



Barack Obama Wins US Presidency!

Barack Obama Wins U.S. Presidency! The historic election of Senator Barack Obama as America's 44th US President – and the 111th U.S. Congress – begins a new era. Now, the entire nation and countless foreigners are absorbing a moment that had seemed not possible in their lifetime. Smart strategists and rank-and-file voters all are amazed at how Obama was able to rise so far so fast as his blend of oratory, biography, optimism, competence and cool confidence paved the way. Most importantly, voters were clear in their message that they want to get America back on track and to change the way that Washington works. They want the Obama administration and the new Congress to lead, to end partisan gridlock and find realistic solutions to the myriad of challenges facing our nation including reviving our domestic economy, resolving two wars and restoring our image on the global stage.

In 2009, President Obama will assume leadership of a nation whose global prestige and influence is in disarray as it faces the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression. The impact will be felt by all Americans as their household wealth has fallen, the stock market has declined by nearly one-third of its value, home values have dropped by twenty percent and retirement savings have been reduced by some two trillion dollars. States are balancing their budget by cutting health care, education and transportation funds and the nation's businesses are eliminating jobs and trimming pension obligations. The accumulated problems pose a formidable challenge for America's traditional optimism, but also present an opportunity if the nation and its new leaders set aside bitter differences and reject personal and ideological gridlock that has plagued Washington for more than a generation. For President Obama the time of transformation has arrived and his immediate challenge will be to transform campaign themes of "hope" and "change" into action that will revive an ailing economy, improve its infrastructure, expand

health care coverage, ensure our national security and redirect America's foreign policy.

African-Americans and Africans alike share high expectations for President Obama but the current economic situation that helped propel him to the White House will also limit how much he can devote resources to fulfill the promises that he made on the campaign trail because basically there is no money. Democrats in both chambers of Congress have eight years of pent-up legislative dreams and Obama has backed many of their spending priorities. They gained at least twenty House seats and seven Senate seats in the November election. That gives the Democrats and Obama unaccustomed flexibility. Unfortunately the mortgage crisis, global financial gloom and a federal budget deficit exceeding one trillion dollars mean the economy has to be "the first priority", because without that, nothing else can really work. The public seems to agree as the economy proved to be the most important issue that paved the way for Democratic Senator Barrack Obama's victory over Republican Senator John McCain.

But the economy means different things to different people. To younger voters, the availability of jobs is very important; for families it might be the ability to own and keep a house; and for those over the age of fifty, it could well be the need for financial security in retirement. Several of Obama's proposals speak to these concerns and he is expected to move quickly to jump-start the economy by creating jobs with a plan to build roads or make other infrastructure improvements. Tackling the nation's health care problems might also be hard for Obama to ignore at least completely as it was a central issue of his campaign. With regard to the older generation, Obama has indeed ruled out cutting benefits or raising the Social Security retirement age but as these boomers age, those entitlement programs will face increasing financial pressure. *(Continued on page 02)*

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Although President Obama faces enormous challenges on the domestic side, he also has the opportunity to capitalize on the mandate of an Electoral College landslide. To many of his supporters, he already has a major accomplishment to his credit – becoming the first Black President of the United States of America. To the vast majority of African-Americans that fact that he has been elected tells them that we as a people have come full circle in our quest to being accepted as first class citizens. At the same time, people who voted for Obama (black, white and other) firmly believe that they have chosen the right person to balance the needs of the struggling nation. He has inherited a real mess but he is very smart and quite capable of surrounding himself with highly competent people. But it is not just about Obama success as we can all share in his victory. If America can put a black man in the White House, surely it must also profoundly rethink the relevance of race, the power of prejudice, the logic of affirmative action and other societal forces that have challenged Africans in the Diaspora through the periods of slavery, Jim Crow, desegregation, civil rights and massive immigration. Beyond an Obama presidency and his campaign for change, will this lead to more black governors, senators, mayors and leaders of industry? Only time will tell, but as the celebratory measures soon come to an end we all need to continue to do our part to help President Obama really change the way that America works for both African-Americans and Africans in the Diaspora.

Message from AAUC Coordinator



Greetings! On behalf of the Members of the African American Unity Caucus (AAUC), I welcome you to our third newsletter where we hope to provide you, our AAUC stakeholders, with news, information and insights on Africa and U.S.-Africa Diaspora foreign

relations. 2008 has been a pinnacle year for the AAUC as we begin to make our mark in the foreign arena. We have had some new and cutting edge events and continue to build relationships with policy and decision makers. Indeed, the same are starting to seek out the AAUC for advice, guidance and assistance on issues covered by our mission. It is becoming abundantly clear that for them the AAUC now represents a leading and informed voice of diversity on African and African Diaspora foreign policy issues. We also continued to strengthen our role with the African Diplomatic Corps, notably through the African Union's (AU) Mission accredited to Washington, D.C. The landmark AU Diaspora Health Initiative was officially launched under the august aegis of H.E. Dr. Jean Ping, Chairman of the African Union Commission and a panel of notable representatives from Africa and the Diaspora. The AAUC has also gained an international voice. Since our last edition, the AAUC was sought out and I was interviewed by Voice of America (VOA) to talk about the AAUC, its mission and vision. The program was diffused across Africa by radio, thus giving voice outside the U.S. as to what we are trying to do.

The AAUC is also being sought by the World Bank as a voice to provide stakeholder education and possibly rally support for

replenishment of the Bank's soft financing facility, IDA 15, which provides so many critical resources to countries in Africa and the Diaspora. We also hope to leverage these discussions with issues of Bank management and staff diversity as we move forward in this dialog. Clearly, we have been engaged in initiatives ranging from strategic dialog with our partners, to outreach and information sharing, to networking and mentoring. And I would be remiss if I did not offer a word of sincere thanks to the Ford Foundation for making this possible; for believing in what we at the AAUC are trying to accomplish; and for providing us with renewed support in a capacity building grant for two more years. Thank You!

On November 4, 2008, an African-American Senator, Barack Obama, made history and became the first African-American to ascend to our nation's highest position. This is a huge victory for us all – both domestically and internationally. I write as I am traveling home from a Diaspora Women's Conference in Brazil. Apart from the fervor that we have seen manifested on TV and the internet from around the world, the message of UNITY of Africa and her Diaspora that I heard from African women representing Africa, North America, Central and South America, Europe and the Caribbean, cannot be described. And while President Obama is not just the "Black President", his ascension signals so much to the possibility of diversity of representation and of a voice in the highest halls of power. It is also our time to provide the voice on diversity as we make our mark of affairs that affect us and all peoples of African descent worldwide.

Jeannine B. Scott- AAUC Coordinator

Summary of 2008 Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series



Dr. Julius Garvey receiving RHB Series Plaque at Ron Brown Legacy Breakfast from Melvin Foote, President of CFA

Last year's Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series, held Monday, September 22-Monday, September 29, 2008 in conjunction with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., was by all accounts an unmitigated success! It started off on Monday with Dr. Julius Garvey, the son of Marcus Garvey, as the Kick-Off Speaker. He provided an excellent message on "Challenges, Opportunities and Strategies for Building Unity Amongst African Peoples Throughout the Diaspora". In addition, Dr. Garvey spoke at a provocative meeting at the Embassy of Jamaica on a "Discussion on the Exoneration Campaign". This was followed by an outstanding program focusing on the Next Generation which was held at Howard University featuring a luncheon speaker, James M. Christian, Sr. who spoke about "The Role and Responsibility of Today's Youth in Africa's Future" and an African Diaspora Next Generation Leadership Caucus that featured a documentary film and group discussion on "Empowering the Next Generation of Leaders in Africa". CFA's partner at Howard University was the Ralph J. Bunche International Center and more than fifty students from various colleges and universities (i.e. - American University, Arizona State University, George Washington University, Georgetown University, Howard University, Maryland University, North Carolina A&T State University, Rutgers University, Temple University and Winston Salem State University) participated in this year's Next Generation Program. In addition, there was a Next Generation Reception held on Capitol Hill which was co-sponsored by the Congressional Black Association (CBA).

AAUC Next Generation Committee Members (Adryan Wallace, Cindy Mutombo and Heather McLeod) are to be commended for their outstanding efforts in making the Next Generation Program during the Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series truly successful!

On Tuesday, the Ronald H. Brown Legacy Breakfast was another fantastic event with more than one hundred and fifty people in attendance and featured the Hon. Rodney L. Slater, former Secretary of Transportation during the Clinton administration, as the Keynote Speaker. In addition, this event showcased the Ron Brown Scholar Program and had four former Ron Brown Scholars briefly address the audience about the "Legacy of Ron Brown" in their lives. The Hon. Lauri J. Fitz-Pegado served as the mistress of ceremonies and deserves great praise for encouraging this partnership between the Ron Brown Scholars and the AAUC Next Generation Initiative. Afterwards,



Dr. Julius Garvey and Jeannine B. Scott pictured with several members of the CFA Board of Directors at the Ron Brown Legacy Breakfast as follows: Left to right - Hon. Michael Brown, Elliott S. Hall, Mondli Kumbula-Fraser, Luddy Hayden, Hon. Rodney Slater and Mel Foote, President & CEO, Constituency for Africa (CFA)

the participants of the AAUC Next Generation Initiative visited the U.S. Peace Corps for a presentation about the benefits of becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer. CD Glin, a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV), is to be commended for organizing this career enhancement opportunity.

Later that evening, an African Leadership Reception was hosted at the Africare House and a proclamation from the Mayor of the District of Columbia was presented to the Constituency for Africa on behalf of the Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series.



AAUC Policy Roundtable on U.S.-Africa Foreign Policy during 2008 RHB Series at the National Press Club. Left to Right: Ofield Dukes; Moderator, Dr. J. Peter Pham representing the Republican position; and Dr. Witney Schneidman representing the Democratic position.

On Wednesday, an AAUC Foreign Affairs Policy Roundtable was held at the National Press Club with the theme "U.S.-Africa Policy Agenda and the Next Administration". This event was moderated by the highly respected Ofield Dukes, a legend in the black public relations community, and featured Dr. Witney Schneidman who spoke on behalf of Senator Barack Obama's Africa Policy Team and Dr. J. Peter Pham who spoke on behalf of Senator John McCain's Africa Policy Team. Also, Lauri J. Fitz-Pegado and Gregory Simpkins served as "respondents" to the debate. The contents of the speakers' remarks are currently available for review on AllAfrica.com. The AAUC's co-sponsors for this event were the Black Professionals in International Affairs (BPIA) and the Sunday Brunch Group (SBG).

On Thursday, an African Trade and Investment Roundtable was held on Capitol Hill and featured Charles "Mike" Williams, former chief of staff to Congressman McDermott and "architect" of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Rosa Whitaker, President of The Whitaker Group and former US Trade Representative for Africa, and Congressman Jim McDermott (D-WA) all who spoke with great passion about their unique perspectives on both the legislative process to establish and the advocacy efforts required to successfully implement AGOA. CFA's co-sponsor for this event was the Trade, Aid and Security Coalition (TASC).

On Friday, CFA co-sponsored with the African Union, the launch of the African Diaspora Health Initiative Luncheon with the theme "Improving the Health and Well-Being of Africans: The Role of Africans in the Diaspora". Featured remarks were provided by H.E. Dr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Dr. Obiageli "Oby" Ezekwesili, World Bank Regional Vice President for Africa Region. Dr. Chinua Akukwe, a member of CFA's Board of Directors, is to be commended for his outstanding efforts in coordinating this event.



2008 RHB Series African Foreign Policy Roundtable at the National Press Club. Standing left to right: Gregory Simpkins, The Sullivan Foundation; Dr. J. Peter Pham; Dr. Witney Schneidman; Lauri J. Fitz-Pegado, The Livingston Group and CFA Board Member; Jeannine B. Scott, Sr. Vice President, Africare and AAUC Coordinator; Ofield Dukes, Roundtable Moderator; and Melvin P. Foote, President & CEO, Constituency for Africa (CFA).

Other activities and events included an Educational Roundtable on Africa held at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and an African Energy Roundtable co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy and the American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE) as well as the CBC Foreign Affairs Braintrust hosted by Congressman Donald Payne (D-NJ). Many thanks to our major corporate sponsors including Chevron, Chrysler Foundation, Coca Cola Company, Pfizer and the World Cocoa Foundation. A complete summary report of the 2008 Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series is available for distribution and for more information about the Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series contact David J. Saunders at intern_cfa@yahoo.com.

2009 AAUC Leonard H. Robinson, Jr. Leadership Retreat

The AAUC will convene its fourth annual leadership retreat April 16-18, 2009 at The Bolger Center in Potomac, Maryland. Named in honor of the late Leonard H. Robinson, Jr., this year's theme will focus on "Empowering the Next Generation of Leaders for the AAUC". There will also be a one-day conference the day before the retreat focusing on youth leadership development. The AAUC Leadership Retreat is held every year as a structured program to help shape and refine the objectives, goals and strategic initiatives of the AAUC. Currently, there are about fifty participating member organizations involved in the AAUC. For more information please contact the AAUC Secretariat at intern_cfa@yahoo.com.

AAUC Establishes Strategic Partnership with Ron Brown Scholar Program



Ron Brown Scholar Marco Ellis (1997) showing Book "I Have Risen" at Ron Brown Legacy Breakfast.

The AAUC has established a strategic partnership with the Ron Brown Scholar Program in connection with its Next Generation Initiative. Named for the late Secretary of Commerce and inspired by his dedication to public service, the Ron Brown Scholar Program was established in 1996 to provide academic scholarships, service opportunities and leadership experiences for young African Americans of outstanding promise. As the first African American to serve in the cabinet as Secretary of Commerce and the first to serve as Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Ron Brown was a figure of global

prominence, respected for his intelligence, political savvy and leadership.

The Ron Brown Scholar Program provides Scholars with the financial resources to attend some of the best colleges and universities in America. Upon acceptance, Scholars are each awarded \$40,000 (\$10,000 per year for four years) that may be used at the college or university of their choice. Acceptance into the program means Scholars are also provided with nurturing and mentorship to succeed and flourish in academia and beyond. The Ron Brown Scholar Program has a proven track record of academic success with a one hundred percent graduation rate. Graduating Scholars go on to outstanding careers in the arts, sciences and public service, and many more pursue professional degrees in law, medicine and business.

The AAUC will collaborate with the Ron Brown Scholar Program to provide linkages between AAUC Members and their networks with Ron Brown Scholars that are interested in a career in international affairs whether it is in business, education, government as well as a wide spectrum of professions, while instilling a strong dedication to leadership and public service. It is also envisioned that this AAUC-RBS partnership will provide opportunities for cross-pollination of mentoring, leadership development and career options in the African advocacy arena. For additional details about this partnership please contact the AAUC Secretariat at intern_cfa@yahoo.com.

AAUC Next Generation of Leaders



Dr. Julius Garvey with AAUC Next Generation Participants from Rutgers University

The mission of the AAUC's Next Generation of Leaders Initiative is to mentor and create opportunities for the next generation of African-American and Africans who are inclined to pursue careers in Africa-related fields of interest. This process will include peer review, mentoring and leadership training. Networking activities will also be developed to enable next generation leaders to establish linkages with Africa-focused groups, government agencies and private-sector organizations.

In addition to the Ron Brown Scholar Program, the AAUC Next Generation Committee has established a partnership with the Congressional Black Associates (CBA) which is a professional and social network for current and former Black Hill Staffers. CBA recently established a Foreign Policy Commission to highlight the issues and concerns pertaining to Africa and the Diaspora. For more information about the CBA please contact Heather McLeod at heathersmcleod@gmail.com. For additional information about how you can become involved in the AAUC's Next Generation Initiative please contact Adryan Wallace, Chairperson of the AAUC Next Generation Committee at adwallac@eden.rutgers.edu.

AAUC Update on Members in the AAUC Community

Congratulations to Sylvester John. On September 1st, 2008 Sylvester John assumed the role of Senior Vice President, International for Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) and manages the International Department. Regional Vice Presidents, Regional Program Managers and other department staffs all report directly to him. Sylvester's field experience and expertise as a Regional Vice President for Africa beginning in 2001 and his most recent position as Head of International Operations has more than adequately prepared him to help take SIFE to the next level worldwide. During the time that he was Regional Vice President for Africa he led the SIFE National Championship Team of Zimbabwe to capture the SIFE World Cup among many of his achievements. Sylvester is a SIFE alumnus from the University of North Florida.

Special recognition for C.D. Glin: In December 2008, CD Glin was named to the Presidential Transition Team to Co-Lead the Peace Corps Agency Review Working Group. He will be working at the US Peace Corps headquarters with the task of reviewing all

of the Agency's programs, policies, personnel and budget in order to identify the big strategic challenges facing the Agency in light of President Obama's promises during the campaign, namely to double the size of the US Peace Corps. An additional task will be to identify the specific tactics that the Agency's new incoming leadership team should consider in order to achieve President Obama's vision. President Obama offered the following comments regarding the importance of the US Peace Corps under his administration - "To restore America's standing, I will call on our greatest resource - not our bombs, guns or dollars - I will call upon our people. We will grow the Foreign Service to renew our commitment to diplomacy. We will double the size of the Peace Corps by its 50th anniversary in 2011. And we will reach out to other nations to engage their young people in similar programs, so that we work side by side to take on the common challenges that confront all humanity." CD Glin is the Vice President, Business Development and Director, MBA Enterprise Corps for the Citizen Development Corps as well as a member of the African American Unity Caucus (AAUC).

AAUC Policy Committee Progresses on Presidential Appointment Initiative

The AAUC Policy Committee has made great progress with its strategy to impact U.S.-Africa Foreign Policy for the next administration. This effort, referred to as the AAUC Presidential Appointment Initiative (PAI), is an unsolicited effort and is not connected to any campaign or political party and therefore should not be considered an official effort. The purpose of the PAI, which is being carried out in collaboration with the AAUC, the Sunday Group (SBG), and the Black Professionals in International Affairs (BPIA) is to actively involve the AAUC in the identification of highly qualified African-American and African candidates for consideration of key positions in the next administration.

This will include an analysis and review of the key positions that will become available in the U.S. State Department, U.S. Defense Department, U.S. Agency for International Development and many other governmental agencies with regard to their influence on U.S.-Africa foreign policy. Particular emphasis has not just been done on assembling a list of highly qualified individuals to present for consideration of these senior positions by the new administration's transition team. In addition, a thorough assessment of the diversity status and employment opportunities for mid-level and entry-level positions within these governmental agencies is also being considered.

Coming into the fall season our parent organization, the Constituency for Africa, completed the 2008 Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series and the AAUC played a proactive role in a number of activities and events. The highlight of these was our forum on the Africa Policy Objectives of the Presidential Candidates. During this forum, the lead Africa policy person from each contesting side presented to us their candidate's

potential policies and objectives towards Africa, and with the African Diaspora in the U.S., should they accede to power. This was as groundbreaking for us as it was illuminating for the audience - comprised of civil society representatives, policy makers, international relations actors and African diplomats. It also provided a forum through which these multiple stakeholders felt empowered to bring forth issues directly to those with influence - issues that traditionally may not be heard or heard from another perspective. Moreover, moving into the elections, it allowed both sides to recognize that the AAUC has a presence and we can wield influence in areas and on issues about Africa where we hope to be effective. We are confident that the winning camp will continue to seek our support and counsel in the future as the role of the Diaspora gains significant importance in the eyes of our diplomatic and development policy makers and programmers.

As a result of the highly successful African Foreign Policy Roundtable held during the 2008 RHB Series, the AAUC Policy Committee will follow-up with President Obama's Africa Policy Team in order to further discuss the recruitment, screening and confirmation hearing process for potential applicants. In addition, the Plum Book is in the process of being updated in order to consider employment opportunities in not only government agencies but corporations and NGOs that have Africa-advocacy interests.

Also, based on the emerging awareness of the AAUC Policy Committee's Plum Book Initiative, plans are underway to convene a briefing with the members of the African Diplomatic Corps to inform them on how to advocate (*Continued on page 9*).

Farewell Briefing with Ambassador Jendayi E. Frazer, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs

Summary of Constituency for Africa and African American Caucus Policy– January 8, 2009 at US Department of State



Ambassador Jendayi E. Frazer, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Ambassador Dr. Jendayi E. Frazer is the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs, a position to which she was appointed by President George W. Bush in June 2005.

She was sworn in and began her tenure as Assistant Secretary on August 29, 2005. Prior to becoming Assistant Secretary, Frazer served as the United States Ambassador to South Africa from August 3, 2004 to August 26, 2005. Among Frazer's key achievements as United States Ambassador were the oversight of rapid expansion of HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment programs under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and the promotion of a new era of cooperation in regional peacekeeping through the signing of a bilateral agreement with the South African Government under the Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA) program.

Ambassador Frazer was Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council from February 22, 2001, until her swearing-in as Ambassador in June 17, 2004. She came to the NSC from Harvard University, where she was serving as an Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government. As a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow, she served as a political-military planner with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Department of Defense, and as Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council. She is a graduate of Stanford University, where she earned a B.A. in Political Science and African and African-American Studies, M.A. degrees in International Policy Studies and International Development Education, and a Ph.D. in Political Science. Dr. Frazer was a visiting fellow at the Center for International Security and Arms Control at Stanford University; a research associate at the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi, Kenya; a member of the faculty of the Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver; and editor of the journal *Africa Today*.

Today's meeting was a gathering of almost forty members of the African American Unity Caucus (AAUC) as a continuation of an annually scheduled U.S.-Africa Policy Briefing that has been hosted by Ambassador Frazer as a part of the Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series since 2005. The AAUC Coordinator, Ms. Jeannine B. Scott, Senior Vice President of Africare and the AAUC Policy Committee Chairman, Mr. Crispian Kirk, Consultant, National Medical Association (NMA) led the AAUC delegation. Ms. Scott provided greetings and opening remarks on behalf of

the AAUC delegation. She expressed her utmost appreciation with Ambassador Frazer for agreeing to host these important policy briefings during her tenure as the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. She also applauded Ambassador Frazer specifically for her remarks on the legacy of the Bush administration with regard to Africa and asked that during her prepared remarks today if she would also provide some suggestions for the incoming Obama administration.

Ambassador Frazer thanked everyone for attending today's meeting. She expressed her utmost appreciation for the continued support of the AAUC constituency during her tenure and stated that she was very proud of the Bush administration's accomplishment and legacy on its Africa Policy record. She also stated that she has gained tremendous experience over the last eight years and has managed to build some great relationships and partnerships in the process. While she is very proud of her overall record she believes that several initiatives impacting Africa have met with great success to include:

(a) President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) which significantly impacts the health of African mothers and children as well as encompasses an approach to improving public health on the African continent. She added that the incoming Obama administration needs to continue the success of PEPFAR by empowering health professionals to be the lead response to combating disease and poor health care in Africa. In other words, leverage science and public health policy in order to effectively deal with Africa's public health challenges;

(b) Liberia has emerged as a successful model on the African continent to move from the removal of a dictator to the free and fair election of the first woman president of an African nation. She was very proud to have been involved in seeing this progression from a stage of conflict resolution to a democratic transformation. With regard to the incoming Obama administration the next step in Liberia should be to focus on economic growth and development; and

(c) Role of the Military is very essential in Africa to generate progress in democracy and protection of the rule of law. For the incoming Obama administration, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Congo and Somalia will be African nations that will require ongoing effort. Interestingly enough, she commented that America's foreign diplomacy on the African continent is still not enough and in her opinion the "value of black life" remains discounted at best. She also stated that Nigeria has the potential to become a real challenge for the United States due to residuals from recent flawed elections.

Ambassador Frazer mentioned that other significant achievements would include Debt Relief/Cancellation, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), the Africa Financial Initiative, and the Africa Education Initiative (AEI). In addition, the President's Malaria Initiative was a good example of bi-partisan support. She also suggested that several "hot spots" on

the African continent include the Congo (eastern and northern areas) as well as the Horn of Africa, Sudan and Zimbabwe. She stated that while she was confident in the fact that President Obasanjo is the United Nations' Special Envoy to Africa and Dr. Susan Rice will be serving as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations - she was optimistically cautious about how to best proceed with dealing with these very urgent security and humanitarian matters on the African continent.

She stated that Dr. Susan Rice at the United Nations will be critical to helping the Obama administration to resolve these challenges to include: (a) Somalia - which unfortunately still provides "flash backs" of the 1990s (i.e. - Black Hawk Down). Although the dynamics have changed there is still some trepidation by the U.S. government. However, she still maintains that progress has been made in the midst of chaos; (b) Zimbabwe - despite the ongoing set-backs, she believes that momentum is shifting on resolving the political situation. However, President Mugabe is very skilled at manipulation with regard to the regional influences. The two key African nations are South Africa and Tanzania but they both must demonstrate the will to close the deal; and (c) Sudan - to include Darfur and the ongoing North-South political situation. This strategic country will become a high priority for the Obama administration but the best strategy is to be pragmatic and not too quick to close-off options. Overall it is a very complex situation.

Ambassador Frazer suggested a three-to-six month playbook for the Obama administration as follows: (a) the role of the AAUC should be to get inside of the political process in order to become more effective. This is not easy but we must be more involved in the decision-making process especially with policy and budget formulation on Capitol Hill; (b) the AAUC must also become more aware of and effective at gaining access to resources for development projects on the African continent. It is very important to be seen as part of the funding process in order to influence key decision-makers; (c) the AAUC should continue to build upon an African Diaspora constituency that can successfully advocate on behalf of Africa as this is extremely important for constructive engagement; and (d) Lastly, the AAUC must hold leadership accountable both in the United States and on the African continent.

Ambassador Frazer further commented that in reality, most people expect President Obama to highlight Africa but this can go either way politically. He can frame Africa as essential to U.S. national interest which would be perceived as positive or he can choose to not allow Africa to be highlighted due to the unfair perception of favoritism which is a negative. She suggested that President Obama acknowledge Africa as a serious foreign policy matter for the United States and should follow the path paved by the Bush administration. Ideology must be inclusive of Africa as a priority of interest. Potential allies in the U.S. government and United Nations must also be forged. With regard to the transition

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process for the Obama administration she will work closely with providing essential information and strategies to assist with their preparation but unfortunately she does not really know who her successor will be.

She also hopes that the global economic crisis will not impact developmental assistance in Africa. However, the apparent lack of access to credit will inhibit the vast majority of African entrepreneurs seeking access to capital and investors' confidence in the marketplace. This can in turn adversely impact the business climate and community of donors that are involved in infrastructure development on the African continent. It will become even more challenging to make the case for global investments on the African continent. With regard to the talent pool, the State Department is making some gains in the recruitment of African-Americans but keeping them within the system is proving to be somewhat difficult. There needs to be a way to encourage more professional experience at the embassy level in order to qualify them as tenured professionals in the Foreign Service community.

She concluded that we must also improve the sustainability of qualified people beyond the entry and junior levels into the middle and senior levels of the Foreign Service community. We also need to better communicate the accomplishments of their overseas assignments in order to enhance the retention of senior career diplomats. Regarding the next generation of Foreign Service personnel, it is very important that we continue to utilize social networking opportunities and make a commitment to connect relationships for influence and networking (i.e. - academia, government, business, non-governmental organizations, and etcetera). They must also excel in their work in order to meet the high standards required for success in the Foreign Service. Concerning Nigeria, she believes that President Obasanjo's ill-fated attempt to secure a third term as president created an unfortunate vacuum in the democratic process in Nigeria. As a result, institutions were damaged and progress stifled if not reversed. Also the Niger Delta is still problematic and the underlying tensions of religious differences in northern Nigeria are both cause for concern.

Mr. Melvin P. Foote, President and CEO of the Constituency for Africa thanked Ambassador Frazer on behalf of the AAUC delegation for her outstanding service in U.S.-Africa foreign policy matters but more importantly praised her for being a true friend over the many years with the AAUC community. He stated that she has "raised-the-bar" on professionalism and performance for her successor and everyone will miss her dearly! He then was joined by Dr. Gloria B. Herndon, Chair of the American and African Business Women's Alliance (AABWA) who presented Ambassador Frazer with a special gift signifying the appreciation of the AAUC community and a group photograph was also taken of the occasion.

In Memory of Olive Ikeh

We are all deeply saddened by the unfortunate news of Olive Ezinwanne Chiazor Ikeh's death over the holidays as a result of a tragic motor vehicle accident while she was visiting family in Nigeria. Olive was a new member of our AAUC family and served on the Next Generation Committee. She was also a community organizer for Senator Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential Campaign. She graduated from the Thomas Cooley Law School with a Juris Doctorate of Law in January 2008 and was President of the African Legal Scholars Association. She will definitely be missed by everyone.

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for the continuation of several critical African initiatives established during the Bush administration that should be continued in the next administration. These would include the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and the African Education Initiative (AEI) among others. For more information about the PAI, please contact Cris Kirk, AAUC Policy Committee Chair at criskirk01@gmail.com.

Spotlight on American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE)

The final months of 2008 were particularly hectic for the American Association of Blacks in Energy (AABE) with the national elections, the transition activities and preparation for next year, but our activities to further the energy development of the people of Africa continues. Following the Energy Roundtable held during the Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series and the extensive set of activities with the delegation from Ethiopia, we have continued to work with the Department of Energy to identify further opportunities for collaborative business relationships between American and African energy firms. The Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs reported on the success of the existing relationship with AABE and committed to another three year term for the cooperative agreement to support African energy development.

The relationship between AABE and the nation of Tanzania has continued to develop especially since President Kikwete's letter of support for the organization and encouragement on the nine areas of renewable energy. A series of meetings with the Embassy of Tanzania have begun and will continue into 2009. On October 8th, the Association was honored to host the H.E. Ibrahim, the Commissioner for Infrastructure of the African Union, who was in the United States to address the Corporate Council for Africa and meet with the World Bank. We had the opportunity to lead a visit to the AABE Institute on the campus of the North Carolina A&T State University. There we met with faculty, toured the research facilities, met with several students and discussed areas for future cooperation and collaboration. Commissioner Ibrahim also took the opportunity to meet with the members of the AABE Washington Chapter for lunch and discussion of energy business opportunities in Africa.

The American Association of Blacks in Energy and the Center for Energy Research and Technology will shortly sign a Memorandum of Understanding which will outline their mutual commitment to cooperate on a series of efforts to support energy development in Africa and encourage African American students to pursue degrees in the technical fields in preparation for careers in the energy industries. One of the early efforts will be a Conference in Greensboro, North Carolina scheduled for February 26, 2009. The theme of the conference will "understand the Alternative Energy Technologies and Their Potential Impacts on Communities of Color". The conference will look particularly at the application of Clean Coal, Bio-based Liquid Fuels, and Renewable Power Technologies in the United States, the Caribbean and the African Continent. It is anticipated that the conference will also address the introduction of the African American agricultural community into the Carbon Credit Market. This will be a one day meeting with speakers from North Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky and Washington, D.C.

The Memorandum of Understanding further calls for the development of a speakers series featuring leading African and African American energy professionals and open to A&T engineering students who are contemplating careers in the energy industries. For more information about AABE, please visit the web site at www.aabe.org.

CFA Launches Upgraded Website

We are pleased to announce that the CFA website has been updated. For more information, please visit the page at www.cfanet.org.

Closing Remarks: Obama's Election is a Challenge for AAUC to Step-Up

by: Melvin P. Foote, President & CEO, Constituency for Africa

The "historic" inauguration of Barack Obama as our 44th President poses a challenge as well as an opportunity for the Constituency for Africa and the African American Unity Caucus (AAUC) to step up efforts to educate, activate, organize, and to build a base of support for Africa in the United States. Having a son of Africa in the White House definitely focuses much more attention on the plight of Africa and the role that African-Americans and others in the Diaspora can play, and are playing, in meeting the myriad of pressing needs on the continent. It is important for those of us in the AAUC network to have a proper reading and understanding of the history and recognize that those who came before us of the likes of Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, CLR James, George Padmore, Harriet Tubman, Mary McLeod Bethune, Henry Sylvester Williams, Julius Nyerere, Leon H. Sullivan, Leonard Robinson, Phil Rutledge and all of the other ancestors – would triumphantly welcome this moment in time -- while certainly expecting much more from us going forward as we take advantage of this historic opening to aggressively scale-up efforts to engender racial equality and to build a base of support for Africa and for African peoples worldwide!

The temptation is certainly great for those of us who are kept well informed about issues of Africa, and who have attended the AAUC retreats, the Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series and other meetings and forums, to form a sort of "elite club" -- made up of those of us "in the know." Such a club could certainly get together periodically to show off the kinte cloth, to share knowledge about the latest development in Zimbabwe and the Congo, and to hear who amongst us received the much coveted invitation to the Obama White House to meet and sip champagne with the President of Ghana, Kenya or some other prominent African country!

The really serious work necessary for building and sustaining a constituency for Africa in the United States still needs to happen and is going to require a lot of time, resources, hard work and sacrifice from all of us. The AAUC and other networks in support of Africa, will need to transform themselves in short order, from mere gatherings of enlightened African experts to becoming the actual vanguard and front line for the constituency-building effort in this country. The immediate target for the AAUC's mobilizing efforts are African-Americans and other Africans from the Diaspora who now live in America. Additionally, we have to think more broadly and also focus as well on the general public who are not well informed about why Africa matters! Those who are not routinely kept informed about critical issues in Africa! And those who have not made the connection between what is happening in Africa and how it impacts citizens here in the United States in a multitude of ways, like national security, trade, energy, health and culture!

The AAUC must formulate a pragmatic and affective strategy to fully engage the Congressional Black Caucus -- the foremost political body in Black America, in the cause of African people globally. Our strategy has to consider how we can effectively engage professional and technical networks such as the American Association of Blacks in Energy, the National Medical Association and the African Scientific Institute. We must figure out how best to engage the Black churches and other faith-based organizations, the NAACP, the Urban League and other civic and social organizations and networks, the sororities and fraternities, the Black colleges and universities, the black media, and especially our youth and next generation leaders. A special effort will also have to be made to engage the private sector and blacks in Corporate America, with an aim nothing short of building an African Global Economic Community that will rival the rise of China, India and the European Union in global competitiveness! Much work remains to be done on this score, but I am confident that if we can effectively pull together our resources, and focus and build the necessary unity and infrastructure amongst people of African descent in this country, that a new reality for Africa and for African people throughout the Diaspora can ensue in short order. We are indeed on the right track, the right train and headed in the right direction.

A hearty salute and best wishes to the new President of the United States, Barack Obama.

About AAUC

Established in 2002, the AAUC is a non-partisan alliance of committed leaders and organizations of African ancestry focused on challenges, issues and concerns affecting Africa and the African Diaspora. The mission of the AAUC is to marshal human, material, and social capital to enhance the overall sustainable development of African people. Through strategic decision-making, the AAUC will initiate and foster actions and forge effective partnerships among public and private entities in Africa and the African Diaspora and impact U.S. foreign policy (adopted February 2006). The AAUC is a program of the Constituency for Africa.



Editor's Note: Please contact AAUC Secretariat at (202) 371-0588 or intern_cfa@yahoo.com if you wish to submit any news and information to the next edition of the AAUC Newsletter. Copyright© January 2009 by the AAUC and all rights reserved