



**MINUTES AND TRANSCRIPT FOR THE
U.S. ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PUBLIC DIPLOMACY'S
QUARTERLY PUBLIC MEETING ON
THE YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE**

Wednesday, March 5, 2014 | 10:00-11:30a.m | Capitol Visitor's Center SVC203-02

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. William J. Hybl, Chairman
Mr. Sim Farar, Vice Chairman
Ambassador Lyndon Olson, Vice Chairman
Ambassador Penne Peacock
Ms. Anne Terman Wedner

COMMISSION STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Michelle Bowen, Program Support Assistant
Dr. Katherine Brown, Executive Director

GUEST SPEAKERS PRESENT:

Mr. Brett Bruen, Director of Global Engagement, National Security Council, The White House
Ms. Elizabeth Berry Gips, Coordinator of the Young African Leaders Initiative,
U.S. Agency for International Development
Mr. Todd Haskell, Director of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Bureau of African Affairs,
U.S. Department of State
Mr. Macon Phillips, Coordinator, Bureau of International Information Programs,
U.S. Department of State
Mr. David Plack, Director of Policy and the Senior Advisor to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

MINUTES:

The U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy held a public meeting on March 5, 2014 from 10:00-11:30a.m. in Room SVC203-02 of the Capitol Visitor's Center in Washington, D.C. The Commission Members welcomed five guest speakers to brief them and the public on President Obama's [Young African Leaders Initiative](#) (YALI).

The purpose of this meeting was to understand the rationale behind the President's signature public diplomacy initiative, and the challenges the White House, Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development officers are facing in its implementation. Formally launched by the President in June 2013, YALI intends to bring thousands of African young leaders to the U.S. to participate in a Washington Fellowship, which involves taking part in both six week institutes at universities throughout the country and a summit with the President and U.S. government, businesses and civil society representatives.

The first 500 young leaders will arrive this summer; after six weeks, 100 of them will stay behind for internships with American organizations. Once the Fellows return to their home countries, the U.S. Agency of International Development will work with them to help identify opportunities for professional development and community service. Instrumental to this initiative is maintaining an online and grassroots network for the Fellows -- and for the roughly 49,000 young Africans who applied to the fellowship but were not accepted.

The first speaker, Mr. Brett Bruen, Director of Global Engagement at the National Security Council, gave an overview of the initiative and explained that the genesis for it was when many African nations were celebrating 50 years of independence. Instead of inviting African heads of state, the White House invited over 100 young African leaders to share their success stories and vision for the continent. The experience was so positive, that YALI was developed to encourage the professional growth of African youth. Mr. Bruen said that this was also part of an effort to make U.S. public diplomacy more flexible toward immediate issues. After spending several years in Africa, Mr. Bruen said, "what young Africans most need are some immediate connections -- connections to resources, connections to each other, and connections to the outside world. That's what YALI strives to provide them with." He also discussed how the model will soon expand to other regions in the world, starting with Southeast Asia and the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI).

The Commission Members asked about the national security dimension of the program and why this was a Presidential priority. Mr. Bruen emphasized that the youth bulge in Africa can be a force for positive and negative change. African youth are often viewed by their governments in political terms, he said, "But seldom do [government leaders] actually look to young people for their ideas, for innovation and for inspiration. And if we can assist young people in having a voice in the decision making process in their countries, then they don't have to resort to more destructive practices."

The second speaker, Mr. Todd Haskell, Director of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the Bureau of African Affairs at the State Department, discussed how 50 American posts in Africa worked to attract the roughly 49,500 young leaders who applied for the Washington Fellowship after President Obama announced it in June. Public Affairs Officers used a mix of grassroots and digital tactics to attract applicants and support them in filling out their applications. Officers also targeted leaders of organizations and institutions to identify employees who would make good candidates. There was also a strong social media push country by country. Originally the State Department was hoping for 5,000 applicants; but they received 49,503 applications for 500 spots.

The third speaker, Mr. David Plack, Senior Advisor at the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at the State Department, discussed the Washington Fellowship's mechanics. ECA, along with their implementing partner, IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board), has worked with institutes at 20 universities across the country, each of which will host 25 Fellows. The Fellows will participate in six week programs, from June to July 2014, on three tracks: business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership and public management. Leadership training, he said, is the main theme of their activities, which academics, community service, and cultural events with each other and with Americans. The Fellows will then gather in Washington to attend the President's summit. One hundred of the Fellows will stay in the U.S. for eight-week internships. Mr. Plack emphasized that alumni development is also a core part of the program.

Ms. Elizabeth Berry Gips, the Coordinator for YALI at USAID, also discussed efforts to support the Fellows when they return to their countries. She said that three things made the Washington Fellowship for YALI different from other exchanges: the interagency nature of the effort, the continued investment in the Fellows through networking and professional opportunities, and the scale of the program. Once the Fellows

return to Africa, they will receive support from USAID to network with each other, develop professionally, acquire access to seed funding for entrepreneurial pursuits, and identify opportunities to serve their communities. USAID has determined 200 professional placements for the Fellows, which will range from two to four months, with the most significant partners being Microsoft. The U.S. African Development Foundation has also committed to providing \$5 million dollars in seed funding to business and social media entrepreneurs.

Finally, Mr. Macon Phillips, the Coordinator of the International Information Programs Bureau (IIP) at the State Department, discussed his recent trip to Africa and his bureau's efforts to create the Young African Leaders Network (YALN), which will allow the 500 Washington Fellows to stay in touch once they return to their countries, but also allow the other 49,000 applicants to connect with the United States and with one another. Part of the network's purpose is to identify areas where the U.S. can help add value to their lives and their professional growth, he said, but it also is a tool for these leaders and aspiring leaders to build connections with one another across the continent.

The Commission Members and audience also posed questions about the program's sustainability after President Obama leaves office, and the risk of narrowly focusing on African elites as applicants for this program. The specific answers to the questions can be found below in the transcript. The Commission will continue to review YALI's implementation and raise concerns as the model is expanded to Southeast Asia and other regions of the world.

The meeting closed by briefly discussing the Commission's mandate and plan for the next year. The Commission will meet publicly again on May 8, 2014.

TRANSCRIPT:

Chairman Bill Hybl: Hello and welcome to our public meeting for the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy. I'm Bill Hybl, Chairman of the Commission. We were reinstated last summer after a 19-month hiatus. But since 1948, the United States Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy has been charged with appraising U.S. Government activities intended to understand, inform and influence foreign publics. It also works to increase the understanding of, and support for, these same activities. The Commission conducts research and symposiums that provide assessments and informed discourse on public diplomacy efforts across government.

This meeting is on the President's Young African Leaders Initiative, or YALI, as it is popularly known. Launched in 2010, this initiative is President Obama's signature public diplomacy project. Its stated purpose is to invest in the next generation of African leaders. It was a focal point for the president's trip to Africa last summer. Implementing it has also been an interagency effort, with many agencies reorienting their programs and strategies to focus on providing opportunities for African youth. As roughly 60 percent of Africa's total population is below the age of 25, a young initiative program certainly fits the profile when you look at that particular environment.

I'd like to introduce our Commission. First Sam Farar, our Vice Chairman from Los Angeles; Ambassador Lyndon Olson, Vice Chairman from Waco, Texas; Ann Terman Wedner from Chicago; and Ambassador Penne Peacock from Austin, Texas. Unfortunately, Lezlee Westine from here in Washington, a

Commissioner, is unable to join us today. To round it out, I'm from Colorado, so that kind of broadens the spectrum here.

We'd like to thank Senator Barbara Boxer, who's been very gracious to the Commission, for being our host today in this particular room and Walker Zorensky on her staff for his assistance.

You know these Commissioners that you're looking at have done a great deal on their own for public diplomacy and I'd like to introduce the Vice Chair of the Commission, Sim Farar. Sim.

Vice Chairman Sim Farar: I'm one of the Vice Chairs, the other Vice Chair sits to my left, former Ambassador to Sweden, Lyndon Olson. Thank you very much, very, very much for coming. It means a lot to us to have you all here. Today, we are honored to have with us today five officials who have been instrumental in implementing the Young African Leaders Initiative at the White House, the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development. From the State Department, we have Macon Phillips, the Coordinator for the International Information Programs Bureau, a position he assumed in September 2013. His first role in the Obama Administration was with the White House as a Special Assistant to the President and the Director of Digital Strategy, previously he served as Deputy Director on the Obama campaign's new media department.

Also from the State Department we have Todd Haskell, hello Todd. He's the Director of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs with the Bureau of African Affairs, and he has spent more than seven years as a public affairs officer in Africa, serving in South African and Burkina Faso. Also joining us is David Plack, the Director of Policy and the Senior Advisor to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs at the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. His office is responsible for all academic programs sponsored by the United States Department of State, including the Fulbright program in more than 150 countries. He previously served at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

From USAID we have Elizabeth Berry Gips, the coordinator of the Young African Leaders Initiative. She has years of experience working in the Africa region. Most recently, she served as a Senior Education Advisor to USAID in South Africa. She also has more than two decades of experience in the education sector with a focus on international development and non-profit management.

And from the White House we have Brett Bruen, who is the Director for Global Engagement at the National Security Council. Brett is a career Foreign Service Officer who has served in Venezuela, Iraq and Madagascar; he was also responsible for embassy public affairs during elections in Liberia in 2005 and Guinea in 2010. There are more detailed biographies and information in the back of the room if you'd like to read more about them.

Our Executive Director, Katherine Brown, will moderate a discussion between them and will open that discussion up for questions from the Commission Members and also questions from the audience. Katherine.

Katherine Brown: Thank you everyone for being here today and thank you so much for our speakers for taking time out of your mornings to be here. We're first going to have a discussion about the YALI between them. We're going to start with Brett. Brett, I was hoping you could talk about the White House's goals for this initiative and what the objectives are for the President.

Brett Bruen: Thank you Katherine. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission. It's really an honor to be here today to have the opportunity to talk about the President's Young African Leaders

Initiative. These started three years ago at a time when many African nations were celebrating 50 years of independence and the President and members of his National Security Staff were looking at ways to take note of that, as well as look to the future. And so instead of a doing big event with heads of state, they opted to invite over 100 young African leaders to come to the White House and to share their visions and to develop their skills. That was such a success that they decided to do it every year both here in Washington as well as on the continent. This was up until last summer, when the President went back to Africa and launched a massive expansion of the initiative, which envisions over the next several years, thousands of young African leaders coming to the United States, participating in six week institutes at some of America's top universities, and a summit with the President and leaders in government, business and civil society. And then returning -- and here there's a rather novel component -- returning to the continent and, with efforts led by the USAID to provide them resources and with tools and with programs that will enable them to build on what they have learned. Hopefully, they will also build networks with other emerging African leaders so they are able to write a new future for the continent and for their communities. And this is part of a trend that the President has initiated, which is moving U.S. public diplomacy, since we're here at the Advisory Commissions session, from a focus on some of the longer term exchanges, exchanges that are really quite expensive in their nature, to exchanges that are focused on more immediate issues and that hopefully can reach more people. I think if you look at the situation in Africa and as was mentioned, I spent some time there, what young Africans most need are some immediate connections -- connections to resources, connections to each other, and connections to the outside world. That's what YALI strives to provide them with.

I think that this is a model that the President sees expanding to other regions of the world. He will travel in April to Asia where he will participate in a Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative town hall. And then over the course of the next several years, we see this as an initiative that will expand to other regions and hopefully as well to other areas. Currently the tracks to participate in the Washington Fellowship are in public management, in business and civil society. But we're aware that there are many other ways in which young leaders can demonstrate a leadership and hopefully participate in the fellowship as well.

Katherine Brown: Okay great, thank you, Brett. Todd, can you talk about how this fits in with the administration's larger policy and public diplomacy goals in the Africa region?

Todd Haskell: Sure, sure and I think I'll start with the President's initiative in South Africa in June where he sat in a room with a bunch of young South Africans and he announced the Washington Fellowship. Now the Washington Fellowship is part of YALI. We've talked about the Washington Fellowship being the flagship program for the Young African Leadership Initiative. This summer we're going to bring 500 Africans from across the continent to the United States to participate in these study institutes and then later on participate in a summit with the President before they return to Africa, where they will have access to all these terrific resources that we're putting into this program.

So the important thing was, when the President announced this program, was to get the word out across the continent. We did that right at the beginning. In addition to the folks who were there with the President in South Africa, we had town halls across the continent where we had video feeds, where people had the opportunity to watch it. And then we had to keep the buzz going. The application was not going to be online until December and, again, the President asked for it in June. So we had six months to develop an engagement strategy where we would reach out to African youth across the continent and make that kind of connection.

Now one thing -- I think is turning into a little bit of a cliché, but I'll say it anyway -- Africa is not a country, it's a continent. We have embassies in 46 countries, we have 50 posts, which means we have 50 Public

Affairs Officers (PAOs) across the continent. In every one of those we reach out to the local community and there's different ways to do that. For instance, one is just to directly reach out to young people, through contacts. We did a lot of this particularly in countries where maybe they don't have a certain Internet penetration that you have in, say, Belgium. In a country like Togo, our Public Affairs Officer, every Saturday morning she would bring young people to our library there. She would sit with them, she would work on their language, she would work on their essay-writing skills, she would talk about the Young African Leaders Initiative and about the Washington Fellowship. Our PAO in Brazzaville in Congo, she set up an English club where she brought in people to talk about the Young African Leaders Initiative as well, but what was great is the other English clubs in the city found out about it and now every Thursday night, 200 or 300 young Africans gather in the middle of Washington in Brazzaville and they meet different members of the embassy and talk about what the embassy does about American culture and also about Young African Leaders Initiative. In Rwanda and in Angola, our PAOs organized a series of barbecue picnics for young people and university students and young professionals where they have the opportunity to talk about the Young African Leaders Initiative. So that was one way to sort of do outreach with students and directly with young people.

A second way is to talk to the older contacts, people who look maybe a little bit more like me, and talk to them about the young people who are working in their organizations and institutions and how those folks would be good candidates to participate. In fact we got buy-in from a lot of ministries, some businesses and different institutions across the country. We were particularly struck that the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde put the Young African Leaders Initiative on his Facebook page and put it on his website and started promoting the program. We had similar successes across the continent. And finally we did the kind of great big broader outreach particularly in certain, more developed countries in Africa that reaches everybody. Our ambassadors in Ethiopia and Kenya, in Nigeria, in South Africa, all went on radio and television to talk about this program, and the importance the President gave it and what it could mean for Africa. In addition, in a lot of our posts that have Facebook pages, pretty much all of our embassies have Facebook pages, and I think State has done a terrific job of developing social media platforms in order to communicate with folks. In Africa that's not the case for every country, but for instance our Facebook page in South Africa has 64,000 fans right now and the country where Brett was before, our embassy now has up to 30,000 fans; in fact it has more fans than any other Facebook page in Madagascar. So we have done a terrific job of communicating that way and we started reaching out. Now that we've begun getting applications, we ask on the application, "How did you hear about this program?" And many have said they've heard about it from social media.

So by September, we started to see a real surge in interest. The International Information Programs Bureau (IIP) has a terrific website about the Young African Leaders Initiative where people could sign up and ask to be included on future emails and information. We were starting to get 1,000 people a week or so who were signing up to get new information. And then we had a terrific metric: thanks to the government shutdown, we had to stop all of our outreach for a few weeks. I guess we had proof at that point that it really worked because as soon as we stopped our outreach, the new request included on our email outreach dropped to just a couple hundred a week. And as soon as we started our outreach again, it picked up. So we had, thanks to the government shutdown, there's a silver lining to everything, we had this opportunity to identify where our efforts went.

In the beginning, we were really targeting -- I remember sitting down with Brett about this -- we were targeting 5,000 people to apply for this program; and we asked, "Oh, should we shoot for 10,000?" We got 49,503 applicants. So it far blew out any possibility of anything that we possibly imagined. So we're very pleased, right now our posts are actively involved in the selection process. It's a much bigger job than we

had planned it would be when we were looking at 5,000 applicants; 50,000 is a lot of applications to read but they're on target and we're on target and we're in good shape.

Katherine Brown: Great. And let's pass the microphone to David and maybe he can talk about the various partnerships involved in implementing this. Thank you, Todd.

David Plack: Thank you again to the Commission for having us here; it's a great opportunity for us to talk about the work that we do, especially the exchanges work that we do in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The first thing I want to say, as you've seen, and you'll see from our colleagues, this is a full interagency effort. This is what makes, I think, this a unique effort as we manage great integration of all work of our agency colleagues. And there's some things that are traditional about what we do, meaning we're applying our expertise in management exchanges to ensure that the program that we design for them builds the relationship that we're looking for and it conveys the mutual understanding that we want to convey between Americans and Africans. We transfer the skills that we're looking to transfer between the institutes, and ensure that the program is impactful on them, that its life changing for them to hear about many of our experiences. And that it's lasting and they apply what they have learned during their exchange experience when they return back to the continent.

So there are four basic areas where the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs is involved with the Washington leadership in close coordination with all of our interagency colleagues. The first is for the institutes themselves. As you heard our colleagues mention, there will be 20 institutes for 500 African leaders that are coming here. Those institutes will have 25 participants each, they'll be based at 20 excellent U.S. universities across the country representing all of the kinds of universities we have in the United States. That experience at the universities will be an intensive academic experience in three separate tracks: one for business and entrepreneurship, one for civic leadership and one for public management.

In addition to the academic skills that will be the core of the institute, the institute will include community service, workshops, site visits, and cultural activities in order for them to interact with each other and also to interact with Americans. Also running through all of the institutes is the common element of leadership training, including instructional mentorship and how to give back to their communities.

After the six week institutes, which will run from mid June until the end of July, at the end of July there will be summit here in Washington, which will include the President. The goal of the summit is to allow the participants from all of the institutes to interact with each other across their tracks and also to interact with senior leaders in the United States from each of these three tracks. The goal is to build relationships amongst the participants themselves and also build networks and relationships with leaders in the United States who are career relevant to those three tracks.

At the end of the summit, 100 of the 500 Africans will stay in the United States and they'll have a professional development or an internship experience with a U.S. federal agency or with a local government, with NGO's or society organizations, with U.S. private sector businesses, community organizations. So across the three tracks they'll be placed in internships across the U.S. And those are eight-week internships to allow them to see the application of some of what they have learned, how that's applied in a U.S. setting and also to help them develop professional relationships that they can carry back with them to their continent.

The last of the four areas that we're working on is alumni development so that the program doesn't end when they leave the United States -- and you'll hear from my colleague about how the program continues

for them when they return to Africa in professional development. We also wanted to maintain that connection with them, to help them maintain an identity that they have as a special group of Washington fellowship alumni and to give them the tools that they need to go out into that community and to share their experience. So through mentorship opportunities, networking opportunities, community service opportunities, we will provide virtual tools for them, open education resources and other kinds of low-bandwidth tools that they can buy and reach out to their communities in Africa. And also to bring them together through alumni associations, to help develop alumni associations so they can do community service and other activities together as a group. And also to bring together possible mentees through experiences like tech camps. Those are the panoply of things that we're working on in cooperation with our partners.

I do want to mention too that we're doing all of this through our cooperating agency, IREX. In managing our exchanges, our cooperating agencies are important partners to us in bringing expertise to the U.S. community applied from other exchanges to this new initiative. And we're appreciative of that.

Katherine Brown: Thank you, David. Liz, if you could talk about USAID's role and how this fits into the overall development goals for the Africa region.

Elizabeth Berry Gips: Thank you, I'd be happy to. I think I want to start by just echoing a bit what was said in the description by Brett and Todd of how this got started because I was actually fortunate enough to be in South Africa when the President announced YALI and the Washington Fellowship, as well as when Mrs. Obama did the Young African Women's Leadership Initiative in 2011. And so in my mind when I think about this I actually think back to what it felt like to be in those rooms when those announcements were made. Particularly last summer, to see this room absolutely teeming with young leaders from NGO's, young business leaders, all so eager for the 45 minutes before the President arrived. It was nonstop singing, chanting, foot stomping; the room was literally pulsing with excitement. And as the President did his town hall and announced the Washington Fellowship he then moved into a Q&A and every single question was hard hitting and substantive about trade and business. It was just this palpable sense of how eager these young people were and how ready they were for this kind of program.

So at USAID we're very excited to be part of this initiative, and in particular, to focus on what happens after the fellows in the United States go back to Africa. I try to keep in mind three things that I think are quite different about the Washington Fellowship. We talked a little bit about the interagency nature. Brett mentioned the fact that there is this notion at its very core that we're going to continue to invest in these young leaders, unlike some other exchange programs where when they're over, we use our alumni networks. Here we're really trying to make a continued investment in both the core networking opportunities and their professional development.

I think the third to keep in mind is scale. As Todd talked about, there were 50,000 applications, and 500 young leaders coming in a matter of weeks. So those three things I think really differentiate this program.

To speak in a bit more detail about what happens when the fellows go back. So beginning next August or September, the 500 young leaders will be returning to their home countries and in designing the activities in Africa, we really tried to mirror the broad goals in the United States, which are continuing to build skills through professional development and continuing to provide really concrete, tangible and important networking opportunities. As part of the networking, also continuing to solidify those ties with the United States.

We've got four activity areas. David touched on some of them but broadly: networking, professional development, access to seed funding, which we know many entrepreneurs, social and business entrepreneurs, are hungry for, and then continuing to give them opportunities to serve their communities.

In terms of networking, we are going to make sure that there are opportunities at the country level and also at the regional and the continent-wide level. At the country level, we'll really be working through the State Department to make sure that posts have funding for alumni associations. And to make sure that posts really take advantage of the many organic, creative things that are happening in each country and include the fellows in those activities and come up with their own events. We've already been hearing Todd and I exchange stories about how Kenya is thinking about this, Kenya's thinking about that. There's a lot of excitement about ways that fellows can be included in post-specific activities. We will then be facilitating networking events at the regional level when the fellows will come together in West, East and South Africa at least once a year for major networking events and every other year for a continent-wide event. We're hoping to include corporate partners in a pretty significant way in these events, in terms of sponsoring and underwriting them, and to be thoughtful about how we bring leaders together across sectors and around specific industries and around focused challenges and questions. We've also been talking a little bit about some of our virtual activities. We'll be creating a web platform specifically for the Washington Fellows that will include both opportunities for them to network through their own profiles, through discussion groups. But also serve as an important resource portal where they'll have access to everything from webinars, to opportunities to apply for seed funding, to information about regional events, etc., etc.

I mentioned we'll also be continuing to invest in their professional development and we'll be doing that in two key ways, through more opportunities for internships with professional placements as well as through mentors. We've been working since last fall to spread the word among corporations and potential civil society partners regarding the Washington Fellowship and what it's all about. We've had a lot of interest in offering professional placements for the Fellows back in Africa. So we've committed to 200 professional placements from two to four months, our most significant partnership right now is with Microsoft, which is very excited to be taking up to 100 young Africans in their offices across the continent. And that's just one example. We'll also be continuing to offer mentors to the Fellows.

USADF, the U.S. African Development Foundation, is an important agency player in all of this as well and they will have committed to provide \$5 million dollars in seed funding, which will be available to entrepreneurs -- both those starting businesses as well as social entrepreneurs. So that's another important resource for the Fellows that go back. And finally, opportunities to serve their communities and David talked about that. That will maybe be happening at the country level; we'll also be looking to the fellows themselves as 25- to 35-year-old young leaders to provide some important input on how they want to serve communities. So I'll stop there.

Katherine Brown: Thank you very much, Liz. Macon, if you can talk about IIP's role in the outreach to the broader Young African Leaders Network.

Macon Phillips: Absolutely. Thank you for inviting me and having me here. It was pointed out in my bio that I'm the newbie here. I have some background in public engagement but mostly to a domestic audience. I have a lot to learn about foreign audiences, so in January I traveled to Africa for two weeks. And when I was there I met a guy named Sir Nigel who to me sums up exactly what we're trying to do here. Certainly with YALI generally, but with this larger virtual engagement as well. So Sir Nigel lives in Zimbabwe; I've never been to Zimbabwe before, I had no idea what to expect. But it is an amazing place, full of young people who want to change the country. As all of you probably know, that's pretty difficult to do in Zimbabwe.

The post there had a series of programs laid out to promote the Young African Leaders Initiative and also to teach me a thing or two about how embassies work and things I need to know back here in DC. But they left one event to this guy, Sir Nigel, who they had met and kind of developed a relationship with. They had him really take on promoting this event. It was just a panel with the me and the ambassador to young people from their country. Sir Nigel is a small business owner in Zimbabwe and he's about 33 years old. And every week or two he goes onto Twitter, because they use Twitter in Africa, and he uses a specific hashtag and talks about issues in Zimbabwe. A few weeks ago, he talked about accountability and transparency in government in Zimbabwe.

He promoted this event and we had 300 people show up; it was amazing. This event in Zimbabwe was the most well attended event during the entire two weeks I spent in the region. And while we were there, the Ambassador and I had a lot of great questions, there was a lot of back and forth. But it dawned on us and, at the same time we made this point to the group: how many of you actually know each other? And everyone kind of started looking around. And we said, "This is part of the value of what we're doing. If you introduce yourself to one person you didn't know before you came, the United States is adding value to this network here in Zimbabwe." So when we think about young African leaders and how we can help them develop, the question certainly is what we can offer them, but it's also the role of government to connect people with one another in these countries to support one another. That's where we want to go with young African Leaders Network.

So I'm from Huntsville, Alabama; everything I look at looks like a space program to me. I think of the Washington Fellows as the nose cones on an Apollo rocket and the 49,000 other people as the big remainder. It turns out applying for YALI was really hard. It was really hard and it should be, this is a significant investment; it's a very important program. I just want to be clear that it's no joke. You had to have letters of recommendation, two essay questions; we had a lot of people actually start and not finish the application. The ones that signed up and won a trip to the United States had to answer, "Show us why we should bring you here; what's your track record of change so far?" All of this of course, is on an online form, and all of this in Africa where it's hard to get the Internet sometimes. So I only say that because we have a highly motivated group of tens of thousands of people who want to develop as leaders and this was where we started when we looked at young African leaders who network. So we created an email program that's communicated directly with this cohort. We've been using it for the last three months, talking to them first about the application process, but as that process spun down, demonstrating the ongoing value of the network.

And what's interesting is, it's working. But we know it's working because we actually measure the performance. We can see the percentage of people that open the emails, we can see what's shared and we ask them what's valuable to them. We did a survey of the list and we had 15,000 people respond. 40 percent of them told us they had taken online classes, well that's a big flag for us because it turns out we're doing a lot of great work in online courses, so maybe we can connect those two groups.

There's a lot of new opportunity this year to show how we can add value to these young leaders' lives in Africa virtually, in addition to exchanges. And so just to echo what David said earlier, maybe I didn't know any better, but I showed up at the State Department and just started asking everyone I could find, no matter where they worked, to help with this. And I think it's really turned into an inter-agency or intra-State Department, and certainly with USAID efforts, to identify the types of things that individual young leaders like Sir Nigel will find valuable to develop as leaders. And we're now developing a marketing channel that helps us not only deliver that information but, when we have other issues, deliver information about crisis, deliver information if we sent a video about Nelson Mandela's passing – whatever it is, we have a highly

efficient delivery mechanism to reach young, influential people in African countries and that's continuing to grow organically. And we're looking to grow it even past the Washington Fellows program.

Katherine Brown: Great, thank you very much Macon, and to all our speakers. I'm now going to turn it back over to the Commission Members for their questions.

(Commission Member) Ambassador Lyndon Olson: This question is for Brett. It may be self-evident, but it may not be self-evident, what is our security interest into this program?

Brett Bruen: Well, I think as is often pointed out in Africa, this youth bulge can either be a tremendous force for development and for positive change in the continent or it can be a force for negative change. And that is really the challenge that we face; so if we can take the energy that young Africans have and apply it and connect it into channels that will help them develop their communities, will help them see opportunity and to resist the influences from organizations like Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda, then I think we have a tremendous opportunity to change the future of the continent. But we are very much engaged in this fight right now because there are organizations, there are influences that are trying to capture the energy that young Africans have in and apply it for other purposes. That isn't only in terms of extremism, it's also in terms of maintaining the status quo. You know often times when you talk to political leaders in Africa about the role of young people, they see it through a prism of participating in political demonstrations and helping to rally participation in what the government wants them to do. But seldom do they actually look to young people for their ideas, for innovation and for inspiration. And if we can assist young people in having a voice in the decision making process in their countries, then they don't have to resort to more destructive practices. They can feel as though they are an integral part of deciding their fate.

Elizabeth Berry Gips: Just a couple comments to add to that. I want to re-emphasize that we're recruiting leaders from business, government and civil society and investing in their leadership. But we're also trying to create connections among them to take back. We've heard this over and over again for a number of years that exchange participants return home, brimming with excitement about what they want to do with their civil society organizations. But they go back and then it's hard, there are a lot of forces working against them. Part of what we're trying to do is create these networks so they'll have other people in their country and, importantly, across the region and across the continent that they can turn to. So when Sir Nigel is up against forces where he feels like he's at a loss, he'll have a whole network of other young leaders he can reach out to support his efforts.

(Commission Member) Anne Terman Wedner: Can I jump in? Because I think my question is relevant to follow up. In terms of what you all talked about, especially you Macon, in making this network that follows everyone, not just the winners. My question is: Is there a way to make it more interactive and participatory for the folks that we're not just sending our video on Nelson Mandela? But how do we allow it to be interactive?

Macon Phillips: So I want to be clear on something. The Mandela video is really an example of something that we added in as sort of a supplemental piece of content. It's in itself not about leadership development, but more of an inspirational video about leadership. I mean the views on that, which is pretty good for a State Department video, is no small part because we were able to get it out quickly. But the State Department actually has quite a few resources that are already in place for young leaders both at the national level, at each embassy, but also at the regional level. When you think about our Ambassador-at-Large for Women's Issues, when we think about our economic statecraft efforts that are looking at supporting emerging markets for American businesses. Some of the challenge is just connecting audiences with those efforts. If we can take the things that we're doing and get them in front of an influential

audience, it's very helpful. On top of that, we are asking questions about the kinds of resources they find valuable in these surveys. Very much so that we're crafting the kind of program that's going to ultimately be relevant to them. Because a 35-year-old that grew up in Alabama isn't necessarily the best source of empathy for the end user: African leaders. And so we need to start by understanding what the challenges they face by country are going to be so we can identify the official resources.

(Commission Member) Ambassador Penne Peacock: I have a question for David. First of all, I want to thank the panel members for your enthusiasm on Africa. You don't always find it. I've served out there for about four years and I very much loved that part of the world and I like what you're doing. I want to bring this thing to life about you saying there are 20 institutes that will be taking care of these people. Well one of them is the University of Texas and just so you know from the other side of the platform, the enthusiasm that they are having in Austin about these young people coming, and the corporate money they're trying to raise, and the reception they are organizing so that they can say "Welcome to United States, welcome to Texas" – we are proud about having this program in Austin.

And the other thing I would like to say to you is – and Lyndon would know this as well – about the alumni situation. Will that be directed by the embassy, like the Fulbright people? During our ambassador years, we had alumni parties and the Fulbright people came out of the walls, out of the mountains, out of the grass. They're so proud – even after 20 or 30 or 40 years they say, "I'm a Fulbright alumnus." And I think you have an opportunity to have the same thing with these young people and carrying them through as they grow older and become the leaders. But I'm concerned about who will direct that – the PAO, the embassy, the ambassador? And who will fund it?

David Plack: Thank you, and thank you for speaking about the universities and their involvement. Actually, I thought after I spoke, that I wanted to note that those 20 universities are full partners for us in doing this. In fact they're all sharing the cost and we have had tremendous response from the U.S. academic community for wanting to become involved in this, which began even before the President announced the initiative. The universities were instrumental in providing their insight into what an effective institute would look like. And it continues now that we have these partners working with us. I want to convey that they will be the success of the experience that the African young leaders have while they're here, they'll be in their hands for the six weeks, they'll be interacting with faculty or experts in these areas and they'll be interacting with the local community to see how Americans think and act on these same kind of issues. So thank you for pointing that out; that was extremely important. And since they will be across the United States, we want them to experience the diversity across the United States.

Regarding the alumni, that's what we intend to do. As it has been pointed out, we intend to provide them with the tools so that the young leaders themselves can directly interact with their local communities. So we see alumni associations often form because someone has been through this life changing experience, and they often go back and form the association on their own. They need resources and tools to make them effective; so we want to support the development of alumni associations, we want to help foster that identity as young leaders, as Washington Fellow alumni. We're also providing our embassies with the ability to develop country implementation plans, which will involve how the embassy and the full country team will interact and integrate the alumni into the activities that the embassy has ongoing throughout the year. We want to connect them to the other networks that we already built through the youth councils, through the exchange programs like Fulbright, through the connections that the embassy has with civil society and government and businesses. So this is a combination of embassy-driven, embassy-directed tools and resources, including what USAID missions are doing, and integrating the alumni into those existing activities as well as providing them with available tools so that they can self-direct.

The profile of the participant is a 25- to 35-year-old who has already demonstrated leadership in their sector on the continent. We know that if you give them, as Macon said, the chance to know each other and build the network with each other, they're going to do amazing things that we don't even have to direct. But we want to provide with the mechanisms, the tools, the resources to make them effective.

(Commission Member) Sim Farar: I'd like to first comment on the speakers today. I appreciate everyone of you for talking. It's been very, very, very informative; thank you very much. Macon, I just want to tell you that Sir Nigel's story was great, very inspiring and I really appreciate that. I want to mention people in the audience, by the way, that there are lots of opportunities in public diplomacy and please, I beg you to get involved. Get involved.

My question is really to Brett. I'd like to ask a question to you if I can? We are competing for youth's youth's attention from other state and non-state actors who are prevalent in Africa. For instance, China and extremist networks. What are we doing besides YALI to get attention there? Obviously there's competition out there for us.

Brett Bruen: What we are doing is, as I alluded to in the introduction, looking at how we shift our approach to public diplomacy. So we are no longer looking through just one set of options, that worked in the last century. We're developing new tools that reflect the realities of the 21st century. And this requires, for instance, that we need to be much more nimble in responding to trends and responding to threats where they exist so that we can have an exchange program that is able to capture an opportunity or to respond to a crisis. And so the President in his budget request for FY15 has, for the first time, requested 25 million dollars in rapid response exchanges. This is so we can structure our exchanges in a way that reflect these realities.

Secondly, I think Macon has talked about some of these tools. We are developing online platforms in capacities that are going to reach beyond the traditional audiences that we engage with, that are going to reach into many of these networks and are going to try to develop a channel through which we can hopefully link young people with opportunities. Maybe a virtual opportunity, but then perhaps we can encourage them to come to an American space or an American Corner, and perhaps even pursue studying in the United States.

On that last point, we are also heavily investing in outreach and in promoting study in the United States. We've added a significant amount to the educational advising line item with the FY15 request because we realize that the world of international education is no longer one that is dependent on government scholarships. We need to compete in a global marketplace where countries are aggressively pushing to recruit overseas students to their universities and we need to spend our resources as part of that outreach. And if we can make a compelling case to students – particularly in strategic regions such as Asia, Latin America and Middle East – we can make some important end roads that I think are going to, in the long-term, make some important dividends.

(Commission Member) Sim Farar: Thank you very much.

(Commission Member) Ambassador Lyndon Olson: This is more of a mechanics question. How do these fellowships – the intern program is kind of interesting to me. How controlled are these? I'm sitting here listening to you discuss 20 universities. I would imagine there would be 100 universities that would be interested in this. Are the internship programs discerned by the universities? And how does that work? And if there were universities that were very interested in this how -- how could you communicate this? Do you want to communicate it, do you want it to be fairly controlled? You got 500 – do you want 1,000? If you

want 1,000, could you handle it? I mean just talk about the potential of this and you know a bunch of us are in a lot of different roles in the world – and man, this is really cool. There are probably a lot of folks that would get involved if they knew about this.

David Plack: Thank you, you're absolutely right. As you kindly pointed out, the response from U.S. academic community, the private sector, businesses and others has been tremendous. We have a lot of visibility because of the leadership of the President in announcing this and we want to capitalize on that. For the selection of the universities, this was done through a competitive process where we selected an implementing partner who selected a slate of universities to partner with them in doing this. And they're selected for the quality of their proposals. If in the following year, when we repeat this, there will be an opportunity as well for additional, interested universities to express their interest through that same process.

(Commission Member) Ambassador Lyndon Olson: Will the universities fund --

David Plack: That's right. So for this, in the request for proposals, the universities were required to put up half of the cost share. In some cases, some of the universities are providing more than half of the cost share. And that comes from contributions with private sector partnerships that universities have. And it also comes from the universities' resources towards the initiative. The great thing about that is we're able to then leverage the expertise of particular institutions in particular areas among the three tracks, in order to provide a very tailored and quality experience for that participant based on that university's expertise.

For the internships, the same principle is at stake. But it's a separate process, universities aren't assigning the internships. Any government agency, local government agency, business, or civil society organization that's interested in hosting one of the YALI fellows as an intern can contact IREX, who is our implementing partner, and they can express their interest in hosting the Washington Fellow. Then they provided some parameters, guidelines, about what it means to host that fellow; we want them to have substantive, high-level experiences. These are very accomplished young fellows. They'll have to have a mentor during the internship experience so that we're sure that their eight weeks is spent to best effect and that they're integrated and have visibility on the organization and how it's managed. The selection for matching the fellows to the internship opportunity will happen once we know specifically who the fellows are; so we're assuring that it's the right fit for both the organization that is hosting and for the fellow. So there are multiple opportunities through the whole Washington Fellowship experience including when they return to Africa, and Liz might want to say something to this, to engage U.S. civil society organizations, African civil society organizations and businesses. Liz, do you want to say something more about that?

Elizabeth Berry Gips: Sure. So, absolutely: there is a lot of interest in offering internship and mentors on the continent as well. As David mentioned, 100 of the 500 fellows will be offered internships in the U.S., and the remaining 400 will return home. We are developing an array of professional opportunities for those 400 -- there's been a great deal of interest, particularly among corporate partners, but also among civil society organizations who see this group of young leaders as a group they want to get to know as well. So we'll also be working with an implementing partner on the ground. They'll do a lot of the mechanics of getting the application up so you can really match the fellow's interests with the opportunity and the internship. And then we'll be putting resources on the ground and USAID coordinators in East, West and South Africa -- plus implementing partner resources to help actually manage the logistics. Because I think we all know that for a professional placement or an internship to be successful, you have to manage the details as well. It's been exciting to see the corporations and civil society partners' interest; a lot of them are willing to offer paid stipends to make this possible.

(Commission Member) Ambassador Lyndon Olson: I've watched too much CSPAN, so I don't want carry on. But I have a dear, dear friend who is a well-known Swedish diplomat. The only reason I'm sharing this is probably because everybody in the audience knew it – I just didn't know that we had this intense security interest in the region. He just went as the Secretary General's envoy to try to deal with the problems and conflicts with Russia. And he was a Swedish diplomat all his life and then he was president of the UN, and he came back as Foreign Minister. When he left, he retired and he was asked to be the High Commissioner in the Sudan to negotiate the peace between the North and the South. And he and I are old friends and we had dinner in Sweden. I asked him about the Sudan, and you alluded to the Chinese awhile ago – and that's sort of what triggered this. I said, "What was it like in the Sudan?" And he said it was the most brutal, one of the greatest tragedies of his life. He said, "I negotiated the Iraq/Iranian peace, but this was brutal." He said, "The thing that's the most interesting was what's happening in the Sudan and throughout Africa." He said, "I went out to three mines. All three mines had been acquired by the Chinese. And in those mines, the Chinese had a deal." In order to purchase them, they had to agree to hire Sudanese labor, 500 people. And he said there was a provision in the contracts, in the agreements that said if the Sudanese labor left, you could bring in Chinese. So, over time, they paid the Sudanese \$5 a day, which was in the upwards of a million dollars -- they'd leave and keep paying them so you had the cost of doing business five times 500 a day – and that's cost of doing business. And they had supplanted all that Sudanese labor with Chinese labor. And in one mine where there were 500 Sudanese who had been hired, there were about 30 left. The Chinese had come in, acquired the mine, refurbished the mines, built roads, infrastructures, highways, schools – and they're not going home. He said, "That's happening all over the place." And I had never seen it, never heard it; but it was just startling to me how we sit here and think of the geopolitics in Africa. So it sounds to me that we have a huge security interest in the region. But this is a fantastic program to begin to deal with that, right? I mean we're talking down the pipeline here, 10 and 20 years, right?

Macon Phillips: I very much appreciate that point. Having traveled over there, you hear all sorts of stories about that and you see a very market difference between how the United States approaches capability and growing competency there versus the more extractive approach to resources and things. In one of the countries that I went to, the country wanted to build a soccer stadium – so China offered to give them a loan so long as China could build it. They flew in their workers and built a little tin city next to the stadium, built the stadium – and they still have the loan.

When I worked the presidential campaign in 2008, one of the things that the president said that he was asking people not to believe in his ability to change things, but to believe in their own ability to do so. I think that still applies in Africa. As we're talking to this group of 25 to 35-year-olds, I just want to emphasize again, having been out there, they work against some incredible headwinds. To have made it this far to apply, to those that get in, it's great. To the remainder, we are talking to the cream of the crop and if we squander that relationship, we're going to pay in price for decades to come. We have a huge, huge opportunity here.

(Commission Member) Ambassador Lyndon Olson: How did you solicit these 50,000 applications? Did you solicit them through the embassies, through the NGO's? How did you do it? How did you get the word out to 50,000?

Todd Haskell: We worked through contacts, through embassy contacts, to encourage people to apply. But we took on media as well, we went on the radio, we went on television. There was a tremendous use of social media. First of all, we had the best salesman in the world talking about the program at the onset. I mean the President was out there talking about it. And I think that gave the program a lot of buzz. But we were kind of relentless about it as well, really trying to get people to come to the party. It was an all

embassy approach, it was an all government approach. We also reached out into various webcasts and web chats. It was a tremendous effort and it took the place of some other things we were doing. But I think that this program -- I really liked it when somebody compared it to the Fulbright. I mean, people who are now Fulbright alumni talk about being Fulbright alumni and it's something they put on their resume and something they put in their bio. We want to build something like that around YALI, around the Washington Fellow, so that in 20 to 30 years, you're talking about 10,000 or 15,000 Young African Leaders. By that time they won't be so young anymore, some of them will be middle-aged African leaders. But they'll form a network with knowledge of the United States, hopefully with the leadership and skills and the values that we share. From one Washington Fellow to another Washington Fellow, they will be able to provide a future leadership of Africa. Frankly, I think we'll have failed if they're calling the embassy all the time to ask them what to do -- we'll have failed in our selection process. We're trying to select leaders who are going to take Africa to the next step, but we're also going to have a relationship with the United States. Our efforts to solicit this with a full court press approach and we're very gratified with the way it's worked out.

(Commission Member) Ambassador Penne Peacock: Another question. These young people who are out there, who will come here and have a wonderfully interesting time, some of these countries don't have the most stable governments. Is there any thought of their security with them coming back and waving the American flag? Or will they have to keep that to themselves? Where do we stand on that? So if they form the alumni group, the people who are not so much in favor of the United States, may say, "Those guys we got to get rid of." They do that, as you know, on a daily basis. So how do you think you work that particular problem out after they've been here? And they're excited and they've had this wonderful experience, they're going to go back and they're going to be marked. I don't know who that is directed to but -- I need a volunteer.

Todd Haskell: We're doing this in a series of countries that already have exchange programs, and I think this is something that we take into account when we work within their country. So obviously we have a different level of emphasis in some. In some where we have good relationships, we work quite closely with the government to identify candidates and others not so much for obvious reasons. But it's something that we're cognizant of and I think it's something that these young leaders are, too. We have to treat them as the leaders they are and I think they're cognizant of what involvement means. We've had a tremendous response in Zimbabwe and I think Macon's story about Sir Nigel points to that. On the other hand, there was a YALI event recently organized for alumni that was broken up -- not by government officials but -- by thugs, and who knows who they really were. So I mean I think these kinds of risks exist, but I wouldn't downplay the potential fellows, the YALI Fellows' ability to make those kind of judgments.

Macon Phillips: And just to reiterate one thing that I didn't realize until I had actually been out there and saw the sort of audiences we're targeting with this program. These are leaders already with a demonstrating track record of success. So we're not going from zero to 60, we're going from 60 to 120. And in order to be a leader from the age of 25 to 35, you have to find yourself with business, NGO or government experience. So this doesn't undercut the need to keep security in mind always, but they're not aspiring leaders who are going to be defined by their relationship with the United States. They are people who define themselves in their communities and the United States is helping them be more successful.

Katherine Brown: Okay so we're going to open up questions to the audience now. If you can please stand up, state your name and your affiliation?

Audience Member: I heard about the involvement of the universities, the institutes and also the private sector. But I didn't hear anything about an important bridge between the two, which are the community colleges. I was wondering if there was any involvement or participation with the community colleges?

David Plack: In this case, in the Education and Cultural Affairs Bureau, we have great appreciation for the role of community colleges and their participation in many of our exchange programs. Even in those programs where the community college itself may not be the host, what we say and what we're encouraging is for universities who are hosting the institute to engage institutions in their community. And this is a model that we've used in other programs like the Humphrey Fellowship, where you have one host university, but they're working with a partner community college or another institution in their community and they're engaging them in that six-week institute. This is either through engaging their faculty, engaging their students but also drawing on those resources and trying to make that network connection with the participants.

As we develop the 20 institutions for this year, we would welcome that kind of involvement. So I can put you in touch with our office to ensure that if there are any members that you have in the community where the 20 institutions are located, that they have a chance to express their interest in the program.

Audience Member: Hello my name is Rachel Macaulay. I work for JSI, and we have a very similar program in Liberia called the President's Own Professionals Program. Same concept, we recruit some of the country's best and brightest, but it focuses more on building public sector in the past --

(Commission Member) Ambassador Lyndon Olson: Excuse me, what is -- did you say JSI?

Audience Member: Yes.

(Commission Member) Ambassador Lyndon Olson: What is JSI?

Audience Member: John Snow, Inc. Their non-profit leg is JSI Research and Training Institute. Traditionally, they're a global health development firm. But this was a partnership that came about. So the President's Young Professionals Program is very, very similar. It recruits the country's best and brightest to help rebuild the public sector after 14 years of civic conflict and some of the challenges we're having now. The President clearly is the biggest pioneer and advocate for the program, much like YALI and President Obama. But the issue we're having now is: How do we ensure the sustainability of the program after 2017, when it's a new election and a new President? Priorities change. So I think my question is: What preemptive measures are being taken to sustain this program, if any, as we continue to think about it in the long term? I mean it's a fantastic idea; it's a fantastic program. But what happens when the next head of state says, "Well we got other priorities right now" and no longer is willing to be the voice for it?

Macon Phillips: Well that's a good question. As someone that came in with the President and will probably leave right around the same time, I very much understand those forces. I would want to hear my colleagues' perspectives, who have been through a number of administrations. But one of the things that I think we are looking at from the outset that will help is really asking ourselves how we're measuring impact. This is certainly an inspirational and generational issue. As with many of the changes, they are really challenging because it's hard to say year on year, "Okay, what do we get for that?" But then you look at it in decades and decades, and it's very clear. That's one of these challenges. As we look at broadening this beyond simply exchange and an episodic approach and looking at country resources within and virtual resources, we're able to start looking at matriculation through online course development. We're starting to look at jobs that people in this cohort have that are actually fueling them, their career development. And let the data speak for itself. So it's not purely a political issue or sort of a principle issue, but it's also a data driven observation of the value of taxpayer dollars and value to the Young African Leader. That's at least

how I'm approaching it. So the best case I could make, I'd love to leave a note on the next President's desk saying, "This thing works and that's pretty compelling." I'll hand it over to Brett.

Brett Bruen: I think that's entirely correct. The results hopefully will help to build a case for why it should continue. In terms of the budget and political support, the President's FY15 request has line items for YALI as well as for YSEALI, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, which I think, in political terms, helps to place them in a structure of support. What we are working towards is to create the structures within the government. I think the most similar issue that I could point to would be PEPFAR, another presidential initiative that carried over from one administration to the next and it did so because there were structures - both because it was delivering results and there were structures in place that support it. So I think the President has been very conscious of the fact that this isn't President Obama's initiative but this is the President's initiative. And when a new President comes into office, certainly it is our hope that there will be this structure as well as political support and the results to support its continuation.

(Commission Member) Ambassador Lyndon Olson: Is the funding just through the State Department, or is it through agencies? What's the size of that budget?

Elizabeth Berry Gips: It's through the State Department and AID. I can speak to the AID portion, which is a \$50 million contribution over five years. And I just wanted to add an Africa-based perspective to the earlier question. You raised a really good point in any development initiative, sustainability is the big question and a hard nut to crack. At its core, this is about building capacity in individuals and we will spend the next five years not just building the skills but building this network to the point where if we don't continue to support it, it should be there of its own volition and I feel confident that it will be. I mentioned at the beginning that I was part of the Young African Women's Initiative that Mrs. Obama did. There was absolutely no follow on support; that group of young women from all over the continent formed a Facebook group and started doing project work together with absolutely no support. They're continuing to operate, and we're seeing that with earlier YALI groups as well. I got an email yesterday from a group in Nigeria that has a fantastic social entrepreneurship idea. They're doing it, so I think given the amount of resources because AID's resources are going into the on-the-continent support activities, will have a good platform in place that they can build.

Audience Member: Hi, my name is Mary Kane and I am President and CEO of Sister Cities International. I would like to talk to your point about sustainability. We're an organization that's been around for 57 years, started by President Eisenhower, and we can sustain these initiatives because we have people going back and forth all the time between these cities. The recipients of an AIDS foundation grant, a number of years ago, to build 24 water and health and sanitation projects between cities here in the U.S. and their sister cities in Africa. It doesn't mean when the money stops that our relationships stop. You're also going to demonstrate at the end of this month another AIDS foundation grant doing trilateral relationships between the US, China and Africa. And in putting those three pilot projects together, it's turned out extraordinarily well. I think you're right, the sustainability over time but when you have these local groups and NGOs and their whole goal is to keep that together. You can look to us to help do that.

Katherine Brown: Great. We also want to recognize Bruce Sherman from the Broadcasting Board of Governors. Bruce do you want to talk at all about --

Bruce Sherman: Sure, sure. I don't need a microphone; my voice carries. The Broadcast Board of Governors is the agency of the Federal Government that operates the Voice of America and other surrogate radio stations. We're an international media organization. In Africa, the Voice America has an audience just north of 50 million people. We're in 13 vernacular languages, regional languages. Brett, having served out in

Africa, knows a lot of what we do. We're working with the State Department as a partner potentially in this initiative to provide a sort of message multiplier for the Young African Leaders Initiative in the following way. We can do short profiles, a minute, two minutes, and we can air those all across Africa. We are in partnership already across the continent with 300 different local media outlets, we're partners with most of the leading national media companies in Africa. So these leaders can be known to a much wider range of the African public that would otherwise be the case. So we very much look forward to doing that. We're also looking at facilitating town hall meetings, we do this through the Voice America all over Africa now, in support of the program. We're prepared to offer internships for those who come for media sectors to work at the Voice America or work with us in Africa. We approach what we do from a partnership basis, across the continent, all of the affiliates that we have now are partners. We can contact co-creation with them now and so we will look to seeing how we could engage them in the region to help us in this initiative and to help perpetuate the coverage of the program and what they do when they go back home. So we're -- we can be a big partner.

(Commission Member) Sim Farar: Thank you that was very nice, very, very informative. Time for one more question or no, up there?

Katherine Brown: Yes we've got time.

Audience Member: My name is Bo Machayo and I work for Senator Gillibrand. I'm a first generation African American. My father is from Kenya and my mom came here from Uganda on refugee status; so this project is incredible. I'm very passionate about Africa; a huge part of Africa is in my heart. I spent years there studying with the African community and I want to know what partnership opportunities there might be for first generation African Americans like myself to partner with you and what opportunities there might be for us first generations who live in the States?

David Plack: Thank you for your question. You're one of the young leaders that we would like to see engage with the young African leaders when they come. In fact, one of the things we want to do with the summit is to connect the young leaders with young leaders like yourself in one of the focus areas. So as a first answer, that's one thing we're looking for: Young leaders in the U.S. and accomplished leaders in the U.S. that can connect with participants while they're here. So I would encourage you afterwards to let me have your contact and I'll get you in touch with our team on that.

More broadly, beginning with the recruitment, we've been reaching out to several society organizations in the U.S., to Diaspora communities and others, to engage them in helping us to get out the word to their contacts and their connections on the continent to encourage those connections to apply and those contacts to apply. You had asked about recruitment. One of the best ways to recruit is person-to-person outreach. There's organizations helping us and on the return, there are Diaspora communities here that can remain engaged with them.

Elizabeth Berry Gips: Just one more point. In addition to the summit, when the young leaders are at the institutions, there is another opportunity to engage with them across the United States. I think one of the themes that has been echoing through this Q&A is the interest of partnering and we're very, very anxious to do that both in the U.S. and, more importantly, when they go back. It's certainly part of sustainability; it's part of continuing to support the young leaders. Identifying mentors or internship opportunities or placement opportunities in civil society organizations around the continent is something we're very anxious to do. So we love partnering and all kinds of organizations are interested in being a part of it.

(Commission Member) Sim Farar: I think this panel could go on for hours and hours, there are some great questions. We only have time for one more question because of time. I saw someone in the back, you're our last question.

Macon Phillips: Can I just say one thing, and then they can ask the question? I just want to reiterate the point that if we just think about the 500 leaders coming here, we're just thinking about the nose cone on the rocket ship. We have the technology that makes the exchange model so much more flexible and powerful. ECA is doing some really great work in the concept of virtual exchanges. So when we think about our greatest asset for diplomacy, which are our American citizens, the idea that we can actually take something from a scale of 500 to 50,000 and think about those kinds of relationships – it's really compelling. In other words, why do we need to wait until June? The answer is because we're not quite sure how it works. This is the sort of thing we're really focused on.

The other thing is finding people who know the challenges of getting things done in Africa that can help us identify the kinds of resources that are actually going to be valuable to the end user. This is a really big challenge. So I'll talk to you afterwards, but just getting a little advisory group going, thinking about the kinds of things we should be offering these folks, is really basic. So thanks for speaking up on that.

Audience Member: Hi, I'm Michael Owen. I'm the former Ambassador to the Sierra Leone and currently senior advisor to the Smithsonian for international affairs. First of all, I'd like to just commend the great work that all of you are doing. I think this is a great program and you really have some terrific ideas. The question I have is that unfortunately still today, there are many areas of Africa where you have smart, ambitious, energetic leaders who do not have access to the internet. They're very eager to be involved in programs like this. In Sierra Leone, we reached them through FM radio and we said, "If you want to apply, you can come to the embassy and use our Internet." But I just want to ask how you're thinking about trying to reach this group of people and make sure they don't get left behind because they could be left behind very easily and they're very smart leaders out there. And then the other thing, speaking for the Smithsonian, we love to host interns if you would like us to have some interns, please let me know.

Macon Phillips: So we've talked about this quite a bit, and you'll have some thoughts on it. But just two concepts to keep in mind. First, if we try to reach everyone all the time in everything it's – we need to focus the effort. If we're having 50,000 people applying for an exchange, maybe supply isn't our big issue. Maybe it's experience and follow on. The second is, in places that have challenges with connectivity, the people who have connectivity may actually have outsized influences. So the one person who is able to get access to the internet and bring it back to the community – that's exactly the kind of person we want to develop a relationship with. So sometimes those challenges to connectivity can help us actually identify people of influence. And I think more generally, it is an issue we need to be very conscious of and why having the physical infrastructure in the region is super important.

Todd Haskell: I agree 100 percent with both of those points. I think one thing that we all have to recognize about the internet is, the train is coming down the tracks in every place. I think sometimes it's a little bit further away but no matter what, at some point, if they're not too far in the future, connectivity is going to be a fact of life everywhere. One thing I think that we've all tried to work on quite a bit though is the idea that the way we deal with recruitment, the way we deal with selection, the way we deal with on-the-continent activities is probably going to be a slightly different strategy in every country in Africa depending on exactly what the environment is. So I think we have to make sure, and we are making sure, that our on-the-continent activities in the future, that our improvement in the rest of it will also involve the "last three feet in public diplomacy," that the chance to actually interact with people exists. And we're going to need a lot of activities like this out on the continent and in a place like Sierra Leone, that's going to be a really big

part of it. And we're going to be able to do other things in Kenya, and other things in South Africa, and places that are more connected.

(Commission Member) Sim Farar: That's great. Thank you very much. Lyndon?

(Commission Member) Ambassador Lyndon Olson: Thank you all very much, Brett, Todd, David, Liz, Macon – and thank you all for being here. It was wonderfully staged. Thank you for being thoughtful and we're grateful that you all came and spent an hour and a half with us. As you can probably sense, this Commission is moving forward in several activities that seek to understand the depth and the impact of public diplomacy activities for the continent. We're developing research and analysis on public diplomacy programs throughout our government with a specific focus on how these programs are measured for impact, how they're conducted in high threat environments, and the human resource dimension of public diplomacy. And with that, if any of you have any questions, want more information we would ask you to contact us, specifically our staff. And again, thank you for your audience participation. I know there were -- I think there were two people who kept raising their hands and I know we'd be more than happy to talk with you afterwards. Thank you for coming and everybody stay warm. (Applause.)

(End.)

PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

Brett Bruen is Director for Global Engagement at the National Security Council at the White House. Before joining the NSC, Brett was Special Assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. A career Foreign Service Officer, Brett has served in Cote d'Ivoire, Venezuela, Iraq, and most recently Madagascar. He was responsible for embassy public affairs during elections in Liberia in 2005 and in Guinea in 2010. Brett graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with degrees in International Relations and Political Science. He holds a Masters in Global History from the London School of Economics. Brett speaks fluent Spanish and French.

Elizabeth Berry Gips has been the Coordinator of the Young African Leaders Initiative at USAID since August 2013. She has more than two decades of experience in the education sector, with a focus on international development and non-profit management. From 2010-2012 she served as Senior Education Advisor to USAID in South Africa where she designed an innovative new education program to build teacher capacity, working in close collaboration with the South African government and leveraging private funding through unique public and private partnerships. From 2004-2009, she worked for Global Education Fund (GEF), serving as Program Director and the Executive Director. GEF improves the lives children living in poverty around the world through education. In Kenya, Ms. Gips established a Young Leaders program providing scholarships and leadership development to youth, primarily girls, in the slums of Nairobi. Previously, Liz was one of the founding staff members at New American Schools, a \$100 million initiative to identify and scale bold ideas for comprehensive, whole school reform in the US. She received a BA from Williams College and an MBA from the Yale School of Management.

Todd Haskell has been the Africa Bureau's Director of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of State since August 2013. Previously he has served as a Public Affairs Officer in Santo Domingo (2013-2016), Johannesburg (2006-2010) and Ouagadougou (2003-2006). His other overseas assignments include Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Israel and Mexico. He is a graduate of Georgetown University.

Macon Phillips is Coordinator for the Bureau of International Information Programs, a position he assumed in September 2013. His first role in the Obama Administration was at the White House, as a Special Assistant to the President and Director of Digital Strategy. Previously he ran the new media program for the Presidential Transition Team and served as the deputy director of the Obama campaign's new media department. Prior to the campaign, Mr. Phillips led Blue State Digital's strategy practice, working with clients like the Democratic National Committee and Senator Ted Kennedy. A proud Americorps *VISTA alum, the Huntsville, Alabama native is a graduate of Duke University.

David Plack is the Director of Policy and Senior Advisor to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. His office is responsible for all academic programs sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, including the Fulbright Program for students and scholars from the U.S. and more than 150 countries around the world, the Gilman scholarship program for U.S. undergraduate students studying abroad, language learning programs, and international student advising. David came to the U.S. Department of State from the U.S. Agency for International Development. He was previously with the Institute of International Education and JP Morgan. David earned his Masters degree in Public Administration from Katholieke University in Belgium and his Bachelors degree from North Carolina State University.

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