

**Statement of Ambassador Lucy Tamlyn
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
August 3, 2022**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, it is an honor for me to appear before you today. I am grateful to President Biden and Secretary Blinken for the confidence they have placed in me as their nominee for Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Representing the United States is something that I have done together with my husband, Jorge Serpa, and children Ben and Filipa. I thank them for their unwavering support and enthusiasm across many continents.

In a career spanning 40 years of service, I have most recently served as Charge d'Affaires in Sudan, Ambassador to the Central African Republic, and Ambassador to the Republic of Benin. I feel privileged to have served in countries where we are literally on the front lines, where U.S. diplomacy really matters, and side by side with colleagues who answer the call despite the personal, family, and health sacrifices entailed. Looking after the safety of the Embassy community and ensuring that each and every American or local employee can flourish and bring his or her best to the job in an environment free of harassment and discrimination, is my highest priority as a leader.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the United States has important interests in the DRC. This enormous country is home to 47 percent of Africa's tropical rainforests. The minerals and metals under its soil, if responsibly extracted, will help power the globe's transition to clean energy. The DRC's dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative population of over 100 million are eager to engage with the United States.

Our cooperation with the DRC has strengthened dramatically under the tenure of former Ambassador Mike Hammer. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) access has been reinstated. Through the Privileged Partnership for Peace, Prosperity, and Preservation of the Environment we are broadening our engagement with President Tshisekedi's government across the full range of issues, to include security, democracy and human rights, anti-corruption, the environment, health, and business climate. If confirmed, I commit to nurturing and strengthening this ambitious agenda which is good for both the DRC and the United States' health, economy, and environment.

In this continent-sized country, U.S. assistance is helping tackle persistent health threats, notably Ebola, working to advance shared climate goals, and promoting responsible and accountable mineral supply chains. We are supporting efforts to fight the pervasive trafficking of persons, natural resources, and wildlife, which feeds corruption and violence.

Other countries, notably the People's Republic of China, fully grasp the DRC's potential. We want the Congolese people to know that corrupt mineral exploitation deals, illegal logging and environmental devastation is not inevitable, and that there are alternatives. If confirmed, I

commit to using all our diplomatic tools, including leveraging visa ineligibilities and sanctions, to help the Congolese fight corruption.

Right now, reducing violence in the DRC's eastern region is critical. The region must not be allowed to stumble into another devastating inter-state conflict. If confirmed, I will work closely with regional institutions and partners to deescalate tensions with neighbors and pressure non-state armed groups to stand down.

The DRC is also home to the world's largest UN peacekeeping mission. This investment, of which the United States carries a quarter of the cost, must be held to the highest standards of performance and demonstrate its ability to protect civilians and conduct proactive operations against armed groups. I take this opportunity to express my condolences to the families of the three UN personnel killed in Butembo on July 26.

Finally, free and fair elections held in 2023 will be a particular focus of my diplomatic engagement, if confirmed. The future leaders of the DRC are for its citizens to decide, but the international community can play an important role in helping to strengthen democratic institutions, supporting civil society, and calling out—without hesitation—when we see signs of democratic backsliding.

I recognize that, if confirmed, I will be assuming leadership of a post in a country of enormous size, complexity, and promise. The large portfolio of U.S. assistance—which cuts across every conceivable area from security to health to conservation—requires astute direction, prioritization, and coordination. Chronic staffing shortages—a situation not unique to Kinshasa—need to be managed to ensure that we do not burn out and lose the next generation of Africa hands. Across all these activities, I commit to ensuring the efficient and effective use of the resources entrusted to us by the U.S. taxpayer.

I look forward to your advice and counsel on these challenging tasks and I am very happy to take your questions.