38 billion in 2014 to \$22  
3 billion in 2017. By comparison, Chinese exports  
4 to the continent totaled \$94.7 billion in 2017.

5 This is where EXIM can undoubtedly  
6 help. Over the last 10 years, EXIM has provided  
7 approximately \$10 billion in financing to Africa  
8 in support of U.S. exports. Currently, we have  
9 more than \$11.2 billion in export transactions  
10 for Africa sitting in our pipeline just waiting  
11 for us to get a quorum of our Board of Directors.  
12 And we see strong opportunities in Ethiopia,  
13 Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Angola,  
14 Cameroon, Nigeria, and Ghana.

15 EXIM fully supports your efforts in  
16 advancing U.S. commercial interest across the  
17 continent. Thank you for inviting me to join you  
18 today to be part of this conversation. The  
19 people of EXIM look forward to continuing our  
20 collective work to showcase to Africa that the  
21 best products in the world are made by American  
22 hands.

1                   VICE CHAIR LANE: We want to open it  
2 for discussion now. Does anyone want to add to  
3 this portion of the report's recommendation  
4 portion?

5                   MS. ANDERSON: Maybe this is the right  
6 moment for USAID. I just wanted to say that we  
7 are committed to continuing our work that  
8 supports U.S. business opportunities in Africa,  
9 including in financing, as well as the other  
10 areas identified in the report. And in fact,  
11 we're making a pivot to do that more effectively  
12 and more deliberately including through the trade  
13 and investment hubs that we have on the continent  
14 through our Power Africa work. And also among  
15 other areas, our Feed the Future Agriculture  
16 work.

17                   So you know in general, our aim is to  
18 help our partner countries in Africa move to the  
19 self-reliance that will make them better partners  
20 for U.S. companies. So we appreciate the  
21 findings and the recommendations in the report.  
22 And we will continue to see how we can support

1       them through our programs, as well as through our  
2       presence in Africa. Thanks.

3               MR. KILLEEN: I just wanted to add to  
4       what Jeffrey had before. And that is, without  
5       EXIM Bank, my company, which is a medium sized  
6       company manufacturing bridges, we would not be  
7       doing the work that we're doing currently in  
8       Zambia. We've hired quite a few people doing  
9       projects or welding at our factory. And it's all  
10      because of the support that EXIM Bank has given  
11      us. So I just wanted to say that EXIM is a very  
12      important facet to closing transactions around  
13      the African continent.

14              VICE CHAIR LANE: Let me turn it over  
15      to you, Jay.

16              CHAIR IRELAND: Yes, thanks. I would  
17      like to comment on this. I think a few things.  
18      Number one, the week after our trip concluded,  
19      Ray Washburne who's the CEO of OPIC followed on  
20      with a trip to Zambia, Kenya, and South Africa.  
21      I met with him in South Africa that week. And  
22      you know, as he says we're open for business.

1 And he was looking for a lot of potential  
2 financing, both small companies, as well as funds  
3 and obviously large deals as well. They've been  
4 a big supporter of a number of our projects. So  
5 that was very good.

6 And I think the other big thing that  
7 is part of the recommendation is utilizing the  
8 DFIs that the U.S. government supports, the  
9 African Development Bank, the World Bank, and  
10 making sure that we, the private sector,  
11 understand what's available there and what we can  
12 do to work with them to finance a lot of our  
13 projects as well. And I think with the people  
14 that are in those -- the U.S. government  
15 representatives in those institutions can really  
16 help drive that as we had a good meeting in  
17 Abidjan around that. So I think that's another  
18 key thing.

19 And then I'll hop onto the EXIM of  
20 course as well. I think it's absolutely critical  
21 and to give you an example, right in 2015 when  
22 they lost their ability to fund bigger deals

1 because of the quorum, we had a billion dollar  
2 deal in locomotives in Angola that was going to  
3 be financed by EXIM. And then of course we  
4 couldn't get it done because of the quorum issue.  
5 And we turned and the Export Development of  
6 Canada supported us. So we were still able to  
7 sell U.S. locomotives, 65 percent -- or 40  
8 percent content -- U.S., but thanks to the  
9 Canadians. So they do help us now and then, just  
10 in your other discussions.

11 So anyway, I think this is absolutely  
12 critical. Again, marshaling the Build Act and  
13 all we can do in financing because that will get  
14 us on a better playing field versus other  
15 governments. Thank you.

16 SECRETARY ROSS: Along the lines of  
17 finding at least temporary possible alternatives  
18 while we're waiting for EXIM, the CEO of the  
19 European Bank for Reconstruction came to visit me  
20 the other day. They are very eager to support  
21 American companies in Africa, particularly Sub-  
22 Saharan Africa. So I don't know if that's

1 already on your radar screen, but if it isn't, it  
2 should be. He's very eager to do business.

3 MR. MEYER: So I know that President  
4 Suma did meet with you, Secretary Ross. Just for  
5 the companies here, the European Bank for  
6 Reconstruction and Development is currently  
7 active in Northern Africa and parts of the Middle  
8 East. But they don't have authorization at the  
9 moment to operate in Sub-Saharan Africa, but  
10 definitely in places like Morocco and Tunisia and  
11 Egypt, they stand as a very good resource for  
12 helping American companies invest and secure  
13 financing.

14 VICE CHAIR LANE: Any other comments?  
15 I think we'll turn over to the next area of  
16 priority in our report, which focused on public  
17 procurement. And I have to say, being on this  
18 trip, it was pretty stunning to see all of the  
19 Chinese projects underway. And the recognition  
20 that all of us had that if American companies  
21 were involved in those projects, they'd turn out  
22 better in a more cost-effective way and last a



1 whole heck of a lot longer. And so public  
2 procurement opportunities across Sub-Saharan  
3 Africa became a real focus of attention for many  
4 of us on the council. And so I wanted to turn it  
5 over to Bill Killeen of Acrow Bridge to open up  
6 this aspect of the report's recommendations on  
7 public procurement.

8 MR. KILLEEN: Thank you, Laura, and  
9 thank you, Secretary Ross and Under Secretary  
10 Kaplan and also Jay. I'm supposed to talk about  
11 three out of the four, but because Mr. Tohamy is  
12 not here, I'll be doing all four of these.

13 So starting with recommendation one,  
14 it's make the private sector public procurement  
15 expertise available to the U.S. government. It  
16 was identified during the trip that deeper  
17 dialogue and information sharing between the U.S.  
18 and private sector and relevant U.S. agencies  
19 concerning Africa, public procurement would  
20 result in more productive project outcomes.

21 To support and encourage U.S. firms to  
22 pursue public procurement in Africa, we recommend

1 more consistent, thoughtful consultation with the  
2 private sector in the core elements of the  
3 competitive tender process, as well as the  
4 various stages of the project development cycle  
5 resulting from direct and unsolicited proposals.

6 The recommended consultation should  
7 include private sector guidance and training of  
8 Foreign Commercial Service and political econ  
9 officers in preparation for their postings within  
10 Africa. Some of the training can be conducted by  
11 corporate entities or trade and business  
12 associations. Training can also be present and  
13 opportunity -- or present an opportunity for  
14 cross-fertilization of ideas between public and  
15 private entities with genuine collaboration  
16 resulting in a greater percentage of successful  
17 opportunities.

18 The second recommendation is support  
19 direct or unsolicited proposals in addition to  
20 competitive tenders for American companies.  
21 African public procurement often involves large  
22 projects requiring structured financing and a

1 diverse array of stakeholders and project inputs.  
2 Size and complexity of these projects and the  
3 lengthy time horizons, which is typically three  
4 to six years, required for their development and  
5 implementation often rendered them inappropriate  
6 for standard tender procurement processes.

7 We recommend that the USG offer a  
8 particular focus in the public procurement  
9 guidance training and diplomacy for direct and  
10 unsolicited proposals, whereby U.S. firms are  
11 able to directly offer African governments  
12 proposals for projects that address key local  
13 government initiatives. And since Acrow first  
14 began to look at the opportunities on the African  
15 continent in '99, I could say about 90 percent of  
16 our projects that we've done over there now have  
17 been through direct unsolicited programs.

18 Number three, continue U.S. government  
19 programming and advocacy focus on transparency  
20 and rule of law in support of best value  
21 procurement. Lack of clarity and transparency in  
22 public procurement processes undermines the

1 ability of African governments to realize best  
2 value in project outcomes because such practices  
3 have the effect of limiting participation from  
4 the private sector.

5           The USTDA has implemented many  
6 programs through its global procurement  
7 initiative that promote transparency and  
8 predictability in the procurement procedures.  
9 These programs need to be extended beyond the  
10 USTDA's scope to include diplomatic advocacy  
11 exercised consistently at ambassadorial levels.  
12 If small and medium sized businesses sense lack  
13 of clarity, they'll choose not to participate and  
14 gravitate elsewhere. As a medium size business,  
15 Acrow, we often have to review what is -- where  
16 are our best opportunities? And if we see a lack  
17 of transparency, we usually do go elsewhere.

18           And then the final one, which is for  
19 Mr. Tohamy, this is recommendation four. We  
20 recommend that the Department of Commerce builds  
21 a user-friendly, modern platform of procurement  
22 opportunities and insights to help U.S. companies

1 to bid and win. PAC-DBIA heard multiple times on  
2 this trip that one of the main reasons U.S. firms  
3 are not winning projects in Africa is because  
4 they are not competing.

5 One way to encourage more interest is  
6 to better share information. A platform could be  
7 built in phases and move towards being fully  
8 automated. Commerce could partner with State,  
9 mainly its clearing house and other agencies, to  
10 better coordinate efforts across the government.  
11 They could collect and share public sector  
12 opportunities from multilateral development banks  
13 and others.

14 Adding pre-tender insights from the  
15 commercial officers and information from export  
16 gov and other financing resources could help  
17 businesses of all sizes to mitigate, perceive the  
18 natural risk. If automated, it would not require  
19 new work load for the embassy officers. Instead  
20 the platform would make their role more efficient  
21 and smart, bridging the gap between opportunities  
22 and U.S. business interests.

1                   And lastly, to better engage small  
2 businesses, USAID should collaborate with  
3 government agencies such as OPIC, SBA, Commerce,  
4 and USTDA to host a series of dialogues on  
5 investment and export opportunities. These could  
6 help create use cases to better serve the needs  
7 of small and medium businesses. With the steps  
8 above, we can imagine a user friendly platform,  
9 web and mobile accessible, conversational and  
10 self-service experience that provides immediate  
11 answers around opportunities and suggested next  
12 step actions. This will allow more U.S.  
13 companies to enter, compete with the  
14 opportunities on the African continent. And  
15 that's it, Laura.

16                   VICE CHAIR LANE: Thank you. Mr.  
17 Secretary, would you like to add some comments?

18                   SECRETARY ROSS: Thank you, Bill, for  
19 presenting these recommendations on behalf of the  
20 council. As to recommendation number one, the  
21 suggestion for training our Foreign Service  
22 officers on business development issues prior to

1 their being deployed in Africa, it seems like a  
2 worthy idea. I'll ask Under Secretary Kaplan to  
3 see how we can use it to improve our current  
4 Commercial Service training program.

5 You've also suggested that we use  
6 trade and business associations for training  
7 government officials working outside of Foreign  
8 Service. Our country desk officers at the  
9 Commerce Department could benefit from this type  
10 of perspective since they work closely with our  
11 Commercial Service officers in foreign countries  
12 on business development issues.

13 Recommendation number two regarding  
14 unsolicited proposals, we recognize the reality  
15 in Africa that shady competitors often circumvent  
16 public tenders as a way to win contracts. We  
17 need to address this in a thoughtful yet direct  
18 manner.

19 U.S. government promotes transparency  
20 and open competition in public procurement. We  
21 provide significant technical assistance to  
22 countries to foster best contracting practices,

1 but some projects are not subject to an open  
2 bidding process. Every country has its own  
3 procurement laws guiding the sole sourcing of  
4 awards. If a U.S. company or consortium is  
5 pursuing a project in accordance with the host  
6 country's laws, the Commerce Department is  
7 prepared to fully support their bid.

8 Contrary to common belief, our  
9 Advocacy Center is not restricted to public  
10 tenders. We can try to get private business as  
11 well. Public procurement does account for the  
12 majority of our advocacy cases, but we do provide  
13 services for unsolicited proposals that are  
14 approved through the same application process a  
15 company would undertake in a general tender  
16 situation. Furthermore, the MOUs we've  
17 negotiated are designed to support U.S. companies  
18 pursuing projects regardless of whether they are  
19 a public tender or an unsolicited proposal.

20 Recommendation number four, finally  
21 regarding the development of a new online tool  
22 for collecting and disseminating foreign



1 procurement opportunities, this is a good idea  
2 and should be applied more broadly even than just  
3 to Africa over time. I'm happy to designate a  
4 team from Commerce to work with our colleagues at  
5 State, USAID, and other agencies to work on  
6 putting the ideas into motion. Thank you for  
7 these thoughtful suggestions.

8 VICE CHAIR LANE: Can we turn it over  
9 to the Department of State to Ms. Sullivan?

10 MS. SULLIVAN: Thanks very much,  
11 Laura. I'm pleased to represent Secretary Pompeo  
12 here today, and I congratulate all the  
13 participants for this tremendous public-private  
14 initiative, which is music to our ears and also  
15 to the Assistant Secretary, newly-confirmed,  
16 Tibor Nagy. He and Secretary Pompeo are in New  
17 York at the U.N. General Assembly having  
18 discussions with heads of state and other members  
19 of foreign delegations from Africa in which the  
20 trade and investment features as our very first  
21 talking point in all of our memos.

22 The Department of State appreciates

1 all of the excellent recommendations and the  
2 plans to -- and we plan to refer to them as  
3 useful guide posts and suggestions to improve  
4 economic growth and opportunities for U.S.  
5 business on the continent. Our embassies,  
6 including Foreign Commercial Service and economic  
7 affairs officers, welcome the opportunity to  
8 better understand the practical dimensions of  
9 private sector engagement in Africa. We would  
10 appreciate having additional details on how  
11 proposed private sector training would be  
12 structured and targeted.

13 Finally, I'd like to add my personal  
14 thanks for your participation in the portion of  
15 the trip in Ghana, as I'll be going out to Ghana  
16 as the U.S. Ambassador in December and look  
17 forward to continued strong collaboration. Thank  
18 you.

19 VICE CHAIR LANE: Let me turn it over  
20 to Mr. Hardy.

21 MR. HARDY: Sure. Thank you, Laura.  
22 And I want to thank the business council for

1 continuing its support of the USTDA's Global  
2 Procurement Initiative.

3 As you all know, our competitors'  
4 solutions don't match the quality nor longevity  
5 of American-made solutions. And many times,  
6 these low cost procurement models have delivered  
7 such poor results that African governments end up  
8 needing to start over with their procurement  
9 process and falling further into the debt trap of  
10 concessional financing. And that's why the U.S.  
11 Trade and Development Agency launched its Global  
12 Procurement Initiative to help officials in  
13 emerging markets understand how to use best value  
14 procurement practices to obtain quality  
15 infrastructure and to level the playing field for  
16 American companies.

17 On our trip to Ethiopia, many of you  
18 will remember that Ethiopia Electric Power  
19 launched a procurement manual that is going to  
20 transform the way that EEP conducts its  
21 procurements based on best value, and that was  
22 accomplished through USTDA's Global Procurement

1 Initiative. And we look forward to seeing the  
2 results of that.

3 Further, in direct response to the  
4 PAC-DBIA's recommendations, we've also launched  
5 an initiative in Kenya focused on best value  
6 bringing over, in the near future, procurement  
7 officials from across Kenya to do a deeper dive  
8 into how they can transform their procurement  
9 models to better incorporate best value  
10 determinations into their procurement practices.  
11 We also concluded a new partnership with African  
12 Development Bank in a way that we can help them  
13 ensure that they're using best value  
14 determinations in their lending processes.

15 We continue to welcome the  
16 recommendations on priority markets and sectors  
17 and project opportunities across Africa from the  
18 PAC-DBIA and companies across the country. And  
19 we welcome your input and information sharing on  
20 both understanding the challenges facing the  
21 private sector across the continent, but also the  
22 opportunities that can be achieved through

1 helping countries make better informed investment  
2 decisions that are based on quality, not simply  
3 the lowest cost offer. And I would note in both  
4 competitive tenders, as well as direct and  
5 unsolicited proposals we're interested in. Thank  
6 you.

7 VICE CHAIR LANE: Before we open it up  
8 to broader discussion, I think all of us in the  
9 council would be remiss if we didn't say a  
10 special thanks to all of the embassies that  
11 welcomed us, to the Department of State and the  
12 Department of Commerce and the Foreign Commercial  
13 Service, the econ officers, and the entire  
14 mission team. We had some of the best meetings,  
15 the best briefings because of the long hours and  
16 hard work that those embassy teams put in.

17 And so I want to underscore something  
18 that Bill said. It's critically important that  
19 we have the assets on the ground in our embassies  
20 overseas to be able to advance American econ and  
21 business interests. And so it's not training,  
22 but also having enough officers on the ground.

1 Having been an econ officer myself at the  
2 beginning of my career, I know the important role  
3 that we can play.

4 And I wanted to let you know that we  
5 will be following up with a letter that will be  
6 signed by over 100 trade associations  
7 representing companies across the United States  
8 of America to Secretary Pompeo underscoring the  
9 critical importance of the role of the Foreign  
10 Commercial Service and the Foreign Service  
11 officers in the econ function for the tremendous  
12 role they play. They'll make a difference in  
13 Sub-Saharan Africa, and they make a difference  
14 around the world. We need more of them well-  
15 trained in the issues that are critically  
16 important to us.

17 I want to open it up though now for  
18 additional discussion. And let me turn it over  
19 to Dow to begin with, from Varian.

20 MR. WILSON: Thank you. I just wanted  
21 to weigh in a little bit on this recommendation  
22 number two about providing direct and -- support

1 for direct and unsolicited proposals, in addition  
2 to competitive tenders. It's already been said  
3 that we think very strongly that the model of the  
4 U.S. Kenya MOU is really an outstanding one as we  
5 think about implementation of this proposal.

6 That MOU permits U.S. government and Kenya --  
7 U.S. companies to present direct proposals to the  
8 Kenyan government. It's a distinct competitive  
9 advantage, and we'd love to see that added to  
10 other MOUs across the continent. It's a  
11 capability competitors in China and Europe, many  
12 of them, already have in many places, they have  
13 that ability. And this would be a great way to  
14 implement that recommendation. Thank you.

15 VICE CHAIR LANE: Let me turn it over  
16 to Barbara Keating.

17 MS. KEATING: Thanks. I would also  
18 like to weigh in a couple of the recommendations.  
19 One on the training recommendation, I find that  
20 that would be very useful to us as we are  
21 starting to use the Advocacy Center, and we look  
22 forward to that approach. And it's our first

1 time in doing so. So we look forward to working  
2 with them, but we also understand that there  
3 needs to be more training in terms of what they  
4 can actually offer us and what they can do in  
5 those things spread across the continent.

6 The other piece, I am actually very  
7 happy to hear that unsolicited proposals and  
8 public-private partnerships will also fall under  
9 the Advocacy Center. I think that we're finding  
10 it as a tool for our intellectual property that  
11 those kinds of avenues seem to be better avenues  
12 for us often. And we also need the support of  
13 our government on those applications. So thank  
14 you.

15 VICE CHAIR LANE: For a final comment,  
16 Sean Wilcock from APR Energy.

17 MR. WILCOCK: Yes, thank you. From  
18 our side at APR Energy, I think using the U.S.  
19 government and having their support is critical  
20 in all the business that we've done in Africa.  
21 We have a simple business model. We generate  
22 electricity, and we get paid, or we hope to get



1 paid. We've done a significant amount of  
2 projects in Africa successfully. We've done over  
3 30 -- we've put over 35 plants into Africa. We  
4 work very closely with Jay and his team at GE.  
5 And we've been reasonably successful.

6 The U.S. government programs and  
7 advocacy is of critical importance. And we  
8 ensure that we have engagement at every level on  
9 every project. As Andrew said, it's critical  
10 that we have the right tools in the toolbox in  
11 order for us to move forward. We lean on the  
12 Millennium Challenge Corporation. We use the  
13 USAID. And we use the U.S. Commerce muscle as  
14 much as we can, and it benefits us.

15 As a U.S. company, we're bound to  
16 follow ethical practices. We lead by example  
17 because it's the right thing to do. No doubt  
18 there are occasions where procurement practices  
19 do not follow the ethical routines. And on those  
20 cases, we usually end up losing business. This  
21 results in loss of U.S. jobs, and it also  
22 discourages U.S. investment and engagement.

1                   So my point is this, I cannot  
2                   emphasize enough the importance of U.S.  
3                   engagement to strengthen ethical procurement and  
4                   the practices that we have in Africa. And  
5                   reaching out to the U.S. Commerce is critical.  
6                   And I want to thank the Department of Commerce  
7                   for their support. And I appreciate the  
8                   recommendations that were put forward in this  
9                   report.

10                   VICE CHAIR LANE: Thank you. In the  
11                   interest of time, we're going to continue through  
12                   on to the next report recommendation. And it's  
13                   one obviously near and dear to my heart, which is  
14                   trade facilitation. I think on this trip,  
15                   everyone saw that each of these countries want  
16                   greater U.S. engagement in all of their  
17                   economies. And the fundamental fact of it is  
18                   that everything begins and ends at the borders,  
19                   and getting border processes right is critically  
20                   important.

21                   From that perspective, the council  
22                   made recommendations in the April report

1 suggesting that we expand the CBP border security  
2 management programs to other willing countries  
3 and even to the level of the regional economic  
4 communities. We think the next step should be  
5 taking that very important coordination effort in  
6 partnership with the private sector to support  
7 the implementation of reforms working with CBP,  
8 USTDA, and the Foreign Commercial Service, and  
9 USTR to include the importance of these issues in  
10 all trade-related discussions.

11 We also recommend that USTR in  
12 partnership with the private sector encourage, to  
13 the extent possible, the very high standards that  
14 we regularly set on customs issues as part of --  
15 as the African Union develops its African  
16 Continental Free Trade Area. It would be a  
17 missed opportunity if they lowered tariffs but  
18 goods got continually stopped at the borders  
19 because the processes weren't modern and  
20 efficient and corruption-proof.

21 Finally, the excitement from visiting  
22 Ethiopia and their recognition that they need to

1 be part of the WTO and saying they wanted to  
2 accelerate their process for a session was an  
3 important one. And we think it's a great  
4 opportunity for us to partner with the Ethiopian  
5 government to ensure that they have the technical  
6 assistance that they need to meet the very high  
7 standards that the WTO will set. And maybe even  
8 beyond, make them a pilot and an example like  
9 Ghana is in West Africa, make them an example for  
10 their part of the region.

11 And so a lot of exciting opportunities  
12 coming out of our trip. And some good  
13 recommendations in the report in terms of how we  
14 further facilitate trade. I'd love to have Mr.  
15 Hardy pick up from there and comment on this  
16 important issue.

17 MR. HARDY: Sure. Thank you, Laura.  
18 This is a critical issue obviously for U.S.  
19 companies, but it's also an area that the U.S.  
20 Trade and Development Agency can play, I think,  
21 an important role. While we were in Ghana, USTDA  
22 launched the West Africa Customs Modernization

1 Trade Facilitation Program focused on reverse  
2 trade missions. And we share your excitement  
3 with the Deputy Commissioner and what he and the  
4 customs authority in Ghana has done to really  
5 transform the customs processes.

6 And under this West Africa Program, we  
7 recognize that it's not just Ghana. And you had  
8 talked about it, it's inter-trade, but it's also  
9 intra-trade within Africa. And we're now going  
10 to be including Nigeria customs officials into  
11 this event, bringing a delegation over at the  
12 beginning of 2019, recognizing it's not a good  
13 idea to bring delegations to FedEx or UPS any  
14 time during the Christmas seasons.

15 So we thank you. We appreciate all  
16 the work that the U.S. company is doing. And  
17 also Customs and Border Protection, the work that  
18 you're doing in Ghana and that partnership. But  
19 it's just the beginning of USTDA's program. In  
20 all of the four countries, we saw firsthand the  
21 limitations that trade facilitation is placing on  
22 the ability to move goods, products, and just

1 generally support economic development.

2 And one of the core areas of USTDA's  
3 program is transportation infrastructure. And I  
4 think that's something that we're going to see  
5 increasing investment in Africa given to where we  
6 have been is looking at how can we help build out  
7 the infrastructure to ensure products move  
8 quickly and smoothly across the continent. So  
9 thank you, Laura, for your leadership on the  
10 trade facilitation.

11 VICE CHAIR LANE: Thanks, Tom. Let me  
12 turn it over to USTR, to Mr. Harmon.

13 MR. HARMAN: Thanks, Laura. Just to  
14 add that USTR is certainly willing to help  
15 promote U.S. best practice border processes in  
16 our engagements with African officials, whether  
17 at the bilateral, regional, or continental level.  
18 It would be hard to overstate the importance of  
19 trade facilitation for the progress in the region  
20 for all the reasons that you articulated that I  
21 won't repeat. Thank you.

22 VICE CHAIR LANE: For a final comment,

1 let me turn it over to Mr. Sisson.

2 MR. SISSON: Thank you, Laura. I'd  
3 like to read a comment on behalf of IBM's El-  
4 Tohamy.

5 IBM appreciates the U.S. government  
6 efforts in this space and supports  
7 recommendations that Laura shared and continue to  
8 have the U.S. government advance American  
9 companies' views on modern trade facilitation.

10 Regional economic communities are  
11 asking for just that. For example, COMESA has  
12 reached out to IBM for education on blockchain to  
13 help them with border management. Blockchain is  
14 one example of advanced technologies that can  
15 accelerate customs modernization. Blockchain's  
16 smart contracts, inherent transparency, and  
17 mutable distributed ledger could help advance PAC  
18 objectives to improve U.S.-Africa commercial  
19 relationship. Modern customs are critical for  
20 improved trade facilitation.

21 VICE CHAIR LANE: Now I'd like to move  
22 to the next section of our report, which is with

1 respect to global value chains and ask Rahama  
2 Wright of Shea Yeleen for her comments.

3 MS. WRIGHT: Thank you, Laura. I  
4 would be remiss if I did not first start by  
5 thanking personally Giancarlo and Ashley and all  
6 the interagency members and the delegation  
7 members. Because I tore my ACL right before the  
8 trip and so I went on the trip with a cane, and I  
9 was hobbling around West Africa. And honestly, I  
10 could not have done it without all of your  
11 support.

12 So with that, during the trip we heard  
13 from the private sector and the public sector  
14 about the need for creating value-added products  
15 in African countries. In Cote d'Ivoire, we heard  
16 about chocolate making. And in Ghana, we heard  
17 about their One Village, One Factory initiative.  
18 Enabling the growth of global value chains means  
19 that countries can have access to necessary  
20 inputs for more domestic production, and that  
21 leads to better jobs and also leads to growing in  
22 new markets.



1                   With that, we have two short-term  
2                   recommendations on global value chain. The first  
3                   recommendation is for the Department of Commerce,  
4                   working with private sector and the U.S.  
5                   embassies, to select a priority list of African  
6                   countries to engage in bilateral discussions with  
7                   a focus on global value chain. So the purpose of  
8                   this recommendation is to facilitate further  
9                   information gathering between key government  
10                  officials, interagency members, and the private  
11                  sector. This will lay the groundwork to promote  
12                  high regulatory and legal standards supporting  
13                  national and regional policies.

14                  The second recommendation is for the  
15                  Department of Commerce, aligned with USTR and  
16                  with other U.S. agencies to work with African  
17                  countries, and both the government officials and  
18                  the private sector, to really understand that  
19                  having local content restrictions can sometimes  
20                  be prohibitive in terms of growing their  
21                  economies. The intent of local content  
22                  restrictions is to protect local industry and

1 create jobs. But sometimes these industries  
2 reduce capacity and access to raw materials.

3 So through commercial officers working  
4 with in-country partners, they can specifically  
5 highlight investments that American firms are  
6 making to broaden local engagement. And also  
7 show how American firms are employing locally and  
8 adding to the value and supply chain. In short,  
9 the U.S. government can demonstrate the  
10 advantages of working with U.S. companies.

11 VICE CHAIR LANE: Thank you. Let me  
12 turn it over to Under Secretary Kaplan for  
13 additional comments.

14 MR. KAPLAN: Thank you, Laura. We  
15 really second the comments made by Rahama Wright.  
16 Another theme from the fact-finding trip was the  
17 desire on the part of African governments in the  
18 countries we visited for increased manufacturing.  
19 They see manufacturing as key to their economic  
20 growth and prosperity.

21 Sub-Saharan African countries, with  
22 the exception of South Africa, are not by and

1 large industrialized. As a result, the majority  
2 of exports are unprocessed raw materials. This  
3 reliance on commodities makes it difficult for  
4 countries to execute growth plans for the future  
5 because of the vulnerability of their economies  
6 to external market shocks. We saw the  
7 consequences of this pattern recently across Sub-  
8 Saharan Africa, but particularly in oil-based  
9 economies like Angola and Nigeria in 2016.

10 There is also a tremendous need for  
11 jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa, and almost every  
12 leader we met said that they had to find a way to  
13 create more employment for young people coming  
14 into the workforce. To remove these  
15 vulnerabilities, these countries are seeking, and  
16 the U.S. government supports, economic  
17 diversification and manufacturing. One key to  
18 this diversification and industrialization is  
19 access to global value chains, both in terms of  
20 access to inputs, as well as to markets for  
21 value-added production. I spent the majority of  
22 my career working on policies to create

1 manufacturing, so I was particularly fascinated  
2 by the recommendation this council put forward to  
3 promote global value chains.

4 On the first recommendation, I agree  
5 that the U.S. government, through the Department  
6 of Commerce, should encourage the harmonization  
7 and simplification of documents, streamlining of  
8 border procedures, and automation of processes.  
9 Also trade facilitation is an essential element  
10 of global value chains. And I'm encouraged to  
11 see not only the recommendation on global value  
12 chains, but the preceding recommendation on trade  
13 facilitation.

14 On your second point, we agree the  
15 Department of Commerce should align with key  
16 regulatory agencies to coordinate regulatory  
17 cooperation work with a focus on using a risk-  
18 based approach in the development of these  
19 regulations. We often see that upstream firms  
20 supplying intermediate inputs to destinations in  
21 Africa have a duplicate production process to  
22 comply with conflicting standards or incur

1 burdensome certification procedures multiple  
2 times for the same product.

3 The Commerce Department is the  
4 appropriate agency for organizing dialogues with  
5 our African counterparts and the U.S. private  
6 sector for increasing international regulatory  
7 cooperation. I also support the recommendation  
8 suggestion to focus on key sectors. And I'd like  
9 to put forward agricultural processing as one of  
10 those key sectors.

11 In your second recommendation, you  
12 raise another key element, local content  
13 restrictions. The outsourcing of materials  
14 inherent in global value chains can seem to run  
15 counter to national development plans focused on  
16 sourcing materials locally to spur job creation.  
17 However, local content requirements often reduce  
18 the competitiveness of local companies if  
19 products sourced locally are neither even  
20 available, nor able to be produced at globally  
21 competitive rates. Global value chains work  
22 because they give local companies the ability to

1 export value-added product to more countries,  
2 capitalizing on comparative advantage.

3 While the Commerce Department and our  
4 interagency colleagues already highlight the  
5 economic disadvantage of local content  
6 restrictions in our policy engagements with  
7 African countries, we need to work on expanding  
8 the understanding that capacity building,  
9 technology transfer, and corporate social  
10 responsibility by American companies are forms of  
11 adding local value to production. American  
12 companies and investors are world leaders in  
13 bringing these skill sets to the countries in  
14 which they do business.

15 Finally, a skilled work force is also  
16 another byproduct of U.S. company participation  
17 and investment and critical to global value  
18 chains. So I'm encouraged again to see the  
19 council's next recommendation on workforce  
20 development.

21 VICE CHAIR LANE: Thank you, Under  
22 Secretary Kaplan. In the interest of an on-time

1 delivery of the meeting, we're going to move  
2 straight to the next section of the report, and I  
3 want to turn it over to Andrew Torre of Visa to  
4 talk about our technology and digital economy  
5 recommendations.

6 MR. TORRE: Thanks, Laura. I'm  
7 pleased to present the council's recommendation  
8 on technology and digital economy. As we've all  
9 heard during the course of the readouts on the  
10 council's mission throughout Africa, there are  
11 abundant opportunities for U.S. businesses in  
12 technology. There's significant demand from both  
13 the public and private sector in Africa. Our  
14 recommendation therefore is intended to  
15 facilitate U.S.-Africa partnership on the  
16 evolution of open, competitive, and enabling  
17 regulatory environments that encourage sustained  
18 investment, innovation, and trade.

19 So what's the problem we're trying to  
20 solve? Africa has produced a generation of world  
21 class entrepreneurs that need digital technology  
22 in order to be able to scale their businesses.

1 They want to build businesses using the best  
2 available software, hardware, and digital  
3 infrastructure. And that often means partnering  
4 with U.S. companies. Unfortunately trade  
5 barriers and regulation often stand in the way.

6 African startups operate in a  
7 fragmented space that hovers between the formal  
8 and informal economies, and African small and  
9 medium-sized enterprises serve a customer base  
10 that too often lacks the digital resources,  
11 technology, digital finance, and payment  
12 services. U.S. technology companies offer  
13 solutions to many of these problems, but to do  
14 so, we must overcome public policies that tilt  
15 the competitive playing field.

16 In this report, we make two  
17 complementary recommendations. The first  
18 recommendations is to broaden -- the first  
19 recommendation is to broaden the mandate of  
20 government-to-government engagements to better  
21 serve the technology industry and commit to high  
22 standard principles for digital trade with our



1 African partners. We included a dozen  
2 foundational policy principles in the report.  
3 And I'd like to highlight just a few.

4 The first is to commit to cross-border  
5 data flows and do not require onshoring, data  
6 localization, or other local content  
7 requirements. The second is to maintain a level  
8 playing field that enables domestic and  
9 international companies to compete on the basis  
10 of the value and functionality that they provide.  
11 And third, we need to think in terms of  
12 ecosystems, platforms, and aim for  
13 interoperability inviting innovators to develop  
14 new capabilities and preventing the fragmentation  
15 and inefficiencies that tend to result from  
16 closed systems.

17 The second recommendation echoes  
18 something that Laura was talking about earlier,  
19 which is to resource embassies on the continent  
20 with personnel dedicated to technology and  
21 digital economy issues. In addition to hearing  
22 from Washington, it is equally important to have

1 boots on the ground working with U.S. companies  
2 that can identify and respond to and avert  
3 policies that undercut U.S. technology exports.  
4 In this regard, PAC-DBIA members would be pleased  
5 to provide resources and educational materials to  
6 the Foreign Service Institute and other training  
7 organizations to ensure that these digital  
8 attaches are fluent in the relevant issues.

9           On behalf of the council, we look  
10 forward to your partnership to implement the  
11 recommendations that will drive economic growth,  
12 increase trade, and grow U.S. technology exports  
13 to Africa. Thank you.

14           VICE CHAIR LANE: Let me ask Under  
15 Secretary Kaplan to add some of this thoughts.

16           MR. KAPLAN: Thank you. African  
17 countries are at a unique juncture in their  
18 development where they are starting to embrace  
19 technology as a means to drive economic growth.  
20 I agree with the PAC-DBIA analysis. We need to  
21 help our African partners get this piece right,  
22 which is why I'm encouraged by your

1 recommendation on technology and digital economy.  
2 Many of the principles you recommended are  
3 already included in our dialogues such as  
4 intellectual property rights and local content  
5 requirements, but not in the context of  
6 technology, and that's an important qualifier.

7           Given that U.S. companies are the  
8 world leaders in technology, I want to ask for  
9 your continuing contributions in the technology  
10 dialogue. You state 12 principles the U.S.  
11 Department of Commerce should promote in its  
12 dialogues. But we would ask you to give us more  
13 specifics as to exactly how we should implement  
14 these principles in the technology area. Or, as  
15 you suggest, we could develop a new dialogue  
16 between the Department of Commerce and the U.S.  
17 private sector to focus on digital trade so that  
18 we are promoting the policies that best align  
19 with the evolution of technology being pursued by  
20 U.S. industry.

21           On your second recommendation on  
22 expanding the Digital Attache Program, I'm glad

1 to hear of our digital attache officers' value to  
2 the U.S. private sector and thank you for your  
3 support. I don't think we can commit right now  
4 to increasing the number of digital attaches  
5 deployed in Africa, but we can commit to  
6 providing additional training to our current  
7 Commercial Service officers on digital trade.

8 Similar to the first recommendation on  
9 public procurement, I'd like to ask the U.S.  
10 private sector to help us develop the curriculum  
11 for this training in order to ensure it addresses  
12 the areas of critical need for the U.S.  
13 technology industry. Thank you.

14 VICE CHAIR LANE: Let me turn it over  
15 to OPIC to Worku Gachou.

16 MR. GACHOU: Sure, thank you. The  
17 continued development of Africa's technology and  
18 digital economy is key to advancing U.S.  
19 commercial interests on the continent. As the  
20 council highlighted, U.S. engagement is essential  
21 to develop policies that are conducive to the  
22 growth of the economies, to promote global best

1 practices, and to position U.S. companies to be a  
2 partner of choice.

3 Supporting Africa's technology and  
4 digital economy in Africa has become a recent  
5 priority of OPIC. As Jay noted, OPIC's  
6 president/CEO Ray Washburne traveled to the  
7 region this summer and launched the Connect  
8 Africa initiative. With the Connect Africa  
9 initiative, OPIC has committed \$1 billion over  
10 the next three years to support information and  
11 communication technologies -- in the  
12 communication technologies sector, as well as  
13 other projects that support and enhance  
14 connectivity on the continent.

15 For example, OPIC recently financed a  
16 \$100 million deal to Africell to support its  
17 expansion of mobile telecommunication networks in  
18 Uganda, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of  
19 the Congo, and Gambia. By continuing to invest  
20 in projects like Africell, the U.S. will be a  
21 strong partner in Africa's digital revolution.  
22 OPIC looks forward to doing more to support the

1 growth of Africa's technology sector through its  
2 Connect Africa initiative.

3 VICE CHAIR LANE: For a final comment,  
4 let me turn it over to Ms. Kimberly Brown of  
5 Amethyst Technologies.

6 MS. BROWN: Thank you, Laura. So I'm  
7 presenting on behalf of IBM's El-Tohamy who  
8 wanted to add to the record that IBM strongly  
9 supports these recommendations and appreciates  
10 U.S. government support. As the U.S. government  
11 seeks to advance sound technology policies with  
12 their African counterparts, we urge everyone to  
13 remember that what works for one country or  
14 region will not necessarily work for another.

15 For example, IBM has worked closely  
16 with the European Union to ensure the GDPR  
17 addresses privacy concerns without undermining  
18 innovation. However, we do not agree with every  
19 aspect of it. We would rather see African  
20 nations following an American approach to privacy  
21 and data protection. The U.S. has a proven track  
22 record of relying on collaborative public-private

1 approaches like it's NIST cybersecurity  
2 framework, rather than government mandates.

3 We hope that such a collaborative  
4 approach could be exported to Africa. This would  
5 provide U.S. companies with a technology policy  
6 environment that recognizes differences among  
7 industries in their use of data, allows for the  
8 legitimate business uses of personal data,  
9 empowers consumers to make informed choices, and  
10 enables cross border data flows. With such a  
11 policy environment, U.S. companies could succeed.  
12 Thank you.

13 VICE CHAIR LANE: Let's now move over  
14 to the important issue of workforce development.  
15 And let me turn it over to Mr. Dow Wilson.

16 MR. WILSON: Thank you, Laura, Mr.  
17 Secretary, and Mr. Under Secretary. It's my  
18 pleasure to present the PAC-DBIAS recommendations  
19 on workforce deployment.

20 First of all, let me just say that it  
21 was a chorus in terms of the countries we visited  
22 on the recognition that lack of skilled workers

1 limits exports. You know, whether it's training  
2 for an x-ray machine, a linear accelerator that  
3 we make, a value-added supply chain, or a big  
4 infrastructure project, the lack of skilled  
5 workers restricts the market.

6 Second of all, I think it was also  
7 resoundingly clear that the countries recognize  
8 Brand USA for education and training. It's a  
9 competitive advantage that we have. And in  
10 nearly every situation and every conversation, it  
11 was what can you do as U.S. companies, as U.S.  
12 government, to help us in training and education?

13 So a couple of things. You know, one,  
14 we thought it would be very good to take stock of  
15 all the existing training programs, U.S.  
16 government and private sector, that we have. It  
17 might be kind of a big ask, especially on the  
18 private sector side. But some leveling the  
19 playing field in terms of what's out there,  
20 especially from medium and small companies in the  
21 U.S. don't really know what training programs  
22 they can access.



1                   And then your recommendation centered  
2 around enhancing Brand USA by developing training  
3 hubs. It was clear that the brand remains  
4 strong, but other countries are certainly  
5 attempting to take our place by fostering  
6 stronger ties for education and training on the  
7 continent.

8                   It's therefore essential to maintain  
9 the strong U.S. reputation in Africa. So we  
10 would repurpose U.S. government facilities such  
11 as embassies to serve as training hubs, where  
12 both U.S. government and U.S. private sector  
13 training activities could take in place in the  
14 kind of hopes of enhancing Brand USA in promoting  
15 the image of a united U.S. investment in Africa.

16                   And let me just say on behalf of our  
17 own company, you know, we worked very well with  
18 USTDA in making some education and training  
19 available to further the cause of curing cancer  
20 in some of these countries. And it's been a huge  
21 assist and something that, you know, we really  
22 didn't leverage for many, many years because we

1 didn't know about it. And I think fairly typical  
2 mid-size company issue. And with that, let me  
3 turn it over to Mr. Hardy from USDITA to comment.

4 MR. HARDY: Thank you, Dow. And  
5 before I start, let me begin by thanking  
6 Secretary Ross and Under Secretary Kaplan for  
7 leading this trade mission. I think it was a  
8 fantastic visit. And I appreciate your  
9 leadership and that of your whole team that  
10 facilitated this. And also Jay and Laura for  
11 kind of being the fearless leaders, making us  
12 think differently, highlighting really the impact  
13 that we can have together on supporting a more  
14 vibrant African partnership with the United  
15 States.

16 Thank you, Dow. I think you're  
17 absolutely right. Across Africa, there's a lack  
18 of highly skilled, highly trained users required  
19 to support -- to utilize U.S. exports in the IT  
20 medical systems, construction equipment,  
21 transportation. And the visit was eye opening  
22 both as to the lack -- the opportunities, but

1 also a great opportunity to deploy U.S. solutions  
2 to do that.

3           It was wonderful to travel to Uganda.  
4 Although it wasn't part of the official trip, Dow  
5 and our teams went to Uganda and concluded an  
6 agreement with the Ministry of Health in the  
7 Uganda Cancer Institute. It's fundamentally  
8 going to transform cancer treatment in East  
9 Africa and provide the training for medical  
10 technicians to use Varian's equipment.

11           And as many of you here know, USTDA  
12 also concluded a training program with Ethiopian  
13 Airlines at the very beginning of the program,  
14 working with Sabre travel solutions to support  
15 them in a competitive bid process. But using  
16 U.S. solution to increase the travel security and  
17 throughput across the African continent. And  
18 that's really where the U.S. Trade and  
19 Development Agency sees the best opportunity for  
20 us is working in cooperation with the Advocacy  
21 Center where U.S. companies are facing strong  
22 competition from foreign -- foreign competition.

1 Where USTDA can step in providing training  
2 grants, providing that high technical expertise  
3 training that will better enable our partners in  
4 Africa to utilize U.S. solutions and focusing on  
5 quality infrastructure.

6 So with that, I want to thank the PAC-  
7 DBIA again, Jay, Laura, for your leadership on  
8 this. Thank you.

9 VICE CHAIR LANE: I'm going to now  
10 turn it over to Andrew Patterson for the final  
11 aspect of the report with respect to MOU  
12 implementation. Andrew?

13 MR. PATTERSON: Great. Thank you.  
14 Clearly, MOUs have been discussed throughout this  
15 conversation and really the impacts of the MOUs.  
16 We can provide testimony to that on the Kenya  
17 MOU. I've been able to position for a  
18 significantly large expressway project there and  
19 the ICT Center -- on the technology side also  
20 leapfrogged on that. Those are clear  
21 demonstrations on what these MOUs can do.

22 The African nations especially see the

1 U.S. government and U.S. businesses when they  
2 come together as a more impactful solution. And  
3 when we have the support of the U.S. government  
4 for these umbrellas under the MOUs, they provide  
5 opportunities for us to showcase our technologies  
6 and position us to provide solution that our  
7 competition has been doing and been doing it very  
8 successfully.

9 As part of the MOU, a key element of  
10 it which we talked about earlier is the  
11 financing. And providing those financing  
12 solutions to these projects and providing our  
13 products is critical. There is three  
14 recommendations coming out of that. And the  
15 first one was the U.S. Department of Commerce to  
16 work with industry associations liaison between  
17 U.S. government and businesses to support the  
18 implementation.

19 I think part of that process is  
20 highlighting the MOUs and the opportunities to  
21 come into that. I think a lot of businesses may  
22 not know those opportunities. And when Commerce

1 can step up and show what these opportunities  
2 are, I think these MOUs can be more impactful.

3 Additionally is for the Commerce  
4 Department to work with U.S. companies and the  
5 foreign government on tracking and following up  
6 on those MOUs. So it's not just we signed it  
7 once and then we walked away. It's really  
8 looking at the implementation and tracking that  
9 progress and getting feedback from the private  
10 sector on what is working and what is not  
11 working.

12 Which would ultimately go into  
13 recommendation number three, which is looking at  
14 further MOUs in other countries that are  
15 strategic where there's strong U.S. business  
16 interests and where those MOUs can make an  
17 impact. And getting the feedback from one and  
18 two recommendations, we'll be able to help  
19 structure further MOUs in the right places.

20 And additionally to all we've -- I  
21 think it's important to look at the framework of  
22 how those MOUs will work in these countries.

1       What works in Kenya may be a slightly different  
2       structure that works in Ghana. And I think  
3       that's important as we look at those going  
4       forward.

5                   I think the overall recommendations  
6       are excellent. And I'd just like to say from a  
7       PAC member being involved over the last two years  
8       and being involved with the one U.S. government  
9       working with U.S. private sector has made a  
10      significant impact. It's being seen on the  
11      continent. And we've seen it personally as a  
12      business. But really the countries are seeing a  
13      different type of engagement. And I think the  
14      PAC-DBIA is a testimony to that, the effort  
15      that's been put into it, a lot of hard work by  
16      Skip and the team. And we appreciate it, Under  
17      Secretary and Secretary Ross for all your  
18      support. Thank you.

19                   VICE CHAIR LANE: Mr. Secretary, can  
20      I turn it over to you?

21                   SECRETARY ROSS: Sure. Well thank  
22      you, Andrew, for your presentation. And thank

1 you to the members of the council for addressing  
2 this topic. The MOUs themselves, as you know,  
3 were recommended by the council in its report  
4 last April. So I'm happy to receive your input  
5 on how the memoranda that were signed and others  
6 that we're working on with other countries can  
7 best be implemented.

8 I'll speak to your first two  
9 recommendations together. The Department of  
10 Commerce and USTR are already in the process of  
11 reaching out to the Industry Trade Advisory  
12 Committees to solicit advice on how to best  
13 utilize the MOUs. We have requested their  
14 guidance in dealing with the non-tariff barriers  
15 that U.S. companies face with the African  
16 countries with whom we have signed agreements.  
17 We will use this advice as the basis of working  
18 with the governments to improve their business  
19 practices. We also intend to tap into business  
20 and trade associations and, of course, the PAC-  
21 DBIA for the same guidance.

22 Regarding your third recommendation,



1 I'm pleased to report that we are working on two  
2 additional MOUs with African countries right now,  
3 Cote d'Ivoire, as you heard earlier, and Tunisia,  
4 which you may or may not be aware of. We'll  
5 receive input from the private sector to assure  
6 that these MOUs actually provide benefit to  
7 American companies.

8 The MOU model continues to prove its  
9 value for increasing U.S. business presence and  
10 competitiveness in African markets. These  
11 agreements provide us with a good mechanism for  
12 bilateral commercial engagement. My team at the  
13 Commerce Department is working with our U.S.  
14 government partners and the private sector to  
15 identify additional countries with which to  
16 negotiate and sign MOUs. Thank you.

17 VICE CHAIR LANE: Jay, let me turn it  
18 over to you now for the adoption of the report.

19 CHAIR IRELAND: Yes. Thank you,  
20 everybody. Thanks for a great morning.  
21 Secretary Ross, thanks for your time, as well as  
22 members of the private sector and government.

1                   So I'm going to ask if there's any  
2 objections to adopting the council's report?  
3 Speak now or forever hold your peace. Okay. So  
4 I move to adopt the report. Do I have a second?

5                   VICE CHAIR LANE: I second.

6                   CHAIR IRELAND: Okay. And a voice  
7 vote please. All in favor?

8                   (Chorus of aye.)

9                   CHAIR IRELAND: Any opposed? All  
10 right. Okay.

11                   Secretary Ross, closing comments?

12                   SECRETARY ROSS: Well let me start by  
13 saying how impressed I am with the breadth of  
14 knowledge contained in the report. To the PAC-  
15 DBIA members, thank you again for the commitment  
16 you made to produce such thoughtful  
17 recommendations. We are committed to turning  
18 your ideas into action. You exemplify what is  
19 required of a successful participatory democracy.  
20 It is based on results and not bureaucratic  
21 inertia.

22                   Thank you also to the Commerce

1 Department team that's been working with the PAC-  
2 DBIA during the current term of your charter.  
3 The first teleconference was held in August 2017.  
4 There were three meetings held here at the EOB.  
5 And to top it off, we did what seemed to be the  
6 improbable. We put out boots on the ground in  
7 Africa.

8 Ashley Bubna and Giancarlo Cavallo are  
9 the designated federal officers for the PAC-DBIA.  
10 They have worked nonstop since the beginning of  
11 this journey in 2016, guiding the PAC-DBIA  
12 members, your staff representatives, and the U.S.  
13 government interagency team through the planning  
14 and flawless execution of our activities and  
15 events.

16 Finally, for their guidance and  
17 leadership, I want to thank Skip Jones, our  
18 Deputy Assistant Secretary for Africa and the  
19 Middle East, and Fred Stewart, Director of the  
20 Office of Africa.

21 Thank you, everyone, for being  
22 instrumental in creating such a successful

1 endeavor. So back to you, Jay.

2 VICE CHAIR LANE: So, Mr. Secretary,

3 I just want to thank you for your leadership.

4 And I just want to echo what Andrew said. This

5 one government approach has made all the

6 difference. And I think if we continue the

7 momentum from the fact-finding trip, implementing

8 these recommendations, there's no stopping

9 American businesses in terms of their exports and

10 opportunities across the Sub-Saharan continent.

11 I want to close though on a very

12 personal note and say just how much I have

13 admired and appreciated working alongside Jay

14 Ireland. As many of you know, he's retiring.

15 His depth of knowledge, his nuanced understanding

16 of Africa, and his incredible dedication to

17 helping every company be able to expand across

18 the continent has made him the perfect chair of

19 this council. And I was really proud to serve by

20 your side. You inspired me, and we need to take

21 that inspiration and keep the momentum going

22 forward. So thank you, Jay.

1                   CHAIR IRELAND: Thank you, Laura, and  
2 thank you, everyone. I'll look you up for a  
3 recommendation. I just want to close on a couple  
4 things. Again, Giancarlo and Ashley, thanks so  
5 much. I was glad to see you got some sleep in  
6 the last month or two. They did an unbelievable  
7 job on the trip, all of the logistics, et cetera,  
8 as you guys know.

9                   I think as I -- you know, this is our  
10 second -- for me, it was the second term of the  
11 PAC-DBIA. And the first one was really gaining a  
12 general understanding of Africa for the  
13 government, as well as the businesses. And we  
14 visited Nigeria and Rwanda. This one obviously  
15 was developing recommendations, which we have  
16 plenty of, and you know where we visited.

17                   But I think if you think about it,  
18 we've been to six countries. And one of the  
19 things in the last 7-1/2 years in Africa that  
20 I've learned is Sub-Saharan Africa especially is  
21 -- and all of Africa is a relationship continent.  
22 You do business through relationships. It's not

1 transactional like we're used to doing business  
2 here or in Europe or anywhere else. And the  
3 relationships are important.

4           And as I think about what the PAC-DBIA  
5 has been able to do, there are a number of people  
6 that were on both the first iteration and then  
7 this iteration is to continue to drive  
8 relationships with the governments and private  
9 sectors and countries in Africa. And I think the  
10 followup of all of the recommendations we have,  
11 not just here for the U.S. government, but also  
12 for what we want to do on the countries and  
13 making sure, especially in the MOUs, that we're  
14 holding them accountable and making sure that  
15 they're following up as well.

16           So all I would do is recommend that we  
17 continue the relationship building across Africa,  
18 as well as here across the U.S. government and  
19 the private sector.

20           And finally, it's been my privilege to  
21 really chair this council over the last few years  
22 -- two years and really get to know everyone.

1 And I -- I feel like I'm preaching to the choir  
2 for passion for Africa. And just from a personal  
3 standpoint, I took this job in 2011. I had never  
4 been to Africa, and I just thought it would be a  
5 great opportunity. I caught the bug.

6 This is going to be the -- this will  
7 be the continent of growth in the next decade.  
8 And the only way that we are all going to be able  
9 to take advantage of that is to invest now, work  
10 with them now. And I think this group of PAC-  
11 DBIA, combination of government and private  
12 sector will help all of us -- help their growth,  
13 as well as help the economic growth of all of our  
14 companies.

15 So thanks again for all your support,  
16 and I really enjoyed it and hope to see you  
17 around. Thanks.

18 Meeting adjourned.

19 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
20 went off the record at 11:33 a.m.)  
21  
22

## A

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President's Advisory Council

Before: US DOC ITA

Date: 09-26-18

Place: Washington, DC

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Court Reporter

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