

**Testimony of Stephanie S. Sullivan**  
**Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the African Union**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**November 29, 2022**

Chairwoman Shaheen, Ranking Member Portman, distinguished Members of the Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be the President's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the African Union (AU). I appreciate the trust and confidence President Biden and Secretary Blinken have in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work with you to advance our nation's interests through our partnership with this key institution and its member states.

This afternoon I'm joined by my husband John, a pillar of support who has accompanied me on each posting. Our sons Dan and Scott are here, from Maryland and New Jersey, respectively.

From my first experience in Africa as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the DRC, I have felt drawn to the charms and challenges of the continent and its people. I have spent two thirds of my thirty-five years of diplomatic service in Africa or working on African issues, with postings in Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, Ghana (twice), and Washington, DC. Throughout my career, I have teamed up with committed interagency colleagues to advance U.S. diplomatic, economic, and security interests. I have visited 33 African countries, in all five regions on the continent. If confirmed as the seventh U.S. Ambassador to the AU, I will be proud to represent our country, which has a sizeable portion of Africa's "Sixth Region" – the diaspora.

The AU brings together its member states to deliberate and act on the continent's most pressing issues and to establish standards by which all members can hold each other accountable. The USAU's vantage point enhances our engagement with - and ability to understand the perspective of - the AU Commission and the AU member states. USAU facilitates our collaboration with Africa to solve global problems.

If confirmed, I will lead the talented USAU team to advance the Administration's Africa Strategy, in which the U.S. partnership with the AU plays a central role. The Strategy's mutually reinforcing objectives are to: 1. Foster Openness and Open Societies; 2. Deliver Democratic and Security Dividends; 3. Advance Pandemic Recovery and Economic Opportunity; and 4. Support Conservation, Climate Adaptation, and Just Energy Transition. We have long partnered with the AU on shared priorities, and the pathways of the strategy will both support the AU's Agenda 2063 and bolster the continent's ability to solve global problems alongside the United States.

First, democracy and accountable governance remain essential for peace, security, and sustained economic growth. Recent democratic backsliding in some places undermines the progress African countries have made toward inclusive development. If confirmed, I will reinforce our shared commitment to democratic principles and the rule of law - to include transparency; free and fair elections with peaceful transfers of power; justice; and respect for human rights.

Second, fragility and ongoing conflicts in parts of Africa also threaten global and U.S. national security. They hinder economic growth and enable the spread of violent extremism. The AU has made significant strides to prevent, respond to, and resolve armed conflict - most recently in Ethiopia - and to counter transnational threats. If confirmed, I will lead ongoing capacity-building efforts to achieve a more peaceful and more secure continent where people and nations can reach their full potential.

Third, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) led the continent's response to the COVID-19 pandemic by mobilizing health ministers, coordinating a continental strategy, and establishing a platform to procure vaccines. The coordination between Africa CDC and our own CDC and other USG agencies shaped our lifesaving support to the continent. If confirmed, I will continue our partnership with the AU to improve global health security and strengthen African health systems. On the broader economic front, the African Continental Free Trade Area positions African governments to reduce trade barriers, enhance regional integration, and increase trade and investment, to form a 3.4 trillion-dollar trading bloc of an estimated 1.3 billion people. When fully implemented, this economic bloc will be the fifth largest in the world. If confirmed, I will champion additional American private sector investment in the growing African market, to promote mutual prosperity and jobs on both sides of the Atlantic.

Fourth, the United Nations recognizes Africa as the region most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. For example, four consecutive years of drought have exacerbated the food security crisis in the Horn of Africa. If confirmed, I will work closely with the AU on addressing the impacts of climate change and help support a just energy transition through programs like Power Africa.

Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.