

STATEMENT OF DONALD E. BOOTH
UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE TO ZAMBIA
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

MAY 7, 2008

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of this Committee:

I am deeply honored to appear before you today. I greatly appreciate the trust and confidence the President and Secretary of State have placed in me as their nominee to be the United States' Ambassador to the Republic of Zambia. I am also grateful for the support throughout my Foreign Service career of my wife Anita, who is in Liberia where I have had the honor to serve as ambassador for the past three years, as well as of my daughter Alison and sons Peter and David. Alison and Peter are here with me today. David is currently attending Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin.

I have spent the better part of my 32 years in the Foreign Service trying to resolve conflicts and promoting development and understanding of the United States in many parts of Africa. During my two years as Deputy Director of the State Department's Office of Southern African Affairs, I worked to keep Zambia from being drawn into the then-widening conflict in neighboring Democratic Republic of the Congo. I was also the coordinator of our efforts to engage the member states of the Southern African Development Community as a group on security cooperation, regional water resource management and in arresting Zimbabwe's slide toward arbitrary rule. As Ambassador to

Liberia, I have seen the impact regional peer pressure can have in ending conflict and restoring democratically elected government.

Despite the wars and civil conflicts in southern Africa, Zambia has been fortunate to escape conflict since its independence in 1964. However, despite its vast mineral wealth, Zambia remains a poor country where 87 percent of the population lives on less than \$2 per day. The reasons for this low quality of life for most people in Zambia are not dissimilar to those I have been working to address during my time as ambassador to Liberia: corruption, unequal access to opportunity and lack of quality education and health care. If confirmed, I would do my best to ensure that the assistance funds appropriated and authorized by the Congress are effectively utilized to help the Government of Zambia address the underlying causes of poverty in Zambia, poverty that can lead to despair and create opportunities for those who would seek to harm the American people, their friends and allies. I would also work with the Government of Zambia to meet the criteria for compact status under the Millennium Challenge Account. My numerous experiences in Africa have left me convinced that we cannot impose solutions to Africa's problems. We can only make a difference by working in partnership with Africans who have the desire and will to tackle their problems themselves.

Zambia also suffers from the twin afflictions of HIV/AIDS and malaria. That is why Zambia was one of the first countries to benefit from the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) as well as from the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI). Over 75 percent of U.S. assistance to Zambia is directed at addressing HIV/AIDS and

malaria. If confirmed, I will make it a priority not only to help Zambia combat those diseases, but also explore ways we can ensure our “emergency” interventions receive the Zambian support needed to make them sustainable and thus truly capable of controlling these two diseases that have so restrained development and could still threaten the region’s stability. Another impediment to Zambia’s development is the unequal status of women and the prevalence of gender-based violence. If confirmed, I would ensure these problems are addressed through the Women’s Justice and Empowerment Initiative as well as through programs that combat trafficking in persons.

Mr. Chairman, I believe our relationship with Zambia should not be defined by what we do to help Zambia, but rather by how much we can accomplish together to expand the horizons of freedom, peace, and economic opportunity. Zambia has been in the forefront of true multi-party democratic governance in southern Africa and I believe we need to encourage Zambia to work through the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to advance democracy and accountable government in southern Africa and beyond. I am pleased to note that as chair of SADC, Zambia recently convoked an extraordinary summit to address the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe. The U.S. ambassador to Zambia is also accredited to the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). While COMESA is a broad group of nations in various states of development, if confirmed, I will try to help COMESA identify ways it can advance meaningful regional economic cooperation that will better integrate its member states into the global economy.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer your questions.