

Statement of Robert Kenneth Scott
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
September 26, 2018

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Booker, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the next Ambassador to the Republic of Malawi. I appreciate the confidence he and Secretary of State Pompeo have shown in me through this nomination. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress and staff to advance American interests in Malawi.

My wife, Anne, and our twins, Jennifer and Nicolas, are here with me today. Nicolas and Jennifer grew up in Tanzania and Zimbabwe, where I served as Deputy Chief of Mission before assuming my most recent position as Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. We would welcome the opportunity to return to serve our country in that region. If confirmed, I would draw on my experience in the Africa bureau, and embassies in leading the outstanding Mission Lilongwe team in advancing U.S. interests in Malawi.

Malawi is a strong partner for the United States, and a regional leader that can showcase a history of democratic elections and peaceful transfers of power. Our goals in Malawi are to strengthen core institutions that underpin democracy,

economic growth, health and security - helping make Malawi a more prosperous, healthier, and more democratic partner for the United States - and creating new jobs and investment opportunities for American companies.

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that our efforts to date continue to bear fruit, to the benefit of both countries. MCC is winding down a 5-year \$350 million compact focused on energy, and I will urge the government of Malawi to implement the reforms needed to take full advantage of its improved power infrastructure. I will also encourage the Government of Malawi's anti-corruption efforts, sustainable management of its environmental resources, and pursuit of regional and continent-wide economic integration. Providing Malawi's women access to education and economic opportunities will be an important part of any future growth.

Malawi has been a leader in Africa in the adoption of policies and programs to control and combat HIV/AIDS. PEPFAR has helped reduce the number of HIV/AIDS deaths by 73 percent, and the number of new HIV infections by 41 percent since 2003, but in a country as poor as Malawi, these advances are fragile, and can easily reverse. A healthy population is fundamental to development, and, if confirmed, I will work with our USAID and CDC programs to maximize the impact of PEPFAR and our other health programs in Malawi, which have also resulted in significant gains in maternal and child health.

Agriculture is a key to successful development and also can provide opportunities for increased trade and markets for U.S. companies focused on value addition. Agriculture generates nearly 80 percent of household income in Malawi and this needs to be a special focus of our efforts; to improve resilience, generate increased income, provide better nutrition and break the cycle of food insecurity. Peace Corps is another successful program active in Malawi. A strong and historic program, Peace Corps volunteers have been working in Malawi since 1963. My wife, Anne, is a former Peace Corps volunteer, and I fully appreciate the impact that these incredible Americans have on building capacity in communities and ties between our peoples.

Our security cooperation with Malawi is excellent. Malawi contributes to UN peace support operations on the continent. It currently has a battalion deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the Force Intervention Brigade and has pledged another battalion for a peacekeeping mission. Malawi also recently hosted AFRICOM's Southern Accord Exercise. I will build on this strong relationship, if confirmed, working with the Office of Security Cooperation to explore new partnership opportunities.

Our work to reinforce democratic institutions and enhance government responsiveness to its citizens is at the core of our efforts. If confirmed, I anticipate

witnessing Malawi's sixth consecutive peaceful, national democratic election in May 2019 – a process supported by our governance programs.

Mr. Chairman, if I am confirmed, I will vigorously pursue the safety and security of American citizens and ensure responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars through effective leadership of U.S. Mission Malawi's strong interagency team.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be honored to respond to any questions.