

**Statement of Amanda S. Jacobsen**  
**Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea**  
**Senate Committee on Foreign Relations**  
**September 19, 2024**

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you as President Biden's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. I deeply appreciate the confidence and trust the President and Secretary of State have shown in nominating me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to advance our interests in Equatorial Guinea. I am grateful to my family - my husband, Cort, and children Nahuel, Aya, Aferebea, and Amani - for their support and sacrifices. All of my children have spent the majority of their childhoods in Africa. I also want to acknowledge the presence of my sister, Rebecca Gehle.

I am proud to hail from a family of teachers, firefighters, and farmers in Wisconsin who encouraged me to become a public servant where I now have the opportunity to advance U.S. national security priorities. I am grateful to have spent my Foreign Service career in challenging environments including Togo, Nepal, and Ethiopia, advocating for American foreign policy priorities including trade, global health, and respect for human rights, while supporting the safety of U.S. citizens overseas. I am passionate about mentoring the next generation of U.S. diplomats.

I believe my Foreign Service assignments have prepared me with the expertise I will need in regional security, health diplomacy, democracy and governance, commercial advocacy, and crisis management. I led interagency teams and managed U.S. government resources as Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires in Botswana. During my leadership tenure, the U.S. government global health team, in collaboration with the government of Botswana and other stakeholders supporting Botswana's National HIV response, helped Botswana surpass UN global targets ahead of 2030; these efforts have helped Botswana approach HIV epidemic control. We also successfully hosted the "Epic Guardian" military exercise with AFRICOM

leadership. In Ethiopia I served as the Public Affairs Officer during a time of acute civil unrest, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. My team and I strengthened youth outreach, empowered civil society, and prioritized media professionalization. In Washington, I served in the Africa Bureau helping shape policy and strategic messaging affecting our 50+ Posts overseas as the Bureau's Spokesperson and Special Assistant. If confirmed, I will harness my foreign policy experiences to strengthen our partnership with Equatorial Guinea, while positioning the United States as the partner of choice.

U.S. oil and gas companies have invested billions in Equatorial Guinea and, if confirmed, I will work closely with them and the government of Equatorial Guinea to improve the investment climate and to prioritize the safety and security of American citizens. I will also work with the government and like-minded partners to develop Equatorial Guinea's economic potential in environmental conservation and tourism. Equatorial Guinea is an upper middle-income country yet struggles with income inequality. If confirmed, I will work with the government of Equatorial Guinea, like-minded partners, and civil society to encourage investment in the health and education sectors.

Regional security is a key element of our relationship. If confirmed, I will work with the U.S. interagency and the government of Equatorial Guinea to enhance maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Mutual goals include the protection of offshore oil and gas facilities and protecting Equatorial Guinea against piracy and illegal fishing. The U.S. government welcomed Equatorial Guinea joining the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation in 2023. If confirmed, I will work to increase the number of military exchanges through U.S. International Military and Education Training (IMET) programming and to strengthen our security partnership.

On democracy and governance, if confirmed, I will engage with the government, civil society, and the media to advocate for human rights. I will harness the vast array of U.S. government tools such as exchanges, trainings, and programming to strengthen the capacity of civil society and address corruption. Combatting Trafficking in Persons (TIP) remains a top U.S. priority. I understand the government of Equatorial Guinea made significant efforts to combat trafficking

and was upgraded to Tier 2 Watch List in the 2024 TIP Report. Critical work remains. If confirmed, I will spend my tenure strengthening the U.S. Embassy's partnerships with a wide spectrum of Equatoguineans country-wide, particularly youth, to help them achieve their vision for their country's secure, prosperous future.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with the talented, hardworking U.S. Mission team in Malabo to achieve our shared objectives of economic diversification, regional security, and democracy and governance, and to strengthen the relationship between our people and governments. If confirmed, as Chief of Mission I will prioritize the safety, health, and resilience of the U.S. Embassy community under the ethos of "One Team, One Mission." Ongoing coordination and consultation with Congress will be essential to achieving our policy and resource goals.

Madam Chairwoman, Ranking Member, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.