

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL  
ON DOING BUSINESS IN AFRICA

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BRIEFING AND TASKING TELECONFERENCE

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TUESDAY  
AUGUST 20, 2019

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The Council met by teleconference at  
1:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, Laura Lane, Co-  
Chair, presiding.

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

LAURA LANE, President of Global Affairs, UPS,  
Co-Chair

SUSAN SILBERMANN, Global President for Emerging  
Markets, Pfizer, Vice Chair

JASON ANDRINGA, President and Chief Executive  
Officer, Vermeer Corporation

JAKE CUSACK, Founding and Managing Partner,  
CrossBoundary Group

TAKREEM EL-TOHAMY, General Manager, Middle East  
and Africa, IBM

DAMIAN HALLORAN, Vice President, Infectious  
Disease, Emerging Markets, Rapid  
Diagnostics, Abbott

BRUCE HANSON, President and Chief Executive  
Officer, Credence ID

RAGHU MALHOTRA, President, Middle East and  
Africa, Mastercard

FRANK MOSIER, Chief Executive Officer,  
Rendeavour, Inc.

JOHN NEVERGOLE, Chief Executive Officer, ABD  
Group

ANDREW PATTERSON, Global Manager for Strategy  
and Market and Business Development,  
Infrastructure, Bechtel Overseas  
Corporation

FRED SISSON, Chief Executive Officer, Synnove  
Energy

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

ARJAN TOOR, Chief Executive Officer,  
International Organizations, Africa, and  
Global IPMI, Cigna

CHRIS TOTH, President, Oncology Systems, Varian  
Medical Systems

BRITTANY UNDERWOOD, Founder and Executive  
Chairman, Akola

U.S. GOVERNMENT

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

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

ASHLEY BUBNA, PAC-DBIA Designated Federal  
Officer, U.S. Department of Commerce

GIANCARLO CAVALLO, PAC-DBIA Designated Federal  
Officer, U.S. Department of Commerce

RAMSEY DAY, Principal Deputy Assistant  
Administrator, U.S. Agency for  
International Development

ELIZABETH COHAN, Lead Strategist, Prosper Africa  
Secretariat

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

2 1:33 p.m.

3 MS. BUBNA: Good afternoon, everybody.

4 Hi, Mr. Secretary. Thank you, everybody, for  
5 joining this first convening of the new PAC  
6 today.

7 Mr. Secretary, on the line we have  
8 Laura Lane, president of global public affairs  
9 for UPS, also the co-chair of the PAC-DBIA this  
10 term.

11 We have Susan Silbermann, global  
12 president for emerging markets, Pfizer, who  
13 happens to be our vice chair.

14 Jason Andringa, president and chief  
15 executive officer, Vermeer Corporation.

16 Jake Cusack, founding and managing  
17 partner, CrossBoundary Group.

18 Takreem El-Tohamy, general manager for  
19 Middle East and Africa, IBM.

20 Damian Halloran, vice president,  
21 infectious diseases, emerging markets, rapid  
22 diagnostics for Abbott.

1                   Bruce Hanson, president and chief  
2 executive officer for Credence ID.

3                   Raghu Malhotra, president for Middle  
4 East and Africa from Mastercard.

5                   Frank Mosier, chief executive officer  
6 for Rendeavour, Inc.

7                   John Nevergole, chief executive  
8 officer, ABD Group.

9                   If you are not speaking at the moment  
10 could you please mute your line? Thank you.

11                   We have Andrew Patterson, global  
12 manager for strategy and market and business  
13 development infrastructure, Bechtel.

14                   Fred Sisson, chief executive officer,  
15 Synnove Energy.

16                   Peter Sullivan, managing director and  
17 head of the public sector group for Africa for  
18 Citi.

19                   Arjan Toor, chief executive officer,  
20 international organizations Africa, Cigna.

21                   Chris Toth, president oncology  
22 systems, Varian Medical Systems.

1                   And Brittany Underwood, founder and  
2 executive chairman, Akola.

3                   So I'd now like to turn it over to  
4 PAC-DBIA co-chair Laura Lane to say a few words  
5 on behalf of the PAC-DBIA leadership. So, Laura.

6                   CO-CHAIR LANE: Good afternoon, Mr.  
7 Secretary. And I just want to echo what Ashley  
8 has already said, that I'm thrilled to be back  
9 serving as co-chair of the council and very  
10 pleased with the council makeup.

11                   We have a great group of companies and  
12 representatives that I think are going to be able  
13 to take the work from the last two years council  
14 forward.

15                   My fellow co-chair Farid Fezoua from  
16 GE unfortunately was unable to participate in  
17 today's call. He's on an airplane at the moment.

18                   But I know he looks forward to  
19 responding to your request for input on Prosper  
20 Africa and how we carry forward a lot of the  
21 recommendations from our previous PAC-DBIA  
22 report.

1                   And I know Vice Chairman Susan  
2                   Silbermann is going to be a great new partner  
3                   with us in terms of leading the council.

4                   On behalf of the 26 members of the  
5                   PAC-DBIA 3.0 I can definitely say that we're very  
6                   much looking forward to diving into the next two  
7                   years of work with you and the entire interagency  
8                   team.

9                   We just had a great briefing on  
10                  Prosper Africa and we're really eager for this  
11                  strategy to be fully implemented so that American  
12                  businesses can do a lot more in terms of  
13                  accessing, expanding and investing in African  
14                  markets.

15                  And so the council stands ready to  
16                  support the implementation of the Prosper Africa  
17                  initiative and help ensure that it's as impactful  
18                  as possible, building on the recommendations from  
19                  PAC-DBIA 2.0.

20                  So with that I'd like to turn it over  
21                  to you, Mr. Secretary, for the tasking so that we  
22                  can begin the really important work we have ahead

1 of us.

2 SECRETARY ROSS: Well, thank you,  
3 Laura. It was almost exactly two years ago on a  
4 telecom line just like this one that we first  
5 spoke. And it's a pleasure to be reconnecting  
6 right now.

7 I want to thank all of you for taking  
8 the time to participate in this call today, and  
9 more importantly for the commitment all of you  
10 have made to serve on the President's Advisory  
11 Council on Doing Business in Africa.

12 I'm pleased to welcome back 12  
13 returning members from the previous term of the  
14 council.

15 Your experience in collaborating with  
16 U.S. government interagency teams, working among  
17 yourselves to reach consensus on complex analyses  
18 and recommendations and undertaking a fact-  
19 finding trip to four African countries will be  
20 invaluable to making this term just as productive  
21 as the last one.

22 I'm equally delighted to welcome the



1 14 new members to the addition of the fresh  
2 perspectives and the hard-earned wisdom.

3 I'd like to thank Council Co-Chairs  
4 Laura Lane and Farid Fezoua and Vice Chair Susan  
5 Silbermann in particular for stepping into the  
6 leadership roles to guide the council's work this  
7 term.

8 I look forward to working with all of  
9 you and meeting you in person soon, but I'm  
10 pleased to speak to you today to discuss some of  
11 the tasks we'll be asking of the PAC-DBIA over  
12 the next 22 months.

13 Over the last five years since the  
14 inception of the PAC-DBIA this council has  
15 established itself as a vital tool and partner  
16 for the U.S. government.

17 Over this short period of time we've  
18 seen our relationships with African countries  
19 evolve both politically and economically.

20 We've seen the commercial landscape in  
21 Africa steadily grow more competitive and we've  
22 been working consistently to better understand

1 those dynamics and the opportunities for  
2 increasing mutually beneficial trade and  
3 investment between the United States and Africa.

4 We need unvarnished and substantive  
5 input from the private sector as we do this. And  
6 the PAC-DBIA is the primary source of that input.

7 Before I joined the call today you had  
8 a chance to speak with some of the U.S.  
9 government thought leaders behind the  
10 administration's new strategy for an economic  
11 engagement with Africa.

12 That strategy as you know is called  
13 Prosper Africa.

14 As you've heard, the high-level  
15 strategy is complete and the heart of it is a  
16 framework intended to focus U.S. government work  
17 along three lines of effort.

18 One, to modernize and synchronize U.S.  
19 capabilities and efforts.

20 Two, to facilitate private sector  
21 transactions.

22 And three, to foster better business

1 conditions in Africa.

2 The task at hand for us now is to  
3 develop a concrete implementation plan. This is  
4 where we believe the PAC-DBIA can make critical  
5 contributions. So it will be the basis of the  
6 council's first task for this term.

7 Over the next two to three months my  
8 request of PAC-DBIA has as much to do with  
9 process as it does with a report or list of  
10 recommendations to be delivered.

11 First and foremost, the task for you  
12 is to develop recommendations and advise the  
13 committee how it can pursue our implementation  
14 plan by operationalizing the Prosper Africa  
15 strategy.

16 The Interagency Planning Committee is  
17 organizing itself into working groups along the  
18 three Prosper Africa lines of effort.

19 It would make sense for PAC-DBIA to  
20 organize itself similarly and receive regular  
21 briefings from the Interagency Working Group  
22 under the Prosper Africa Interagency Planning

1 Committee.

2 That can inform your thinking as you  
3 develop your advice on the mechanics of  
4 implementing those lines of effort.

5 I'd like to talk briefly about how the  
6 PAC-DBIA recommendations from the previous term  
7 fit into this process.

8 First, it is important to note that  
9 the Prosper Africa initiative itself was  
10 developed largely in response to observations and  
11 recommendations from the PAC-DBIA.

12 That clearly demonstrated the need for  
13 the U.S. government to develop a new way of  
14 supporting U.S. companies doing business in  
15 African markets.

16 And as you should have been provided  
17 with the status report by now you can be assured  
18 that we are actively considering or implementing  
19 those recommendations.

20 Some of them have already been  
21 completed, namely those recommendations that were  
22 action-oriented proposals calling on one or more

1 agencies to do something fairly specific.

2 While I'm asking you to focus your  
3 best time on recommendations supporting the  
4 development of an implementation plan you will  
5 find that many of the PAC-DBIA's recommendations  
6 from last term fit conceptually under one of the  
7 three Prosper Africa lines of effort.

8 So as you advise the government on  
9 concrete steps to implement the Prosper Africa  
10 strategy please feel free to include concrete  
11 actions pursuant to those existing PAC-DBIA  
12 recommendations and feel free to add onto those  
13 recommendations if new ideas come up during the  
14 process.

15 At this time as you know the publicly  
16 available documents we have to work with are  
17 limited to the one-page Prosper Africa fact sheet  
18 and the recent public speeches that have been  
19 given by U.S. government officials to roll out  
20 the strategy.

21 But I am confident that these  
22 materials along with your in-depth briefings with

1 the Prosper Africa Interagency Planning Committee  
2 will provide you with all the detail you need to  
3 develop well-informed input.

4 Beyond this first tasking on the  
5 Prosper Africa implementation plan you are all  
6 aware of the request I made in the previous term  
7 for a PAC-DBIA report on the, quote, "keys to  
8 success," end quote, in doing business in Africa.

9 I would like to revive this request to  
10 be undertaken by the current PAC-DBIA later in  
11 the term.

12 I still believe this product has the  
13 potential to be a uniquely useful resource for  
14 other U.S. companies who are looking at entering  
15 African markets for the first time.

16 Additionally, the PAC-DBIA most likely  
17 will be tapped for ongoing feedback as Prosper  
18 Africa implementation begins.

19 Let me convey my thanks again for your  
20 attention here today and for the invaluable  
21 contributions I know you are going to make to  
22 helping us better support U.S. companies in

1 Africa.

2 I'd like now to turn it over to Laura,  
3 Farid and Susan although I gather Farid is not  
4 here for initial comments or questions. And then  
5 welcome any comments or questions on the tasking  
6 from the whole group. Thank you.

7 CO-CHAIR LANE: Thank you, Mr.  
8 Secretary, for those remarks and those taskings.  
9 At the outset I can assure you that we will make  
10 sure that we organize ourselves to align well  
11 with the Interagency Working Group structure so  
12 that we have an efficient communication flow back  
13 and forth and will endeavor to build from the  
14 recommendations made in PAC-DBIA 2 into the PAC-  
15 DBIA 3 report in terms of ways to really help  
16 with the implementation process for the Prosper  
17 Africa strategy.

18 And we will also be mindful of the  
19 requests that you've made on developing those  
20 keys to success recommendations so that other  
21 companies that maybe aren't part of this council  
22 process can also benefit from a lot of the

1 information and success strategies that we have  
2 developed and are seeing work well in specific  
3 markets so that we can help other companies be  
4 able to realize a lot of the opportunities that  
5 the African continent represents.

6 One important question that we posed  
7 in the previous briefing was the importance of  
8 assuring that there is going to be sufficient  
9 funding for this Prosper Africa initiative.

10 I know there's a lot of discussion  
11 right now surrounding the international affairs  
12 budget.

13 But we are hopeful that appropriate  
14 funding will be provided to ensure the success of  
15 this Prosper Africa initiative.

16 And in that regard we wanted to know  
17 if you're seeing fairly unanimous support not  
18 just across the administration but among members  
19 of Congress in terms of supporting the Prosper  
20 Africa initiative, and are there any ways that we  
21 can be helping on that front to reinforce the  
22 messaging that we will be providing the



1 administration by also letting members of  
2 Congress know how important this effort is.

3 SECRETARY ROSS: Sure. Well, within  
4 the administration I don't think there's any  
5 controversy whatsoever.

6 Given the nature of Congress right now  
7 I hesitate to say there's no controversy on any  
8 topic there.

9 But as -- if we come across material  
10 stumbling blocks we will reach out to you once  
11 they resume because the next month or so is when  
12 they're really going to do the fine-tuning.

13 CO-CHAIR LANE: Okay. We will make  
14 sure that we as a council separate and apart from  
15 our work with the administration continue to keep  
16 members of Congress apprised about the important  
17 work underway and why it's important to have the  
18 support and funding for this important  
19 initiative.

20 SECRETARY ROSS: Oh yes. There's no  
21 harm to remind them over and over and over.

22 CO-CHAIR LANE: Susan, can I turn it

1 over to you for an additional question?

2 VICE CHAIR SILBERMANN: Sure. Thank  
3 you, Laura. Secretary Ross, thank you very much  
4 for your time today and for outlining your  
5 expectations of this 3.0 PAC-DBIA. I feel very  
6 privileged and honored to be a part of it.

7 I guess I had one specific question  
8 which is the African Continental Free Trade  
9 Agreement includes North Africa. And if I'm not  
10 mistaken the U.S. does have a free trade  
11 agreement with Morocco already.

12 So I'm wondering if PAC-DBIA as well  
13 as Prosper Africa would be considering the entire  
14 continent of Africa in this initiative, into the  
15 work of the council.

16 SECRETARY ROSS: Yes. The answer is  
17 yes. We started with sub-Saharan Africa largely  
18 because that was recommended by the PAC-DBIA as  
19 the logical starting point.

20 You're also correct, we do have a free  
21 trade agreement with Morocco. Morocco is a  
22 pretty small trading partner of ours, but has

1       been a very good relationship for the U.S. for a  
2       very long time.

3                       So it was done apparently by prior  
4       administrations on a one-off basis. But I think  
5       the idea of specific thoughts on other specific  
6       countries would be very useful.

7                       VICE CHAIR SILBERMANN: Yes, and I  
8       think in light of one of the tenets of Prosper  
9       Africa also being exports to the U.S. and  
10      investment in the U.S.

11                      And one of the conversations we had  
12      before you joined the call was about finding a  
13      template of FTAs. If we are including Africa,  
14      the entire continent, even if it's a one-off it  
15      perhaps could serve as a good starting point for  
16      other FTAs.

17                      And I know you'll be looking to us to  
18      help with the Prosper Africa interagency group to  
19      prioritize countries because as we realize  
20      working in Africa means working in dozens and  
21      dozens of countries.

22                      So thank you very much. That's very

1 encouraging. And I think what I'd do is I'd turn  
2 the remaining few minutes we have, if there are  
3 any other PAC-DBIA members that would like to ask  
4 a question of the Secretary.

5 MEMBER UNDERWOOD: Yes. I would love  
6 to. This is Brittany Underwood with Akola.  
7 Again, thank you so much for including me in this  
8 council. I feel very privileged to be a part of  
9 it.

10 My question is around small and medium  
11 enterprises. Knowing that they create four out  
12 of five jobs in emerging markets and are the most  
13 effective way to target women in poverty  
14 alleviation how will Prosper Africa focus on SMEs  
15 specifically?

16 SECRETARY ROSS: Well, I think given  
17 the geography and given the resource limitations  
18 of small and medium sized enterprises, developing  
19 e-commerce and social media strategies probably  
20 is the most efficient way for many of them,  
21 particularly those in consumer products  
22 businesses to capture customers.

1                   But I think you're aware Foreign  
2 Commercial Service of Commerce has  
3 representatives in something like 100 cities  
4 around the U.S. So on the U.S. side we should be  
5 making use of those local talent resources.

6                   On the international side we have  
7 offices in 70 some odd countries and so that's  
8 the other resource.

9                   But I don't think it's really part of  
10 this entity to encourage trade between Africa and  
11 third party countries.

12                   It's really meant to be focused  
13 Africa-U.S.

14                   CO-CHAIR LANE: Are there any other  
15 questions?

16                   MEMBER EL-TOHAMY: Yes, I have a  
17 question.

18                   CO-CHAIR LANE: Go ahead.

19                   MEMBER EL-TOHAMY: This is Takreem of  
20 IBM. And Secretary Ross, I appreciate you  
21 reconstituting the group. Thank you very much  
22 for that.

1                   And also I applaud the team for its  
2 help to launch the Prosper Africa.

3                   I understand from the platform that  
4 there will be an online platform as one piece of  
5 Prosper Africa.

6                   And based on experience in building  
7 one-stop shops I've seen them serve as a forcing  
8 function to achieve desired outcomes globally  
9 around enhanced coordination, capacity building,  
10 deep team enablement.

11                   So do you agree with this potential  
12 and support that we work to make recommendations  
13 accordingly?

14                   SECRETARY ROSS: We are building up  
15 this online platform to really enable ultimately  
16 individuals.

17                   DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY JONES:  
18 Sure. This is Skip Jones, Takreem. We've started  
19 with a rather simple website for the Prosper  
20 Africa and we're continuing to build that out.

21                   Right now it is a landing page that  
22 can direct people who come to the landing page to

1 more information.

2 Eventually what we want to do is make  
3 it more dynamic so that any company coming in can  
4 get easy access to the full range of services  
5 that the U.S. government offers for U.S.  
6 companies seeking to expand their business  
7 presence in the African market and even for  
8 African companies seeking to do greater business  
9 or invest more in the United States.

10 That will be a process of ongoing  
11 work, but we agree with you that a very dynamic  
12 online platform is really essential to the  
13 overall goal of making this whole government  
14 coordination vision a reality.

15 MEMBER EL-TOHAMY: Yes, and experience  
16 says that when you do that it will recommend and  
17 suggest changes that specific government agencies  
18 can -- to do to serve better the specific  
19 function and coordinate better.

20 So, I think this is good and we will  
21 be able to help with that.

22 DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY JONES:

1 Super. Thank you.

2 SECRETARY ROSS: Any other questions?

3 MEMBER TOTH: Yes, hi, this is Chris  
4 Toth from Varian Medical Systems.

5 One item I wanted to put out there for  
6 feedback and perspective of the committee is as  
7 we do take actions across Africa how can we  
8 prioritize sustainable impact within the  
9 geography.

10 So specifically what I mean in the  
11 context of Varian as an example is we're a cancer  
12 care company. We supply devices for treating  
13 cancer patients.

14 Our view is we'd like to encourage the  
15 committee to focus on it's not just about  
16 placement of the technology to help the  
17 individuals in the communities, but then how are  
18 we creating education, training, sustainability  
19 with jobs and up-leveling not just access to  
20 care, but social and economic status.

21 SECRETARY ROSS: I think that's right.  
22 Implementation at the very detailed level of all



1 those aspects obviously is important to making  
2 the whole thing succeed.

3 I think that will vary a lot by the  
4 product and the service. But as a concept I  
5 think you're right.

6 We need to make sure that all the  
7 bells and whistles relating to ongoing and  
8 sustainable implementation are in place.

9 DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY JONES:  
10 Secretary, if I can add to that. We have always  
11 envisaged as part of the overall effort not only  
12 helping companies finish deals, but also building  
13 that capacity both physical capacity and  
14 regulatory human capital capacity and engaging in  
15 trade and investment policy interventions to  
16 create a better business environment.

17 So it's an effort to expand the deal  
18 flow to build the capacity on the African side to  
19 take advantage of the increased presence of U.S.  
20 industry and then the trade and investment policy  
21 engagement try to remove any barriers that  
22 appear.

1           So Chris, entirely agree with your  
2 suggestion and that's one of the key things that  
3 we're going to try to be doing in this enhanced  
4 coordination across these activity areas of the  
5 U.S. government.

6           SECRETARY ROSS: Any other questions?

7           CO-CHAIR LANE: Mr. Secretary, I think  
8 in the interest of time to stay on schedule let's  
9 -- I propose that we can gather any additional  
10 questions for follow-up.

11           But it may be best to turn it over to  
12 Ashley and Giancarlo right now, the designated  
13 federal officers for PAC-DBIA to outline next  
14 steps for the process and to reiterate that we  
15 are very much looking forward to developing the  
16 recommendations and following through on the  
17 tasking that you've given us.

18           SECRETARY ROSS: Thank you.

19           MR. CAVALLO: Thanks, Laura. So just  
20 a couple of notes from us.

21           This meeting here, well timed because  
22 we actually have our next meeting, the PAC-DBIA

1 members staff representatives on Thursday.

2 At that meeting we are now sort of  
3 primed to launch into structuring a work plan for  
4 tackling the tasking at hand, beginning to  
5 organize into sub-working groups, begin to  
6 coordinate with the Interagency Working Groups on  
7 what kind of a cadence we can set into place to  
8 begin regular briefings.

9 As far as -- we have two more of those  
10 scheduled before we would anticipate the next  
11 full council in-person meeting where the report  
12 would be delivered.

13 We are targeting end of October,  
14 potentially November for that, and we'll be  
15 working with you and your schedules to work that  
16 out with the Secretary.

17 And in the interim though we will look  
18 into potentially calling some interim  
19 teleconferences with you if needed with the  
20 Prosper Africa Planning Committee.

21 And otherwise your staff  
22 representatives will be working regularly with

1       them.   Anything I missed, Ashley?

2                   MS. BUBNA:   No, you covered it.

3                   MR. CAVALLO:   Okay.  Thanks again to  
4   everybody.  We look forward to following up very  
5   soon and seeing all your staff on Thursday.

6                   VICE CHAIR SILBERMANN:  Thank you all.  
7   Thanks very much, Laura.  Thanks to the rest of  
8   the team.

9                   SECRETARY ROSS:  Thanks, everybody,  
10  for participating.  Have a good day.

11                   (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter  
12  went off the record at 2:02 p.m.)

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on Doing Business in Africa

Before: US DOC

Date: 08-20-19

Place: teleconference

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