

Statement of Simon Henshaw
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
September 26, 2018

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am deeply honored to appear before you today, and grateful to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea. I want to recognize the attendance of my wife, Jackie Greene.

My second Foreign Service assignment was in Abidjan, and my wife and I have fond memories of our time there traveling throughout the country and region. In fact, we were married by the mayor of Abidjan. We look forward to returning to the region. I traveled to the continent three times in my last assignment in the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration. Most of my career has been in the developing world and I have extensive experience working with USAID and other developmental actors, particularly on democracy, human rights, and good governance. Throughout my career, I have worked on election issues in the Philippines, El Salvador, Honduras, and Russia.

On October 2nd, Guinea will celebrate 60 years of independence. Despite Guinea's proud history of independence, it was only in 2010 that Guineans finally embraced democracy. From working through USAID to assist the national election commission in revising the electoral code, to our participation as an

observer in the national political roundtable, we remain committed to helping Guinea complete its democratic transformation. Just as positive political and economic trends were starting to take shape, however, the 2013-2016 Ebola epidemic struck Guinea and other countries in the region and beyond, killing over 2,500 people in Guinea alone, and significantly setting back the country economically. However, with the assistance of the international community, including the United States, Guinea overcame that horrible affliction.

Today, the country is looking toward the future. The economy is growing faster than anticipated, sustained mostly by strong mining activity, construction, and agriculture. With the assistance of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, in 2016, U.S. investors were able to expand mining operation in Guinea in an environmentally friendly and community responsive way. In addition, the U.S. company, Endeavor, was able to break ground this year on a 50 megawatt power plant in the capital of Conakry. While remaining challenges are great and the work to be done is daunting, the United States will remain a committed partner in support of Guineans as they pursue their aspirations toward more robust democratic institutions and stronger and more inclusive economic growth. Concerning peace and security issues, we support efforts to reform Guinea's security institutions and greatly appreciate Guinea's peacekeeping work,

including its deployment to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

If confirmed as the 22nd U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea, my objectives will be to continue to support and encourage the ongoing democratic process; to promote economic development, including more advocacy for U.S. exports, investment and economic diversification; improved public health; and a stronger security partnership.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to address you today. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you in representing the interests of the American people in Guinea. I am happy to answer any questions.