

Brief Statement by His Excellency Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Head of State and President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea on the Occasion of the First Africa-United States Summit on The Subject of Investing in Future Generations

Washington D.C., 4 August 2014

I congratulate and thank President Obama and the United States Government for their initiative in organizing this Summit of Leaders from the United States and Africa. It is something for which African leaders have wished for a long time—a diplomatic strategy to help achieve our goal of closer friendship and cooperation.

We are especially grateful that the Government of the United States has arranged this assembly, so we can express our feelings on the current status and the future of friendly relations and cooperation between the United States and Africa.

There is no doubt that this Summit is the dawn of a long awaited new era in the relationship between the United States of America and the African continent, considering that there are undeniable historical and cultural links between us, as well as States' responsibility to cooperate with each other, in the interest of creating a world of peace, wellbeing and happiness for all humanity.

The subject of this Summit, devoted to investing in youth, is by definition the main pillar of our cooperation. Indeed, investing in youth through education has always been a mainstay of our multilateral cooperation, as a guarantee for a promising future for our States. This investment has yielded positive results before and after the independence of our States, producing illustrious personalities, both in Africa and the United States, who have contributed and continue to contribute to substantial advances in the political, economic, social and cultural lives of both regions.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea cannot but be part of this cooperation by which, throughout many years, our youth have been beneficiaries of American education, through public and private cooperation programs, chief among them those of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Pacem In Terris Institute and cooperation with American universities.

Africa is a young continent, considering when African states achieved their national independence. Given these circumstances, speaking for Equatorial Guinea, the education of our young is an ambitious goal to which my government is committed. We are further committed to creating an economic framework in which our young people can develop a work ethic and take a leadership role in attracting technology and innovative practices that create jobs for graduates of our universities and technical schools.

In this regard, the integration of young Equatoguinean graduates from our universities into the socio-political process of our country is a priority of my government.

However, what is the point of training the young if our countries do not have the economic structure and infrastructure to offer them enough employment?

This point is part of the cooperation discussion that Africa should be having with the United States of America, the great power that has helped the economies of several regions of the world become stable, so that it can contribute financially to tapping Africa's abundant natural resources.

Nothing can be negotiated and nothing can be asked of those who have nothing. In this regard, President Obama is giving us an opportunity to express our concerns, because his country is in a position to help Africa.

In Africa we say that an empty bag cannot stand upright. What would be the purpose of democracy if it did not produce good management of public affairs?

Equatorial Guinea understands that Democracy is a system that promotes citizens' freedom, in the sense of fostering economic growth and good management of public affairs. In this regard, we believe we have made great strides in our country with the latest constitutional reforms designed to ensure this view of democracy becomes a reality.

For this reason, we are grateful to the American oil companies that have invested in our petroleum industry. Thanks to this, the political sector of my country understands that democracy is not simply the rotation of governments, but is most importantly a mechanism to better control and manage State assets.

However, direct foreign investment in the oil sector is not everything. Africa needs to see this kind of investment across all sectors of the economy: port and airport infrastructure, communication, transportation, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, cattle raising, mining, creation of industries, tourism, social services and others that lead to economic sustainability.

Therefore, Equatorial Guinea proposes to the United States cooperation through direct foreign investment in the above mentioned sectors, in which both parties would derive equitable and reciprocal benefits, as a way of transferring technology to Equatorial Guinea that enables development of the sectors described.

Africa's economic growth and its increasing geopolitical importance face serious obstacles that not only paralyze progress but produce negative effects on the development of democracy, peace, security and political stability on the Continent.

Indeed, armed conflict, starvation, food insecurity and, more recently, piracy, terrorism and mercenary invasions continue to undermine the freedom, security and welfare of the African people.

Therefore, we believe that cooperation with the United States of America on security and intelligence, and development of a plan to protect our populations from the expansion of these groups is key to winning the war against them and advancing the development of Africa. A clear example of this kind of cooperation is the current intervention by the United States and the international community in the search for the 200 girls kidnapped in Nigeria.

In summary, Africa requests three types of assistance from the United States to guarantee the emergence of Africa as an economic power: massive support for the training of human resources, greater investment in productive sectors and direct cooperation in security and intelligence

Finally, we would like to see this Summit institutionalized, with its second meeting held on African soil, in order for all participants to experience firsthand the realities of the Continent, as well as create closer and warmer links with the peoples we represent.