

## Africa Day 2017 Celebration:

# Investing in Africa's Future: Opportunities for Youth

## "Africa Day- 2017"

**Washington DC, Friday, June 23, 2017....:** The Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center (RRB/ITC) in Washington, DC came alive with music, dance and ceremony Thursday, May 25<sup>th</sup> in celebration of the 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Africa Day. Approximately six hundred attendees, representing the 55 countries of the African Union (AU) and the African Diaspora, observed in awe as the African Group of Ambassadors made a grand entrance into the atrium during a ceremony that began an evening of pageantry and joy. The evening was a culmination of day-long activities, which focused on AU's commitment to investing in its most important natural resource, its youth.

LINK TO SHORT VIDEO: <https://youtu.be/p8-qtPgwpXE>

Evening highlights included:

- The Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps, **H.E. Serge Mombouli**, Ambassador of the Republic of Congo stated *"Let us celebrate Africa Day 2017 by investing in African Youth--their success is the world's success!"*
- **H.E. Arikana Chihombori Quao**, the new Ambassador of the African Union Mission to the USA, remarked *"supporting our youth—the future leaders-- will provide a guarantee for sustainable peace, community stability and cohesion within the African countries."*
- The evening's co-chair, **H.E. Ambassador Mninwa Mahlangu**, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa, hopes *"the AU will be able to transform Africa's youth into an innovative and competitive labor force that will contribute to the economic growth of the continent."*
- Co-chair, **H.E. Carlos dos Santos**, Ambassador of the Republic of Mozambique, believes *"Africa is positioned to becoming one of the biggest contributors of youth globally making our responsibility to involve our youth more urgent."*
- State Department **Peter Henry Barlerin**, Acting Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, offered strong supportive remarks celebrating Africa's importance in the world today.
- **Andrew Gelfuso**, Vice President, TCMA, RRB/ITC summed it up best, *"Africa is on the move and we are thrilled for the first time in our history to be hosting the Africa Day celebrations!"*

Exciting entertainment included the exhilarating **Vivalda Dula**, Angolan "Queen of Drum," the popular **Kweku Amoako** (aka DJ Kweks) of Ghana; and lively **Sahel Band** representing African culture around the world!

The evening's great success was due to the sponsors including **Sasol** (Double Platinum). Other platinum sponsors included **Chevron, Exxon Mobile, Anardarko, Team South Africa** (South African Airways, South African Tourism, Brand South Africa, and Wines of South Africa) and the **Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center**. Silver Sponsors included **Aetna, Caterpillar, Ethiopian Airlines** and **Sahouri Insurance**. **Diplomatic Duty Free Stores of New York, Drumpulse Entertainment** were two of the most prominent Partners.

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**African Ambassadors Group (AAG) in Washington DC**

The African Ambassadors Group are all African Ambassadors station in Washington, DC accredited to the United States of America.

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