

Ambassador Scott DeLisi
Ambassador-Designate to Uganda
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
March 22, 2012

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today as the nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Uganda. I am grateful to the President and Secretary of State for their confidence and support.

Uganda is a vital U.S. partner in a volatile region. As the major troop contributor to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Uganda has made tremendous sacrifices to promote peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. The Ugandan military has also led regional efforts to counter the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Although the LRA has not been active in Uganda since 2006, it continues to cast a wide shadow across central Africa.

The United States has supported Uganda's constructive role both in AMISOM and against the LRA. Most recently, we deployed a small number of U.S. military personnel to serve as advisors to Uganda's counter-LRA forces and those of other regional partners. Uganda has also contributed to peace and development in South Sudan, Africa's newest nation and Uganda's neighbor to the north, by providing training and assistance to its civil service, judiciary, and military.

Uganda stands out not only for its current contributions to regional peace and security but also for its own transition from a state in chaos to one of the region's most stable nations. When President Yoweri Museveni came to power in 1986 after decades of violent internal strife in Uganda, he instituted political reforms and sound macroeconomic policies that created a more inclusive government and contributed to steady economic growth. Against this backdrop, the United States has enjoyed a close bilateral partnership with Uganda for the past quarter century.

We recognize, however, that we must continue to work with Uganda to address a number of ongoing challenges in terms of broad economic development and the nurturing of a democratic political culture.

On the development front, we have a robust set of programs. The President's Feed the Future Initiative focuses on improving productivity and incomes in the agriculture sector, on which seventy percent of Uganda's citizens rely for their livelihoods. Another area of focus has been northern Uganda, where we provided \$102 million last year to help the region's people, including many former LRA abductees, rebuild their lives and communities.

The health sector is another challenge. Although HIV/AIDS prevalence rates have decreased from a high of 20 percent in the 1990s, they have stagnated at around six percent for the past decade. Malaria is another lethal threat in Uganda, causing an estimated 100,000 deaths per year. There are also very significant challenges in the area of maternal and child health. Through the Global Health Initiative, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and the President's Malaria Initiative, we are working with the Ugandan government to improve the quality and accessibility of health services and to address Uganda's most pressing health concerns.

We recognize, however, that long-term success will require a significant and sustained commitment from the Ugandan government. If confirmed, I will continue to reinforce this point and seek to build even more effective partnerships with the Ugandan government, civil society, and faith-based groups in the areas of economic development and health.

We are also working to help Uganda strengthen its multiparty democracy and reinforce its respect for human rights. Although Uganda's electoral process last year was more transparent and peaceful than previous elections, it was carried out on an uneven playing field and fraught with irregularities. More can be done to improve and empower Uganda's governing institutions, and we will continue our efforts in that regard. Likewise, we continue to urge the Ugandan government and civil society to respect not just political freedoms but also the fundamental human rights of all individuals.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, the protection of U.S. citizens and U.S. business interests in Uganda will be one of the foremost concerns for my team and for me.

In sum, Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will seek to strengthen our partnership with Uganda as a force for regional peace and security. I will also work with the government and people of Uganda in pursuit of a healthier, more productive, and more prosperous society where protection of citizens' political and personal

freedoms is a priority for all. Achieving these objectives will be critical to Uganda's future stability and economic growth, as well as its continued role as an important and constructive regional leader.

I look forward to the opportunity to serve our nation in Uganda if confirmed, and I welcome any questions the Committee may have.

Thank you.