

Statement of Robert P. Jackson

U.S. Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of Ghana

Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

October 1, 2015

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and Other Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today. I am grateful for the confidence that President Obama and Secretary Kerry have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana. I am joined today by Babette Pollard Jackson, my wife and partner for the last 26 years.

Since I entered the Foreign Service 33 years ago, I have served in Canada, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Portugal, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Morocco, and Cameroon, as well as here at home. In these assignments, I have endeavored to promote human rights, strengthen civil society, foster development, and expand U.S. exports. I have repeatedly returned to Africa because I have found that, in the course of two or three years, one can see one's accomplishments; I found that especially true as Ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon. If confirmed as the next U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana, I will draw upon these experiences to advance U.S. interests in Africa.

Ghana is a strong partner of the United States, sharing democratic values and goals of human rights, economic growth, and regional stability. If confirmed, my priorities will be to promote democracy, good governance, peace, trade, education, and health, to unlock Ghana's potential for sustained, inclusive, broad-based economic growth and to help it graduate from traditional development assistance.

Ghana is widely considered one of the leading democracies on the African continent, with active political parties and civil society organizations. Ghana's democracy benefits from a lively media, a history of peaceful political transitions between the two main political parties, an apolitical military, and a good human rights record. Celebrating 58 years of independence in 2015, Ghana has held six national elections since 1992, and power has alternated between its two largest political parties. If confirmed, I look forward to witnessing Ghana achieve its seventh consecutive peaceful and transparent national democratic elections in December 2016.

Ghana has been hit hard by low prices for its three major exports: cocoa, gold, and oil. Nonetheless, Ghana has the potential to become one of sub-Saharan Africa's leading economies and provides enormous opportunities for bilateral trade and investment. While Ghana takes advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), continued assistance to increase

domestic capacity and market competitiveness is needed to help Ghanaian businesses take full advantage of the trade benefits provided by this legislation. The recently launched Trade Africa Expansion Initiative, along with USAID's West African Trade Hub, will play key roles in building the capacity of Ghanaian institutions and supporting Ghana's efforts to expand exports. Along with the USAID-led bilateral Feed the Future programs, the Trade Hub will also increase regional trade in agricultural products to improve food security. If confirmed, I will explore new and innovative approaches to expand commercial ties between the United States and Ghana.

One of the brakes on Ghana's growth has been inadequate infrastructure, especially in the energy sector. Ghana completed a five-year \$547 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact in 2012 focused on agriculture and rural development. Ghana signed a second MCC compact to transform the power sector on August 5, 2014, during the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit.

The Summit highlighted U.S. ties with Africa. People-to-people links between the United States and Ghana have grown ever stronger through more than 50 years of a continuous and vibrant Peace Corps presence, as well as Fulbright, Humphrey, Community College Initiative (CCI), and Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) exchange programs. Ghana is the original

Peace Corps country and is proud of the fact that while Peace Corps was born in America, it learned to walk in Ghana. More than 4,410 Peace Corps volunteers have served in Ghana since the program was established in 1961. There are currently 136 volunteers in Ghana working with their communities on projects in education, agriculture, and health.

Ghana has made significant but uneven progress in improving health over the past decade. One of the key bottlenecks across almost all health indicators is the uneven distribution of wealth between Ghana's impoverished North and the more affluent South. Many of our programs, including basic education, health, and agricultural assistance, therefore, focus on the North.

Ghana and the United States share an interest in countering terrorism, securing the maritime borders, and promoting regional stability. We are also working together to combat escalating drug and human trafficking. Ghana is an important supporter of peacekeeping through the Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Center and law enforcement-oriented efforts through the Regional Training Center. A longtime participant in the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, Ghana is also a partner country in the Security Governance Initiative and the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership (A-PRRP). Stability in Ghana has contributed to peace and security in West Africa, and if confirmed, I will support Ghana's efforts to

promote regional and global stability. Of course, as is the case for all Ambassadors, protecting the safety and welfare of U.S. citizens will be a top priority.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to address you today. I welcome your questions.