

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
 PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DOING BUSINESS  
 IN AFRICA

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MEETING

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THURSDAY  
 APRIL 13, 2023

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The Council met in Room 350 of the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, 1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest, Washington, D.C., and by Video Teleconference, at 4:15 p.m. EDT, Peter Sullivan and Rahama Wright, Co-Chairs, presiding.

PRESENT

PETER SULLIVAN, Citi, Chair \*  
 RAHAMA WRIGHT, Yeleen Enterprises, Chair  
 TAKREEM EL-TOHAMY, IBM, Vice Chair  
 FRANKLIN AMOO, Baylis Emerging Markets  
 JASON P.H. BRANTLEY, Deere & Company  
 DEEPAK CHOPRA, OSI Systems \*  
 GAD COHEN, eleQtra Group  
 BRUCE HANSON, Credence ID  
 KATHRYN KAROL, Caterpillar Inc. \*  
 FRANCINE KATSOUDAS, Cisco Systems, Inc.  
 WILLIAM KILLEEN, Acrow  
 SAMI MAINICH, Dow Africa \*  
 BRENDA MBATHI, GE East Africa  
 JOHN NEVERGOLE, ABD Group  
 KWABENA OSEI-SARPONG, RIFE International  
 NICOLE POINDEXTER, Energicity Corp  
 OLIVIER PUECH, American Tower Corporation

JUSTIN SIBERELL, Bechtel Overseas Corporation \*  
ANDREW TORRE, Visa Inc.  
KATE TULENKO, Corvus Health  
PATRICK VAN der LOO, Pfizer \*

ALSO PRESENT

DON GRAVES, U.S. Department of Commerce  
ENOH EBONG, U.S. Trade and Development Agency  
MOLLY PHEE, U.S. Department of State  
JUDD DEVERMONT, National Security Council  
CAMERON ALFORD, Millennium Challenge  
Corporation  
ANDY HERSCOWITZ, U.S. International Development  
Finance Corporation  
HAZEEN ASHBY, Export-Import Bank of the United  
States of America  
MONDE MUYANGWA, U.S. Agency for International  
Development  
BROOKE JAMISON, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
ERIC MEYER, U.S. Department of Treasury  
CLAIRE EHMANN, U.S. Small Business  
Administration  
OSVALDO GOMEZ-MARTINEZ, Office of the United  
States Trade Representative  
SCOTT CAMERON, Prosper Africa  
JOHN IRONS, Power Africa  
HELAINA MATZA, U.S. Department of State

\*participating remotely

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1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 (4:24 p.m.)

3 CHAIR WRIGHT: I'd like to call the  
4 meeting to order. Deputy Secretary the  
5 Honorable Don Graves, Senior Director Devermont  
6 --

7 (Off-microphone comments.)

8 COURT REPORTER: She needs to speak  
9 into the mic.

10 CHAIR WRIGHT: -- fellow Council  
11 members --

12 COURT REPORTER: She needs to speak  
13 directly into the mic.

14 (Off-microphone comments.)

15 CHAIR WRIGHT: Good afternoon. My  
16 name is Rahama Wright, and I'm the founder of  
17 Yeleen Enterprises. And I'm honored to serve  
18 as the co-chair of the President's Advisory  
19 Council on Doing Business in Africa. Welcome  
20 to our first meeting of the fourth term.

21 We're thrilled to see the U.S.  
22 government's renewed engagement with Africa.

1 The Biden Administration has made significant -  
2 - the Biden Administration has made significant  
3 strides including hosting the successful  
4 African Leaders Summit and committing \$55  
5 billion to address pressing needs on the  
6 continent.

7 This has been complemented by  
8 several high-profile official missions to the  
9 continent. Most recently Vice President  
10 Harris' trip to Ghana, Tanzania, and Zambia,  
11 and the AMCHAM Business Summit in Nairobi,  
12 Kenya. These activities send a clear message  
13 that the U.S. is committed to working with its  
14 African partners alongside the U.S. business  
15 community.

16 The Vice President announced a new  
17 billion-dollar commitment to women's economic  
18 empowerment, an issue that's very dear to my  
19 heart. And she also highlighted complementary  
20 private sector initiatives like Shea Yeleen's  
21 digital payments pilots that we're doing with  
22 our shea butter suppliers in Ghana. PAC-DBIA

1 members Visa and Pfizer were also featured in  
2 this commitment.

3 We look forward to the US  
4 government's continued efforts to create  
5 environments in which small and medium  
6 enterprises, the diaspora, and women-owned  
7 businesses can thrive. Our recommendations  
8 report, which we'll present today, aims to  
9 contribute to U.S./Africa policy objectives  
10 recognizing U.S./Africa trade as a critical  
11 partnership for the mutual prosperity for both  
12 markets. Our work reflects the importance we  
13 place on creating lasting positive change for  
14 both Africa and the United States.

15 I would now like to turn to my Co-  
16 Chair Peter Sullivan who's joining us from  
17 London. Peter?

18 CHAIR SULLIVAN: Thanks so much,  
19 Rahama. I'm proud to co-chair the PAC-DBIA  
20 with you and work with all the members who  
21 represent the U.S. private sector that are  
22 investing and doing business across Africa.

1 The PAC is comprised of different-sized firms  
2 with varied experiences across sectors, and in  
3 different countries offering unique and  
4 informed perspective on Africa.

5 With the recommendations we are  
6 presenting here today, we hope that we will  
7 serve to enhance and optimize the U.S.  
8 government's toolkit in strengthening  
9 commercial partnerships throughout the African  
10 continent. Before we share the specific  
11 recommendations from the PAC's sectorial  
12 subcommittees, Takreem and I wanted to  
13 highlight two key overarching recommendations  
14 from the report.

15 First, we strongly advocate the  
16 Administration to better utilize the PAC as a  
17 resource for U.S. commercial engagement. We  
18 are a ready-made cadre of American firms that  
19 can visibly and tangibly partner with the U.S.  
20 government. There is no better way to  
21 demonstrate our partnership approach to our  
22 African allies than to showcase the strong

1 relationship and alignment between the U.S.  
2 public and private sectors.

3 Second, we suggest close private  
4 sector collaboration on the Partnership for  
5 Global Infrastructure Investment, PGII, that  
6 results in a pipeline for deals, particularly  
7 transport, rural, and energy infrastructure for  
8 Africa. For example, with over 50 years on the  
9 continent, Citi aims to bring our expertise and  
10 experience to contribute to reducing the  
11 financial gaps for both infrastructure and  
12 investment.

13 Africa faces a critical inflection  
14 point or current headwinds of debt stress, food  
15 insecurity, climate change, and job creation  
16 can be turned into transformational tailwinds  
17 of fiscal resilience, agricultural self-  
18 sufficiency, environmental sustainability, and  
19 economic opportunity for all.

20 The U.S. is perfectly placed to  
21 proactively and predominately contribute to  
22 this transformation through the strong



1 partnership of the American public and private  
2 sector. With that, I'd like to turn it over to  
3 our vice chair, Takreem.

4 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,  
5 Peter. It is a true honor as a son of Africa  
6 to serve on my third term on this important  
7 president's advisory council representing IBM.  
8 For nearly a century, IBM has collaborated with  
9 African businesses and governments to deliver  
10 innovations that matter from supporting  
11 PEPFAR's last mile drug delivery to Egypt's  
12 comprehensive e-taxation system.

13 In my two decades of experience in  
14 Africa and also in my current global role, I  
15 have witnessed Africa becoming the central  
16 geography in the global dialogue on economic  
17 opportunity and growth. The continent  
18 potential is undisputed. That's why this PAC-  
19 DBIA is so vital. As Peter said, please rely  
20 on us. And as we wrote in our letter to  
21 President Biden, continue your strong work on  
22 making it easier for you as businesses to do

1 business in Africa.

2 We recommend developing a concierge  
3 resource within Prosper Africa or elsewhere for  
4 easier access to the many U.S. government  
5 financial support programs and tools. A one  
6 stop shop that is web- and mobile- accessible,  
7 conversational, and a self-service experience.  
8 It can provide immediate answers and suggested  
9 next step actions. It would modernize what is  
10 now at times a cumbersome process, particularly  
11 for small and medium sized firms, many of which  
12 are diaspora-led that are key job creators in  
13 the U.S. and Africa.

14 Lastly, we commend your ask of  
15 Congress to increase funding for Prosper  
16 Africa, and the Departments of State and  
17 Commerce. Additional funding for staff and  
18 critical resources would contribute to this  
19 one-stop shop.

20 I have overseen the technical build  
21 of such for other trade and investment  
22 agencies. They can be transformative in

1 extending agencies' reach and more effectively  
2 support businesses as well as advancing the  
3 government's foreign policy interests.

4 Speaking of foreign policy  
5 interests, I want to recognize Judd Devermont,  
6 National Security Council senior director for  
7 African Affairs to share with this group the  
8 Biden Administration interests in Africa.

9 MR. DEVERMONT: Thank you, Takreem.  
10 Let me start by saying thanks to everyone for  
11 being here today. Thanks to the PAC, the  
12 cooler way to say it, just the PAC, for your  
13 commitment to strengthening commercial ties and  
14 engaging between the United States and African  
15 countries. I want to do a special shout out to  
16 the Department of Commerce for all your hard  
17 work in making this event possible today.

18 As many of you know, the Biden-  
19 Harris Administration made it a priority to  
20 expand and deepen our commercial partnerships  
21 in Africa, and we see that as a means to  
22 advance the prosperity both for Africans and

1 for Americans. At the U.S.-Africa Leaders  
2 Summit last year, President Biden said that he  
3 was all in on Africa, and the reasons, I think,  
4 are increasingly evident.

5 Africa is critical to advancing our  
6 shared global interests. If we want to make  
7 progress on addressing climate change, tackle  
8 the next global pandemic, confront democratic  
9 backsliding, if we want to define the rules of  
10 the road for economies, trade, for tech, it is  
11 imperative that Africans have a seat at the  
12 table.

13 Let me just say it again, we believe  
14 that Africans need to be at the table. We need  
15 African leadership if we're going to address  
16 these problems and seize the opportunities in  
17 front of us.

18 And what makes sense for geopolitics  
19 I think also makes sense for Commerce. At the  
20 summit we worked very closely with African and  
21 American businesses to announce \$15 billion in  
22 private sector commitments and investments.

1 And as Rahama alluded to, Vice President Harris  
2 made another billion-dollar commitment for  
3 women's empower. And I'll add that she also  
4 made another \$7 billion commitment on climate  
5 resilience. So count them, that's \$23 billion  
6 since December of last year.

7 We're really proud of this work, we  
8 can't rest on our laurels. We know that we  
9 have to do more to generate new opportunities  
10 and grow the U.S. private sector market share,  
11 especially in areas such as agri-business,  
12 energy, entertainment, healthcare, and  
13 technology. After all, this is what our value  
14 proposition is.

15 We leverage the best of America,  
16 that includes all the tools across our  
17 government, private sector, and civil society  
18 so that we can partner with and support African  
19 institutions, citizens, and nations to advance  
20 our shared goals.

21 To do this, we need the expertise  
22 and the experience of people in this room, in

1 the private sector, in the PAC so that we can  
2 get the essential insights and inputs so we can  
3 continue to refine our policy process. That's  
4 why you are all so important to the work that  
5 we do, and why we value the contributions that  
6 you made with this report, and you will be  
7 making over the lifetime of your tenure on the  
8 PAC.

9 We will look at these  
10 recommendations very seriously. They will  
11 spur, I promise you, a very rigorous dialogue  
12 about how we do better, how we partner with  
13 you. And so I want to thank particularly the  
14 council leadership and its members for crafting  
15 these very thoughtful, deliberate  
16 recommendations.

17 Probably the most important thing  
18 here is that we are joined by Deputy Secretary  
19 Graves who shares all of our commitment to  
20 Africa and increasing our trade investment.  
21 So, sir, thank you for joining us, and I'll  
22 yield the floor.

1 MR. GRAVES: Well, Judd, thank you  
2 very much for your leadership here at the White  
3 House, for those framing remarks. And I think  
4 you laid it out really well, Takreem, and  
5 Peter, and Rahama, thank you for your  
6 leadership of this council. Thank you to all  
7 of the members of the PAC-DBIA, for your  
8 commitment. It is not easy to make the time to  
9 do yet another thing on top of very busy  
10 professional lives focusing on Africa and other  
11 places. Thank you for being a part of this  
12 meeting. And thank you for all of the work,  
13 including the recommendations, that have led up  
14 to today.

15 I am really excited about this  
16 meeting, which is part of the reason that I  
17 forced some schedule changes on the Secretary's  
18 schedule so that I could be the one that stayed  
19 here talked for the entire time.

20 I would be remiss if I didn't also  
21 acknowledge two really important friends.  
22 There are a lot of friends in the room, but

1       there are two special friends without whom I  
2       suspect that the work that this administration  
3       is doing would have fallen flat and, frankly,  
4       we wouldn't have gotten to where we are as  
5       quickly as we have. And first, that's Scott  
6       Eisner from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's  
7       U.S.-Africa Business Center. Mr. President,  
8       thank you.

9                        (Appause.)

10               MR. GRAVES: And of course, Florie  
11       Lizer from the -- CEO of the Corporate Council  
12       on Africa. Thank you, both. We collaborate  
13       with them so often, they make our lives so much  
14       easier because they're able to provide those  
15       informal consultations, the guidance, they can  
16       get us answers. And just as important, they  
17       can help us get to the right U.S. businesses  
18       and know the lay of the land across the  
19       continent. So just -- you've been such big  
20       supporters of our work and PAC-DBIA, so thank  
21       you for both joining us, but also thank you for  
22       all the work that you've been doing.



1 I had the chance to meet most of the  
2 members of the PAC-DBIA, maybe I'll just call  
3 it the PAC, Judd, the PAC back in December  
4 informally when the Secretary and I attended  
5 your informal meeting at the U.S.-Africa  
6 Leaders Summit and the business forum.

7 And I will tell you that my team has  
8 been keeping us informed of everything that  
9 you've been doing, all of the good  
10 conversations. It's something that I -- I know  
11 DAS Richardson gets a little bit tired of  
12 meeting with me, but I have a keen interest in  
13 what happens on the continent, particularly the  
14 way that the U.S. government supports the work  
15 that you all are doing, the work that we as a  
16 country are doing on the continent.

17 So I am also excited about, but I  
18 think we'll be competing trips from the  
19 Secretary and myself this year, we're going to  
20 see who gets to announce the biggest things,  
21 the commitments. And we're also committed, I  
22 should say this upfront, to making sure that we

1 can see how we get the PAC-DBIA to be a part of  
2 our trips. I know it's important to you. It's  
3 also important to me and to the Secretary. So  
4 we just want to make sure that you know that  
5 that's at the top of our list.

6 The Secretary and I firmly believe  
7 in the President's and the Vice President's  
8 vision for the U.S.-Africa partnership in the  
9 next decade. It is critical. Now is the time  
10 to be engaged. Frankly, we're playing a little  
11 bit of catch up. We should have been engaged  
12 more robustly prior to now. But there's a lot  
13 more that we can do.

14 This is going to be the  
15 quintessential 21st century partnership. It's  
16 going to be driven by trade, investment,  
17 commercial ties, and sectors that drive job  
18 creation, competitiveness on both sides of the  
19 Atlantic. And so the recommendations that you  
20 all are providing today I think will be able to  
21 give us the ability to turn that vision that  
22 the President has had and the Vice President

1 has had into reality.

2 But it can't be done without a  
3 whole-of-government approach. There's too many  
4 folks here in the room for me to thank and  
5 appreciate their engagement. But I do want to  
6 call out two partners, Director Ebong who has  
7 become a dear friend in this process. I know  
8 that USTDA is a critical part of this. Also  
9 Molly Phee, the assistant secretary at State.

10 This partnership between State,  
11 Commerce, TDA, EXIM, DFC, and so many other  
12 parts of the federal government is going to be  
13 critical. And I think the fact that we're all  
14 here today is a testament to how much we  
15 appreciate what the PAC is doing and the  
16 critical advisory role that you all play in  
17 moving things forward.

18 I will quickly just talk about the  
19 reality because it's one thing to talk up here,  
20 and it's a whole different matter to talk about  
21 the reality, what we can actually do learning  
22 from you, talking with you, working with you.

1           So a few of the recommendations that  
2 this group has provided that has led to real  
3 change, real innovation in our approaches  
4 include evolutions in U.S. government  
5 financing. I know that's a critical piece.  
6 It's critical for you. It's just as critical  
7 for folks on the continent.

8           So the evolution of these tools that  
9 are designed to leverage private capital for  
10 Africa including our early experience with  
11 blended finance, the Commerce Department has  
12 created a new digital solution for  
13 disseminating early-stage trade leads to U.S.  
14 companies, another thing that we heard directly  
15 from you all, and that's called Express Leads  
16 Middle East and Africa. It's a way for us to  
17 get more information as quickly to you about  
18 opportunities as we can.

19           There's also a great new partnership  
20 between TDA and the government of Kenya under  
21 the Global Procurement Initiative. I'm sure  
22 you will talk about that, you know, in a little

1 bit. A new model of engagement to elevate our  
2 commercial diplomacy with African governments  
3 through our bilateral commercial MOUs, and it's  
4 an effort that began through the PAC in 2018  
5 with a trip to the continent back then. And  
6 it's continued to yield new partnerships ever  
7 since including our recent MOU that the Vice  
8 President announced just last week with the  
9 government of Zambia. So we're making good  
10 progress but keep bringing these great  
11 recommendations because it will enable us to  
12 enable you.

13 I'm not going to take too much more  
14 time. I'll just say that you all have  
15 conducted a number of important high-impact  
16 trips to Africa. You did one in 2016, one in  
17 2018, and a key source of input in helping to  
18 shape the international road map for how we  
19 engage around Prosper Africa.

20 In the current term, the PAC is  
21 organized into subcommittees, as you all know,  
22 with sectors that are really highlighting

1 everything that we saw at the U.S.-Africa  
2 Business Forum. So what you are doing allows  
3 us to be more proactive on those specific  
4 silos. We'll go back into them over the course  
5 of the conversation.

6 And the recommendations that you're  
7 providing to us today are going to allow us to  
8 drive a lot of this work forward, especially  
9 around two-way trade and investment that's  
10 going to be crucial to U.S. and African  
11 economies.

12 So as you begin to make your  
13 presentations, let me commit to all of you that  
14 my colleagues and I will consider all of the  
15 recommendations with as much careful thought as  
16 you put into developing them. As these things  
17 go, there may be some tweaks, there may be some  
18 back and forth. But having led -- having been  
19 the director of a separate Advisory Council to  
20 the President years past, I know that the work  
21 that you do is actually going to frame up  
22 everything that we do going forward. Your

1 recommendations are absolutely vital to  
2 everything that we do.

3 We mobilize all of our teams across  
4 the entire Department of Commerce, the  
5 Secretary and I have. This is not an  
6 international trade administration solely-  
7 focused effort. This is a whole-of-Commerce  
8 and a whole-of-government approach.

9 So we're going to bring a bunch of  
10 new tools, bunch of new resources. You have my  
11 commitments. The Secretary, I saw her just  
12 before I ran out of the office to come over  
13 here. She said to tell you that she is also  
14 committed to taking your recommendations and  
15 engaging with you collectively and  
16 individually.

17 With that, I've said way too much.  
18 I will hush up so that we can get to the really  
19 important discussions. Rahama, I'll turn it  
20 back over to you. Thank you.

21 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Deputy  
22 Secretary. I would like to turn to our vice

1 chair, Takreem, to begin the year program.

2 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: So thank you  
3 again for the -- so thank you, Deputy Secretary  
4 Graves. We will now present our PAC's  
5 recommendations starting with healthcare. I  
6 recognize Patrick Van Der Loo.

7 MR. VAN der LOO: Thank you very  
8 much, Takreem. And thank you, Deputy Secretary  
9 Graves, and all members of the United States  
10 interagency for convening us today. I would  
11 also like to thank my fellow PAC-DBIA members  
12 for their partnership, their leadership and  
13 collaboration.

14 We learned many important lessons  
15 from the COVID-19 pandemic including the strong  
16 connection between health and economic well-  
17 being. Our two recommendations reflect that  
18 interconnectedness and seek to remove barriers  
19 that prevent U.S. companies from contributing  
20 more to both the health and the economic well-  
21 being of African people.

22 Our first recommendation is focused



1 on strengthening the regulatory systems and  
2 removing trade barriers. A predictable,  
3 transparent, and harmonized regulatory  
4 environment is fundamental to supporting health  
5 investments and patients' access to medicines.

6 In all of our individual company  
7 engagements with African government officials,  
8 each will quickly highlight that if we invest  
9 in their country, we have access to a common  
10 market of 1.2 billion people. However, there  
11 is no single market for health-related products  
12 and services. Each government has different  
13 regulatory standards that companies must meet.

14 The requirement for individual  
15 market authorizations, export permits, and the  
16 need to meet local standards eliminates  
17 economies of scale that would allow for greater  
18 investments. Removing these individual  
19 standards through the African Medicines Agency  
20 or even within the regional economic  
21 communities is critical for removing barriers  
22 that prevent patient access, and

1       disincentivized localized investment.

2                   Unfortunately, we have recent  
3       firsthand experience. Pfizer invested heavily  
4       in a local South African facility to  
5       manufacture and store our mRNA COVID-19 vaccine  
6       to supply the African continent. But  
7       unfortunately, we were not able to export to  
8       any other African countries due to regulatory  
9       requirements and lack of harmonization of  
10      regulatory efforts.

11                   For this reason, the PAC-DBIA  
12      recommends the creation of a healthcare  
13      regulatory dialogue between the U.S. Government  
14      and African Union along with capacity-building  
15      initiatives. It would focus on increasing  
16      regulatory harmonization as well as  
17      implementation of reliance of methods.

18                   Our second recommendation reflects  
19      the changing healthcare landscape in Africa.  
20      Most USG funding and development assistance is  
21      currently allocated for addressing infectious  
22      diseases. Yet, the burden of non-communicable

1 diseases continues to grow exponentially, and  
2 has not only a negative impact on each market,  
3 but on the economic competitiveness of the  
4 continent as a whole.

5 By addressing cancer, heart disease,  
6 and diabetes along with infectious diseases,  
7 U.S. companies in partnership with African  
8 governments can ensure that there is a vibrant  
9 economic environment to enable trade.

10 For this reason, our second  
11 recommendation calls for expanding the scope of  
12 USG programming and funding for global health  
13 initiatives to be inclusive of non-communicable  
14 diseases. This involves a whole-of-government  
15 approach to addressing the burden of disease  
16 and a patient-centric model to ensure that we  
17 are addressing the patient needs along with  
18 doctor continuum.

19 Again, thank you for the time today,  
20 and we stand ready to work with you to  
21 implement and execute these recommendations.  
22 Back to you, Takreem.

1                   VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you.  
2 Thank you very much, Patrick. I now turn to  
3 Kate Tulenko to amplify.

4                   MS. TULENKO: And it's a pleasure to  
5 be here. So I'd like to give two quick  
6 illustrative case studies around our  
7 recommendations. So first on regulatory  
8 harmonization, I'd like to give an example from  
9 Corvus Health.

10                  So we're a global health workforce  
11 firm addressing the African and global  
12 workforce shortage. We've established a group  
13 procurement organization for nursing schools in  
14 Africa to reduce the cost of all their inputs  
15 and to help them scale up. But we have to  
16 navigate 54 separate import and custom systems.  
17 So this significantly increases the complexity  
18 and cost of our work, and leaves our imported  
19 goods vulnerable to delays, expiration, theft  
20 and bribe requests. So by harmonizing import  
21 regulations, the U.S. Government will greatly  
22 assist American companies doing business in

1 Africa.

2 On the second recommendation on NCD  
3 funding, the NCD funding recommendation is both  
4 an appeal to humanitarian causes and economic  
5 grounds. On the economic side, not only will  
6 U.S. NCD funding help more Africans continue to  
7 work and be able to support their families, but  
8 it will help Africa capture the billions of  
9 dollars that are currently being sent every  
10 year to India, Turkey, the Middle East on  
11 healthcare, mostly in NCDs, cancer care,  
12 cardiac care, orthopedic care.

13 By allowing this treatment to occur  
14 in Africa, it'll be done more cost-effectively,  
15 a more culturally appropriate way. And just to  
16 give the illustrative example for Corvus  
17 Health, we're in the process of setting up a  
18 tele-oncology program, but under current U.S.  
19 funding guidelines, there are few programs that  
20 would be able to finance it. Thanks, Deputy  
21 Secretary.

22 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you

1 very much, Kate. I now recognize esteemed  
2 colleagues in the Biden Administration to  
3 provide reactions. So Deputy Secretary Graves.

4 MR. GRAVES: Well, thank you very  
5 much. Thanks for your thoughtful  
6 recommendations. I'll take them in turn. The  
7 recommendation on the new regulatory dialogue  
8 with the African Union is -- I think is a very  
9 important, very good recommendation for your  
10 insights on barriers inhibiting access to high-  
11 quality American medicine, and the medical  
12 products in Africa.

13 Harmonization of healthcare  
14 standards I think as you all likely know, or  
15 maybe you don't, is an issue that we are  
16 focused on across the federal government right  
17 now. It's something that we're focused on.  
18 The USTR is in negotiations, for instance, with  
19 -- excuse me -- with Kenya under the U.S.-Kenya  
20 Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership.

21 And as you indicate in your  
22 recommendation, progress on this front at the

1 subregional level will be critical to creating  
2 the building blocks for the greater  
3 harmonization at the pan-African level that's  
4 envisioned under the AfCFTA.

5 Commerce I think would absolutely  
6 welcome the ability to -- the partnership in  
7 working with our colleagues at the State  
8 Department who manage the bilateral  
9 relationship with the African Union. And  
10 consider a way forward on proposing a new  
11 dialogue with the AU on these issues.

12 I's also add how important the  
13 Department of Health and Human Services, their  
14 health attachés are currently in Kenya and  
15 South Africa to help guide these efforts on  
16 harmonization along with Commerce's standards  
17 attaché in South Africa. So we're getting,  
18 again, that whole-of-government approach.

19 Let me end by talking about our  
20 commercial law development program, which many  
21 of you I'm sure know, it could be an excellent  
22 resource to help lead on the capacity-building

1 side. That's their job. The nexus of  
2 regulatory framework development and technical  
3 assistance I think is exactly where the CLDP  
4 could be most effective.

5 Of course, CLDP also -- their  
6 programs require foreign assistance authorized  
7 funding. That's a challenge. We don't have  
8 that currently internally, so we'd need to work  
9 with our partners across the interagency to be  
10 able to get that done. But again, that's a  
11 whole-of-government approach.

12 Our healthcare industry experts at  
13 the International Trade Administration along  
14 with our National Institutes of Standards and  
15 Technology can provide what I think would be  
16 valuable technical input on the ways that we  
17 can engage, and specifically the expertise on  
18 the content.

19 And as always, you don't have to  
20 remind me or tell me that we should be working  
21 with our good colleagues at TDA. You don't  
22 have to convince me. I spend enough time with



1 Director Ebong to know that any hour that I can  
2 get with her is worth its weight in gold. So  
3 we will be continuing to amplify the ways that  
4 we can work collaboratively. And just know  
5 that we're all in in working with the Director  
6 and her team. Thanks, Takreem.

7 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you.  
8 Thank you, Deputy Secretary Graves. Thank you,  
9 Deputy Secretary Graves. I recognize Assistant  
10 Secretary of State Molly Phee.

11 MS. PHEE: Thank you very much. And  
12 just let me say, it's a delight to see all of  
13 you. This has been long overdue, and we're  
14 thrilled to begin energizing our work and  
15 collaboration with you.

16 To the recommendations at hand, as  
17 has been said, it's clear that regulatory  
18 harmonization is essential, and we will be  
19 upping our game in terms of increasing our  
20 efforts to engage with the African Union. We  
21 are already working with the U.S. government,  
22 as Deputy Secretary Graves mentioned DHS. Also

1 other regional and multilateral partners and  
2 foundations. And specifically at the AU with  
3 the African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization  
4 Program. But there are many pieces to the AU,  
5 many which have a stake in these complicated  
6 and contentious trade issues. So we're happy  
7 to take that on and see what else we can do.

8 As some of you know, I've been  
9 concerned that we, in the Africa Bureau at the  
10 State Department, need to up our game. And so  
11 we have recently released a commercial  
12 development strategy -- I'm sorry, commercial  
13 diplomacy strategy that would take advantage of  
14 I think what we offer which is real estate and  
15 access and influence through our embassies on  
16 the continent.

17 And as you have already identified,  
18 we identified in that strategy, the importance  
19 of a public/private dialogue on health  
20 regulatory issues with the AU. So I just want  
21 to commit to that here.

22 We also agree that it's important to

1 have a holistic approach to the health systems  
2 in Africa, particularly addressing the rise of  
3 non-communicable diseases. And we also believe  
4 that your role in helping in this sector as we  
5 see here today, and I think as we've seen  
6 through the PEPFAR program, is really critical,  
7 so we're delighted to have your partnership.

8 And, finally, I just want to  
9 underscore what I think many of you know, that  
10 we're really lucky to have Dr. John Nkengasong  
11 working at the State Department leading, on  
12 behalf of the Secretary, our engagement on the  
13 health security. And he is a terrific partner  
14 to me.

15 Africans really are responding  
16 positively to his emphasis on moving away sort  
17 from assistance and building up I think the  
18 private sector capability as well as the  
19 resilience of the healthcare systems. So I  
20 just want you to know that we're very good  
21 partners and we will continue to draw on his  
22 skill and background. So thanks.

1                   VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you. I  
2 turn to USTDA director, Enoch Ebong.

3                   MR. EBONG: Thank you so much,  
4 Takreem. And thank you, Department Secretary  
5 Graves, for your leadership on strengthening  
6 our commercial engagement with Africa.

7                   I do want to thank the PAC -- it is  
8 saying now, Judd. Thank you -- for the, as  
9 everybody has said, comprehensive, thoughtful,  
10 actionable recommendations. And with respect  
11 to this one, for your interest in leveraging  
12 USTDA's support for a single African market for  
13 health products.

14                   I thought I'd use my time just to  
15 talk a little bit about what our engagement  
16 could bring practically to the discussion. So  
17 the vehicle for our engagement will be USTDA's  
18 coalition for healthcare infrastructure in  
19 Africa. It's an initiative that we launched  
20 with many of you in this room with U.S.  
21 industry to advance Africa's healthcare  
22 infrastructure in terms of priorities in

1 partnership with its public and private  
2 sectors. The two are key on the continent.

3 The coalition is also designed to  
4 increase access to quality products and  
5 services for millions of people across the  
6 continent because, of course, we believe that  
7 greater access to U.S. technology and  
8 healthcare technology will save lives.

9 With the vast growth opportunity on  
10 the continent, advancing market entry for U.S.  
11 healthcare companies is critical. We have  
12 heard from U.S. industry that USTDA has an  
13 important role to play in the regulatory  
14 environment.

15 We invite you all in U.S. industry  
16 to join us as we plan a series of workshops  
17 related to regulatory convergence for  
18 healthcare products in Africa. These events  
19 will be implemented over the course of a two-  
20 year period with the goal of supporting  
21 continental alignment with international  
22 standards and convergence of regulatory

1 healthcare systems. We look forward to  
2 following up with you on these events, and I'll  
3 stop there. Thank you.

4 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,  
5 Director Ebong. Now to Rahama to cover the  
6 egregiousness in food and water security.

7 CHAIR WRIGHT: All right. I would  
8 like to recognize Mr. Jason Brantley from John  
9 Deere to provide a summary of recommendations.

10 MR. BRANTLEY: Thank you, Rahama.  
11 And good afternoon, everyone. I'm really glad  
12 to be here today presenting the Agri-Business  
13 and Food and Water Security Subcommittee's  
14 recommendations. These are important and  
15 inter-related areas, and they're critical for  
16 health and security. And they also play a very  
17 important economic role in Africa.

18 Our first recommendation centers on  
19 the theme of the PGII and the focused  
20 infrastructure investments that serve the  
21 unique needs of agri-business to bolster food  
22 and water security in Africa. The PGII is

1 clearly a feature of this report. We as a  
2 subcommittee sought to bring attention to the  
3 opportunities in and especially around the  
4 rural infrastructure space.

5 Ag-related infrastructure includes  
6 rural roads, power, coal chain, warehousing,  
7 storage, and ports. And these cater to food  
8 and perishable goods that support the economy  
9 and export. A focus on these unique areas of  
10 hard infrastructure would foster a value-chain  
11 approach that supports the entire lifecycle  
12 from seeds and ag-chemical inputs to farming  
13 logistics and packaging that supports food  
14 conservation and enhances food security by  
15 ensuring more product reaches markets.

16 Infrastructure for water security  
17 has a unique consideration in that they're  
18 distinct rural and urban applications. In a  
19 rural context, this is around crop irrigation,  
20 water pumping, distribution, and water storage  
21 infrastructure.

22 To drive this focus on ag-related

1 infrastructure, we call for two things. First,  
2 for a subset of the \$200 billion allocated to  
3 PGII, it needs to be focused on infrastructure  
4 that directly supports the agricultural and  
5 water ecosystems.

6 And two, for a platform to be  
7 created to better enable companies to  
8 understand the investment opportunities among  
9 DFIs, especially in rural infrastructure. This  
10 area often goes under-activated. This could be  
11 through the Department of Commerce, but we also  
12 see a strong role here for Prosper Africa.

13 Our second recommendation focuses on  
14 how the U.S. government can help boost exposure  
15 to U.S. tools and technologies around climate-  
16 smart agriculture. The African continent and  
17 the agriculture sector are on the front lines  
18 of the adverse impacts of climate change.  
19 There's much to be done, and the U.S. private  
20 sector is very well positioned to help.

21 Investments in agriculture can be  
22 and must be more climate smart offering



1 technologies and other effective solutions that  
2 help farmers optimize input usage including  
3 fuel and fertilizers, gain access to drought-  
4 resistant seeds, improve their mechanization  
5 operations, promote efficient irrigation  
6 techniques, and reduce post-harvest crop loss.  
7 This increases the food supply and farmer  
8 profitability.

9 This recommendation focuses on the  
10 establishment of coordinated field days which  
11 leverage the resources of both USAID's Feed the  
12 Future and USDA's AIM for Climate Initiatives.  
13 These events would include elements of both  
14 policy and practice to drive a lasting shift  
15 towards climate-smart agriculture.

16 We also envision round tables with  
17 African policy makers, U.S. government  
18 supporters, and both the African and U.S.  
19 private sectors to discuss how we can foster  
20 sustainable solutions and investment in this  
21 sector. Concurrently, we envision  
22 demonstrations where companies with viable

1 climate-smart solutions can showcase these  
2 tools and technologies that, once adopted, can  
3 enable ag operations to be more environmentally  
4 friendly. And with that very brief summary,  
5 I'll turn the floor back over to you, Rahama.

6 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Jason.  
7 Given the importance of agriculture to the  
8 African workforce, its unrealized potential for  
9 huge productivity gains, and its vulnerability  
10 to climate change, it's a sector we cannot  
11 overlook. About 60 to 80 percent of African  
12 women work in agriculture. And they produce  
13 about 70 percent of Africa's food, yet, their  
14 yields are much lower than men's because of  
15 poor access to inputs and access to capital and  
16 financing.

17 On a continent in which one-fifth of  
18 the population is food insecure, it just makes  
19 sense to invest in women farmers. Just as they  
20 have the highest ceiling for crop yield yields  
21 -- yield increases, they are the most at risk  
22 for the effects of climate change.

1                   We welcomed Vice President Harris'  
2 announcement in Zambia that the U.S. government  
3 will provide new federal funding and  
4 initiatives to further accelerate the  
5 implementation of the President's emergency  
6 plan for adaptation and resilience.

7                   And this program aims to do a couple  
8 of things. One is address the pressing needs  
9 resulting from the climate crisis including  
10 food security challenges helping to lift up  
11 over 116 million farmers and promoting climate-  
12 smart agriculture. An example of this support  
13 is the Prosper Africa and USAID's trade and  
14 investment project plans that will provide \$1.5  
15 million to launch a new fertilizer fund in  
16 Zambia.

17                   The second thing is to expand access  
18 to climate information services and enhancing  
19 climate resilience and adaptation. For  
20 example, the U.S. Trade and Development  
21 Agencies, U.S.-Africa Climate Innovation Week  
22 will advance the development of climate

1 resistant projects in Africa by hosting leaders  
2 from across the continent to showcase  
3 innovative American technologies and best  
4 practices that can benefit Africa's  
5 infrastructure for water management as well as  
6 identifying early -- it's a hot mic -- as well  
7 as identifying early warning and emergency  
8 management systems.

9           These announcements demonstrate  
10 America's commitment to partnering with African  
11 people and governments, and the private sector  
12 to help the continent meet its climate adaption  
13 and food security goals. With that, I would  
14 like to turn to you, Deputy Secretary Graves,  
15 to comment.

16           MR. GRAVES: Well, thank you, both  
17 for the recommendations -- well, thank you to  
18 the PAC for all of the recommendations. Thank  
19 you for providing the overview.

20           I would be remiss -- I know it  
21 wasn't specifically called out in your  
22 recommendations, but I would be remiss if I

1 didn't start by talking about who the  
2 Department of Commerce is. In addition to  
3 being the Department of Business and  
4 International Trade and all of these things, we  
5 are also the climate agency for the U.S.  
6 government particularly through our National  
7 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration which  
8 includes the National Weather Service.

9 The work that we are doing there  
10 aligns with all of the recommendations. And  
11 what we have heard loud and clear from our  
12 partners on the continent is that they need  
13 more data to make better decisions around the  
14 investments that align with your  
15 recommendations, infrastructure investments,  
16 investments around water, around agriculture.  
17 And that's what we are doing and will do for  
18 the continent.

19 We're committed to providing the  
20 best type of climate data, which includes  
21 climate observation, climate modeling, and  
22 climate prediction because, you know, if you're

1 John Deere, you want to know where there's  
2 going to be opportunities for certain types of  
3 equipment to be used I'm sure. And governments  
4 want to also know where is the best place to  
5 locate some of their investments. So that's  
6 what we can do at the top.

7 Thank you for highlighting the need  
8 for a concerted focus on rural infrastructure  
9 that enables agriculture. You all know with  
10 more than 60 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's  
11 population engaged in small-holder farming, and  
12 over 20 percent of the region's GDP driven from  
13 agriculture, your reminder of the unique  
14 infrastructure needs of the sector is  
15 absolutely welcome to all of us in government.

16 Regarding your recommendations for  
17 leveraging our liaison officers to the multi-  
18 lateral development banks, and utilizing our  
19 Express Leads tool, I am pleased to report that  
20 our liaison offices at that African Development  
21 Bank and the World Bank have been working with  
22 colleagues at those institutions to conduct a

1 number of round tables with the private sector  
2 that are focused on these sectors, including  
3 recently at the African Development Bank round  
4 tables on digital information, communications  
5 technology, healthcare, pharmaceuticals.

6           They've been absolutely valuable  
7 opportunities to showcase U.S. expertise at the  
8 African Development Bank, leadership that  
9 decision makers are using for procurement  
10 opportunities. And I believe that we're  
11 actually really well positioned to pursue these  
12 types of engagements across the continent  
13 including with the Development Bank and the  
14 World Bank alike focusing on agri-business,  
15 focusing on ways to look at water security.  
16 And we welcome your input as we shape all of  
17 that.

18           I'm very glad that you raised the  
19 Express Leads tool, which is I think a very  
20 simple, maybe, Amil, you would agree, a simple  
21 but very powerful means of providing early  
22 actionable information as I said earlier on

1 opportunities to U.S. companies. We welcome  
2 your feedback specifically on that tool.

3 Our liaison offices have been  
4 working with the Express Leads team to make  
5 sure that we're using that system effectively  
6 and efficiently, and that we're also notifying  
7 our commercial service teams as well as our  
8 partners at State in embassies across the  
9 continent who have the deep networks to U.S.  
10 companies across sectors. We'll take a closer  
11 look at how we can use that to enhance our  
12 output for agri-business leads.

13 Regarding the recommendation on  
14 field days in the five subregions, that's a  
15 very creative idea, and I'm sure that we can  
16 explore how to leverage Commerce's expert  
17 commercial services to help execute high-impact  
18 events. I'll have more later. But that's  
19 probably more than enough for now. Thank you.

20 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you. I would  
21 now like to turn to Ms. Helaina Matza from  
22 PGII.



1 MS. MATZA: Thank you so much. And  
2 thank you to the PAC for your thoughtful  
3 inclusion of the Partnership for Global  
4 Infrastructure Investment in your  
5 recommendations. This is particularly helpful  
6 as we're getting ready to go into our second  
7 year of implementation. And we really are  
8 taking on board the recommendations on hard  
9 infrastructure for food and water security on  
10 the continent.

11 Through the implementation of PGII,  
12 we've organically expanded our approach to  
13 include agri-business. For example, we've  
14 identified opportunities where we can leverage  
15 initial investments and rail expansions on the  
16 continent that act as transportation routes for  
17 critical mineral commodities to open new  
18 opportunities for potential two-way trade and  
19 spurs for agricultural products to move in and  
20 across the continent.

21 In Angola and Zambia specifically,  
22 we're working with leadership from both

1 countries to determine priority areas for  
2 agricultural activity, and how we can use  
3 existing and planned infrastructure to advance  
4 food security in and across the region.

5 We're building out our strategy in  
6 this space and look forward to further  
7 opportunities to interlink food and water  
8 security considerations into our broader  
9 infrastructure investments so we can do our  
10 best to leverage every public dollar of our own  
11 and our G7 partners for greater impact. With  
12 that, I'll turn the floor back.

13 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you. I would  
14 like to now invite Ms. Brooke Jamison from  
15 USDA.

16 MS. JAMISON: Thank you. And thank  
17 you very much for adding agriculture and agri-  
18 business to the agenda. I think if the Ukraine  
19 crisis taught us anything, it's the importance  
20 of agriculture supply chains that is so  
21 important to make sure that everyone in the  
22 world is fed.

1                   We strongly support the increase  
2 recommendation for infrastructure, especially  
3 hard infrastructure. Although, I would add one  
4 thing, and I'll borrow it from our friends in  
5 healthcare, regulatory infrastructure has also  
6 been a large barrier. Our ag attachés who are  
7 in the embassies all over Africa, they ask  
8 repeatedly some of the big agri-businesses in  
9 the world, ADM, Cargill, Bunge, why aren't you  
10 investing more in Africa. And the answer is  
11 similar to healthcare, because there's 55  
12 different regulatory systems.

13                   So even if we invest in mills or  
14 something like that in Zambia where they  
15 produce wheat, they can't even -- they can't  
16 ship that wheat across a border. And so  
17 without regulatory infrastructure, you know,  
18 agriculture investments will still, you know,  
19 fall flat until we get that right.

20                   At USDA, we are working very hard on  
21 that specific issue. We are leaning into the  
22 Africa-led growth idea that Africa itself wants

1 to start an African continental free trade  
2 agreement. We support that, that we have  
3 worked with the African Union Commission on  
4 food safety standards. And a lot of the things  
5 that we have worked with them on have been  
6 adopted as part of the negotiations with the  
7 Africa Free Trade Agreement. So we look  
8 forward very much to seeing that to fruition  
9 and supporting that as much as we can.

10 In terms of the second part for  
11 climate, I absolutely love the field days idea.  
12 At USDA, Secretary Vilsack, we have invested  
13 billions of dollars in trying to learn what  
14 works best in climate-smart agriculture in the  
15 U.S. And, you know, American agriculture is  
16 leading the way on the best practices, the best  
17 technologies. And so having a way to showcase  
18 some of that stuff would be excellent. So very  
19 much support that. Thank you.

20 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Brooke. I  
21 now turn it back over to you, Takreem.

22 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,

1 Rahama. So now can I ask Franklin -- so now --  
2 Franklin Amoo to please provide the summary for  
3 the digital information and communication  
4 technology recommendation?

5 MR. AMOO: Thank you, Takreem.  
6 Gladly. Very happy to be here. As an  
7 energetic agent-investor in African digital  
8 infrastructure and telecommunications, Baylis  
9 Emerging Markets is very pleased to show the  
10 findings of the digital NICT subcommittee.

11 The digital NICT sectors promise to  
12 be a key vector for engagement with the  
13 continent that is both the youngest and fastest  
14 growing in the world, and thus projected to  
15 become a significant market for connectivity,  
16 communication, and digital applications.

17 Our recommendations are focused on  
18 securing a constructive role for the U.S.  
19 private sector by ensuring inclusive, open,  
20 secure, and trusted digital infrastructure  
21 against the backdrop of a policy environment  
22 that is conducive to the shared success of the

1 U.S. and African private sector, their workers,  
2 and their consumers.

3 Recommendation one is focused on the  
4 Digital Transformation with Africa initiative,  
5 DTA, that President Biden announced at the  
6 December 2022 U.S.-Africa business forum. We  
7 are recommending that the initiatives' lead  
8 agencies, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the  
9 U.S. Department of State, USTDA, USAID in  
10 coordination with the NSC African Affairs  
11 Directorate and the other relevant and vibrant  
12 government agencies ensure increasing annual  
13 budget requests for DTA that are commensurate  
14 with the status of the presidential initiative  
15 and also adequate to meaningfully achieve  
16 results across its three pillars.

17 We also feel that it should define  
18 key metrics to measure progress and success  
19 targeting indicators that would demonstrate  
20 pillars across several different achievements,  
21 as an example, the cost of data.

22 We also recommend that it apportion

1 a dedicated amount of the \$500 million  
2 International Technology Security and  
3 Innovation Fund as well as the \$1.5 billion  
4 Public Wireless Supply Chain Innovation Fund of  
5 the CHIPS and Science Act towards open ran and  
6 5G promotion in Africa.

7 We suggest that it conduct regular,  
8 coordinated dialogue with the private sector in  
9 order to ensure the initiative is getting  
10 ongoing injection of private sector perspective  
11 with minimum duplication of effort and  
12 resources.

13 We also suggest that it identify  
14 opportunities with the private sector for  
15 workshops, for capacity building and training,  
16 for technical assistance to negotiators,  
17 regulators, policy makers on priority building  
18 blocks for digital trade with a focus on data  
19 flows, cyber security, digitization, and  
20 emerging technology.

21 Our second recommendation pertains  
22 to the suggestions to the Office of the U.S.

1 Trade Representative, the USTR, which is well  
2 positioned to support African governments in  
3 achieving a policy and regulatory framework  
4 that will promote, facilitate, and protect  
5 infrastructure deployment, promote inclusivity,  
6 incentivize innovation, attract investment, and  
7 expand intra-African and U.S.-Africa trade  
8 investment across a digital economy.

9 To support these objectives, we  
10 recommend that USTR work with the AfCFTA  
11 secretariat in prioritizing the completion of  
12 high-standard AfCFTA protocols for digital  
13 trade. We also suggest that USTR accelerate  
14 its dialog with Kenya under the landmark U.S.-  
15 Kenya Strategic Trade and Investment  
16 Partnership where ICT services and digital  
17 trade establish a new high standard model for  
18 digital trade between the United States and  
19 African countries.

20 Lastly, we suggest that U.S.  
21 embassies in Africa create a regular forum for  
22 dialogue between U.S. and African stakeholders



1 to provide perspectives on the merits of  
2 digital trade for inclusivity and for focusing  
3 on small businesses, women connectivity,  
4 economic growth, innovation, and investment  
5 promotion. Thank you.

6 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,  
7 Franklin. So now for further discussion, I  
8 turn first to Andrew Torre.

9 MR. TORRE: Thank you, Takreem.  
10 Africa is undergoing a rapid digital  
11 transformation. By all accounts, the digital  
12 economy should be in excess of \$300 billion of  
13 GDP by 2025. African governments, African  
14 citizens, SMEs need access to great technology,  
15 to cutting edge technology to be able to  
16 transform whether it's a global technology  
17 platform, or it is a local FinTech that is  
18 innovating on the ground to provide life-  
19 changing services.

20 We believe that high standards, high  
21 standard digital trade roles encourage  
22 regulatory and policy conditions that foster

1 innovation, competition, and trust and  
2 participation in the digital economy. We  
3 encourage the Administration to prioritize  
4 collaboration with African counterparts to  
5 promote policy, a policy and regulatory  
6 framework and environment that facilitates  
7 trade, innovation, and inclusion.

8 We also ask, and we all want to  
9 prioritize that the digital economy includes,  
10 empowers, and uplifts women and SMEs. Thank  
11 you. Let me turn it over to Bruce Hanson.

12 MR. HANSON: Thank you, Andrew. And  
13 thank you, Deputy Secretary, as well as all the  
14 representatives of the various U.S. government  
15 agencies gathered here to consider our  
16 recommendations. I'm Bruce Hanson, the CEO of  
17 Credence ID, a digital ID technology provider  
18 proudly based in Oakland, California.

19 Along with 5G, digital identity is  
20 becoming increasingly important as a  
21 foundational technology for doing business in  
22 Africa. The World Bank reports that over half

1 the population in Africa lacks a credible,  
2 secure identification document making it  
3 difficult for governments and businesses to  
4 verify the identity of their citizens,  
5 customers, and employees. This results in  
6 higher transaction costs, increased fraud, and  
7 unequal access to important services like  
8 social benefits.

9           Unlike Belt and Road alternatives,  
10 U.S. technology companies offer a path to  
11 overcome these challenges while still providing  
12 governments and enterprises with a reliable,  
13 secure, and privacy-ensuring method of  
14 identifying their constituents. By way of  
15 example, using U.S. technology, Ghana has  
16 enrolled close to their entire population, and  
17 now has an efficient and cost-effective method  
18 of identifying citizens from multiple KYC  
19 applications including financial inclusion, SIM  
20 card registration, and social benefit  
21 distribution.

22           Using similar U.S. technology,

1 Senegal uses digital ID to track pre- and post-  
2 natal healthcare outcomes for low-income women  
3 who have historic -- who have historically no  
4 means of identifying themselves, much less  
5 connect their identity to their healthcare  
6 records.

7 We encourage the U.S. government to  
8 continue to support and promote cross-border  
9 trade with Africa related to this foundational  
10 technology. With that, I'll turn it over to  
11 Fran Katsoudas from Cisco.

12 MS. KATSLOUDAS: Thank you so much.  
13 I'd like to add two observations as it relates  
14 to our digital and ICT recommendations. First,  
15 to bring the President's Digital Transformation  
16 with Africa Initiative, funding is and will  
17 remain pivotal. With the Administration begins  
18 laying the groundwork for the President's next  
19 budget, we ask that DTA be a priority.

20 Expanding digital access and  
21 literacy is key to enabling and supporting an  
22 inclusive Africa, and we are committed to

1 working with Congress to ensure adequate  
2 appropriations are dedicated to this very  
3 important initiative.

4 It is also important for the U.S. to  
5 lead in the technological race on the African  
6 continent. In particular, the recommendation  
7 related to directly funding Africa on Open  
8 Radio Access, or ORAN, is strategic and  
9 necessary from both a foreign policy and a  
10 security perspective. We can work with African  
11 nations to dismantle the proprietary  
12 technologies of the past so that we can usher  
13 in the open secure technology of the future.  
14 Thank you. And with that, I'll hand to Olivier  
15 Puech.

16 MR. PUECH: Thank you, Fran. And  
17 thanks for having us today. Let me start by  
18 saying that we believe that the U.S. government  
19 and American companies investing in the  
20 continent are well-positioned to work with  
21 African nation to promote, facilitate, and  
22 protect telecommunication infrastructure

1 development that will allow to bring the  
2 benefits of connectivity across the continent.  
3 But much more are needed.

4 As we all know, Africa is an  
5 enormous potential. Just to give you an idea,  
6 out of the 1.3 billion people in the 53 markets  
7 in Africa, we believe that around 200 million  
8 people have never made a phone call, never  
9 connected to the internet. So this is the last  
10 frontier really for our sector, and we have a  
11 lot to do there to play a key role.

12 We're already playing a role in  
13 building a more connected Africa as passive  
14 infrastructure is the foundation of mobile  
15 connectivity, and the fundamental pillar for  
16 the rollout of 5G. However, while there is a  
17 need to accelerate digital transformation  
18 connected, especially in the aftermath of  
19 COVID-19, policy responses from government have  
20 been timid at best.

21 Just to give you an example as well,  
22 the mobile network operator in key markets in

1 Africa, probably the most developed like Kenya,  
2 Ghana, South Africa are struggling, sometimes  
3 collapsing back in the hands of the local  
4 government. So there is a lot we can do  
5 definitely between the private and public  
6 sector to help there.

7 Government need to put in place  
8 specific measures and promote regulatory  
9 frameworks that support critical passive  
10 telecommunication infrastructure to ensure more  
11 productive and inclusive society. American  
12 company, the private sector, IBM, Cisco,  
13 ourselves, we are at the forefront of any  
14 technology that with the support of the U.S.  
15 government, with funding, sharing of best  
16 practices, know-how, we can truly make a  
17 difference to make connectivity and 5G a  
18 reality, and improve the lives of millions of  
19 people across the continent. Back to you,  
20 Takreem.

21 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,  
22 Olivier. So let me amplify a bit more on open

1 5G. So IBM appreciates the U.S. government's  
2 advocacy support on this issue in its quad  
3 discussions in Eastern Europe and in Latin  
4 American.

5 While we appreciate the recent and  
6 increasing activities of Commerce, State, and  
7 USTDA in this space, more is needed in Africa,  
8 and as Franklin expressed, move away from high-  
9 risk suppliers.

10 We support having a portion of the  
11 multi-lateral security fund, and possibly even  
12 a portion of the larger Wireless Innovation  
13 Fund should be directed toward Africa targeting  
14 both greenfield and brownfield deployments. I  
15 mean yesterday, there was an NTA's NOFO  
16 release, so we're reviewing this and more will  
17 come on that.

18 Lastly, one note on digital  
19 policies, through trade discussions on digital  
20 provisions, we can champion American values and  
21 approach to tech policy rather than the  
22 European approach GDPR. So let's promote the



1 industry government collaborative model that  
2 takes a risk-based approach to strong privacy  
3 and security protections while enabling data to  
4 flow across borders. Let's export our tech  
5 leadership and policy model such as the NIST  
6 frameworks on cyber security and AI risk  
7 management. So as this is under the Department  
8 of Commerce, I turn to Deputy Secretary Graves  
9 for comment.

10 MR. GRAVES: Well, thank you very  
11 much for the recommendations on the new Digital  
12 Transformation for Africa Initiative, DTA. I  
13 will leave -- I will leave the second  
14 recommendation to my colleagues from USTR who  
15 can speak more fully to that particular set of  
16 recommendations.

17 But I'll just note that the Commerce  
18 Department fully supports USTR's leadership on  
19 the MOU with the AfCFTA, and on the strategic  
20 partnership with Kenya. And we're going to  
21 continue to work with them to advocate for the  
22 priorities of the U.S. private sector in all of

1 these engagements.

2 Building off of the -- several of  
3 the comments, we know how important the digital  
4 and ICT sectors are today, both domestically,  
5 but just as importantly, around the world.  
6 And, especially, how fiercely competitive these  
7 sectors are today.

8 Anyone who's spent enough time with  
9 the President knows that he often has colorful  
10 ways of describing things. So he talks about  
11 an inflection point in a certain way. He says  
12 the way that he was taught, his physics  
13 professor would say an inflection point is  
14 basically you're driving down the road, and you  
15 make a turn of the steering wheel 20 degrees  
16 and you're headed in a different direction, and  
17 you can't ever get back to where you were.

18 And so we are at that point as it  
19 relates to what's going on in Africa all across  
20 the continent. That turn has already been made  
21 so we're having to move very, very quickly to  
22 make sure that we're getting ahead of where our

1 new vector would lead us.

2 Certainly that is the case for ORAN  
3 and 5G. And I will tell you that I'm glad  
4 you're looking at the NOFO that NTIA has put  
5 out. But expect that there will be much more  
6 beyond just the innovation fund as it relates  
7 to ways that we can focus on working across the  
8 continent on those issues.

9 But more broadly, part of the reason  
10 that the President created and launched the  
11 DTA, and it's why Commerce is working so  
12 closely with TDA, is we're focused on the --  
13 co-leading this -- the pillar that's focused on  
14 the digital economy and infrastructure. We  
15 know how important it is to the U.S. private  
16 sector and to the continent.

17 And we're coordinating very closely  
18 with State Department, with USAID who also lead  
19 the pillars on the enabling environment and  
20 human capital respectively because we know that  
21 this is -- it isn't just about the digital  
22 economy infrastructure. It's a much broader

1 set of tools that we have to bring to the  
2 table.

3 I am very pleased to report that  
4 just earlier today, we had the very first  
5 meeting of our new Africa Digital Policy  
6 Council, the ADPC, which is the interagency for  
7 those that don't know all of our acronyms and  
8 names, it's the interagency convening body for  
9 DTA.

10 I'm very proud that our assistant  
11 secretary for Global Markets and the director  
12 general for the U.S. Foreign and Commercial  
13 Service will serve alongside our partners at  
14 the National Security Council and the Africa  
15 directorates. So thank you, Judd.

16 As co-chair of this council, issues  
17 of funding for the initiative, metrics for  
18 tracking, and driving success, and stakeholder  
19 engagement are top priorities on the agenda of  
20 the policy council. We hear you loud and  
21 clear. We know that it's critical for success  
22 in this area. And I can absolutely assure you

1 that as we implement the DTA going forward, you  
2 will see engagement between the ADPC and  
3 private sector entities, partners including and  
4 especially the PAC. So I will hush because  
5 there's other partners who can go into more  
6 depth on some of the other components. Thank  
7 you.

8 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,  
9 Deputy Secretary. I now recognize the Deputy  
10 Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa,  
11 Osvaldo Gomez-Martinez.

12 MR. GOMEZ-MARTINEZ: Thank you, Mr.  
13 Vice Chair. Good afternoon to everyone. On  
14 behalf of USTR, I also like to commend the  
15 efforts that the PAC is undertaking to  
16 strengthen the commercial engagement between  
17 the U.S. and Africa.

18 Let me get to the recommendations at  
19 hand. As to the recommendation on the AfCFTA,  
20 I would emphasize that the Biden Administration  
21 is keen to help harness the economic gains of  
22 the AfCFTA. The memorandum of understanding

1 that Ambassador Tai and Secretary General Mene  
2 sign at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, it will  
3 increase U.S.-African coordination and  
4 collaboration with the AfCFTA secretariat in  
5 order to support continental economic  
6 integration, attract investment, and improve  
7 the livelihoods of all in the continent.

8 Furthermore, the United States  
9 Government is committed to providing technical  
10 assistance to support the AfCFTA protocol on  
11 digital trade through the U.S. Agency for  
12 International Development Support for a Digital  
13 Advisor and other related activities.

14 As to the recommendation on Kenya, I  
15 would like to stress that digital trade is  
16 among the 11 topics identified by the U.S. and  
17 Kenyan government for priority focus under the  
18 U.S.-Kenya Strategic Trade and Investment  
19 Partnership.

20 The United States and Kenya share an  
21 interest in fostering consumer business and  
22 worker trust in the digital economy ensuring

1 access to information; promoting the  
2 development and use of resilient and secure  
3 digital infrastructure; promoting competition  
4 and the participation of micro, small, and  
5 medium enterprises; and addressing  
6 discriminatory practices.

7 This U.S.-Kenya talks are following  
8 an intensive schedule with a conceptual round  
9 that took place in Washington the week of  
10 February 6th. And the first negotiating round  
11 in Nairobi taking place next week. Again,  
12 thank you. Over to Mr. Vice Chair.

13 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you. I  
14 now recognize Ambassador Molly Phee.

15 MS. PHEE: Thanks very much. And  
16 thanks for including me in this discussion.  
17 The presentations were particularly thoughtful  
18 and constructive. And, Mr. Deputy Secretary,  
19 congratulations on launching -- I'll spell it  
20 out, the Africa Digital Policy Council, which  
21 will be important to all of us and we're  
22 grateful for your leadership and support, and

1 as well as all the work that Enoh does on this  
2 issue because I know it's dear to her heart.  
3 So I think it's obvious to everybody here that  
4 digital access, digital trade, digital policy  
5 are critical to achieving all of our broader  
6 economic goals.

7 So I think you want me to talk about  
8 the money, so let me talk about that. As you  
9 might imagine, I have a great need for many  
10 resources from the U.S. Congress. But we  
11 definitely share the view that we need to see  
12 this initiative fully funded. So we will -- we  
13 already have submitted that recommendation in  
14 previous budget submissions, and we will  
15 continue to do that. We will continue to  
16 advocate.

17 And given that we have a lot of good  
18 partners in the U.S. government around the  
19 table within the administration, hopefully  
20 we'll have some luck with OMB and possibly some  
21 luck with the Hill. So we all recognize the  
22 need for the funding.



1           I think you all know within the  
2 Chips and Science Act, there is a fund called  
3 the International Technology Security and  
4 Innovation Fund, and that seems like a good  
5 source for some of the work that we need to do  
6 together to contribute to implementation of the  
7 DTA.

8           That is a discussion that's ongoing  
9 within the State Department. There's a lot of  
10 competition for those resources as you know  
11 because they're meant to be applied globally.  
12 But we have made clear the points that you have  
13 raised here today, the centrality of this issue  
14 for Africa, so we will continue to focus on  
15 that.

16           Secretary Blinken, as you may know,  
17 is trying to drag the State Department into the  
18 21st century. He has a modernization agenda,  
19 and that included establishing a Bureau of  
20 Cyber Space and Digital Policy. And I just had  
21 to look down to make sure I had the name  
22 correct, that's how new it is. But we are

1 working with them to see how we can collaborate  
2 and coordinate so to take advantage in  
3 particular of their expertise in cyber security  
4 and digital connectivity.

5 And you all know, of course, our  
6 colleagues in the Bureau of Economic and  
7 Commercial Affairs, so they in turn with all  
8 the U.S. government colleagues here will help  
9 us make sure we keep the dialogue going with  
10 you as you have recommended. So thank you, Mr.  
11 Deputy Chair.

12 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you  
13 very much. So now back to you, Rahama, for the  
14 energy and environment recommendations.

15 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Takreem.  
16 I'd like to invite Nicole Poindexter to provide  
17 a summary of the recommendations.

18 MS. POINDEXTER: Thank you, Rahama.  
19 As we all know, there are substantial  
20 opportunities to invest in energy, environment,  
21 and the energy efficiency sectors in Africa.  
22 And at scale, these investments will make

1 African economies more sustainable, both  
2 environmentally and economically. However,  
3 there's still several challenges to ramping up  
4 U.S. investment to fulfill on that promise.

5 With that in mind, you'll note our  
6 specific recommendations in the document, but  
7 in summary, in order to meet the goals of  
8 universal, sustainable, and abundant energy  
9 access in Africa, we focused in on three  
10 specific challenges and opportunities to  
11 increase investment in energy deals:  
12 Mismatches between USG deal-making capabilities  
13 with the energy deals that are present on the  
14 continent today. Risks, both actual and  
15 perceived, that can deter investment at scale.  
16 And unfulfilled opportunities and policy  
17 innovation that make Africa a more exciting  
18 market for U.S. private investors unlocking the  
19 most active capital markets in the world.

20 These challenges, deal sizes,  
21 managing investment risk, and market  
22 attractiveness, are not new, but they remain

1 intractable, which is why the core of our  
2 recommendation is to initiate a public/private  
3 sector working group with Prosper Africa as the  
4 secretariat with key participants as DFC, MCC,  
5 Power Africa, and others to define programs to  
6 collaborate and to amplify solutions that may  
7 already be there today that will seed and grow  
8 the investment in Africa's energy  
9 infrastructure, and Africa's partnership in the  
10 world's future.

11 Our second recommendation is that we  
12 congratulate Power Africa on its tenth-year  
13 anniversary, and we see this anniversary as an  
14 opportunity for the PAC to be part of Power  
15 Africa's substantive review of their  
16 experiences and their impact over the course of  
17 the past ten years.

18 Working with Power Africa, we hope  
19 to build on those lessons learned, and to  
20 create a roadmap for the next ten years of  
21 Power Africa's role in energy infrastructure on  
22 the continent. And also to use those lessons

1 learned as a blueprint as we look at investing  
2 in climate mitigation and other environmental  
3 opportunities which brings us to our third  
4 recommendation.

5 We want to look beyond energy to  
6 focus on environmental opportunities. To  
7 enable advancements in the circular economy, we  
8 recommend that a combination of EPA, USTDA,  
9 Prosper Africa engage with African countries to  
10 address policy changes and engage with the  
11 private sector on technology investment  
12 opportunities. Waste management is a good  
13 example where many African countries are  
14 beginning to develop agendas to address plastic  
15 pollution.

16 Through the activities associated  
17 with this recommendation, we would ensure a  
18 consistent policy framework across countries to  
19 facilitate investment in U.S.-led technologies  
20 that reduce waste, increase jobs, and grow  
21 value creation within the economies. By  
22 implementing these recommendations, we can

1 maximize U.S. private sector participation in  
2 the clean energy sector in Africa, unlock  
3 capital, and address broader environmental  
4 challenges.

5 In closing, I want to thank my co-  
6 chairs in the Energy and Environment Committee,  
7 particularly the leadership of Dow's Sami  
8 Mainich and his team. Unfortunately, he was  
9 unable to be with us today. And RIFE  
10 International CEO Kwabena Sarpong. Thank you,  
11 and we look forward to investing in this  
12 partnership with you.

13 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Nicole. I  
14 would like to now turn to Kwabena Osei-Sarpong  
15 to add additional comments.

16 MR. OSEI-SARPONG: Thank you,  
17 Rahama. Thank you, Secretary Graves, for your  
18 leadership and for being here. I'm CEO of RIFE  
19 International, a company that is focused on  
20 developing solar energy and renewable energy  
21 efficiency projects in the commercial  
22 industrial market in Africa.

1           We see firsthand the challenges  
2 American businesses face, especially funding  
3 for renewable energy projects, climate tech  
4 projects, as Nicole mentioned, compared to some  
5 of our other counterparts in the overall clean  
6 energy transition in Africa.

7           With that said, these solutions that  
8 we presented we hope will help our small  
9 businesses who make up about 80 to 90 percent  
10 of all American businesses who participate in  
11 this sector. And that's a gap that we see.  
12 Similar challenges I believe apply for larger  
13 projects, and I'm sure my counterparts here  
14 will talk about it.

15           Deputy Secretary Graves, I know you  
16 and your team have especially been working on  
17 this since our last conversation in December,  
18 so kudos to you on that, and I'm looking  
19 forward to hearing more on that. We're also  
20 happy to partner and implement, you know, what  
21 has been done so far.

22           And Nicole already mentioned Sami's

1 involvement in -- from Dow on our  
2 recommendations, so I'll leave that alone, but  
3 he did a tremendous job. He's not here with us  
4 today, but I wanted to also kind of give him  
5 some kudos for his work. With that said, I  
6 would lead on to Brenda.

7 MS. MBATHI: Thank you. It's an  
8 honor to represent GE today on the PAC,  
9 particularly on the recommendations covering  
10 the energy topic. As a very brief summary, our  
11 technology is responsible for generating one-  
12 third of the world's electricity, and we have a  
13 deep presence on the continent across the power  
14 value chain, including both traditional sources  
15 of fuel and newly emerging technologies.

16 In the recommendation for a Power  
17 Africa review, we applaud the focus on  
18 supporting African governments in developing an  
19 all-in energy policy, inclusive of both  
20 available and developing technologies to  
21 promote a more sustainable environment. We  
22 stand ready to support its implementation.



1           It is a common statistic that more  
2           than 600 million African people, which is about  
3           half of the continent's population, lack access  
4           to electricity. The deployment of gas power on  
5           the continent can make a tremendous impact on  
6           people's lives by providing the access to power  
7           that is very much needed on the continent. In  
8           this way, natural gas can be part of the energy  
9           transition because it can be deployed to  
10          support energy production needed to achieve  
11          substantial           international           development  
12          objectives.

13           Efforts       are       accelerating       to  
14          decarbonize   gas   power   with   breakthrough  
15          technologies in both the pre- and post-  
16          combustion stage -- phase, sorry -- namely  
17          through the use of hydrogen as a fuel source.  
18          We are aware of the State Department's stated  
19          intention to brief the U.S. private sector on  
20          the Administration's international energy  
21          policy, an exemption process for carbon  
22          intensive fuels. We anxiously await such a

1 briefing and hope the exemption process is  
2 actionable as part of Power Africa's goals.

3 Thank you. And I'd now like to hand  
4 over to Kathryn who is joining us virtually  
5 from Caterpillar.

6 MS. KAROL: Well, thank you so much.  
7 I'm sorry I'm not there to be in person with  
8 everybody, but what a fantastic meeting. I  
9 would just like to reiterate when my colleague  
10 from GE commented on, from a Caterpillar  
11 perspective, not only do we help supply world-  
12 wide the energy required to power up everything  
13 from hospitals to schools, to cities, but we  
14 make the equipment to provide the  
15 infrastructure to develop the energy.

16 And we would like to highlight the  
17 recommendation on the future of Power Africa.  
18 In order to secure a prosperous future for the  
19 people of Africa, energy supply must meet the  
20 anticipated increased demand. Power Africa  
21 should advocate for utilizing inclusive energy  
22 technology in all of the above solution, which

1 is where U.S. companies can excel.

2 The flexible energy technologies of  
3 fuel cells, battery storage, alternatives,  
4 renewables, and traditional fuels will all be  
5 needed to provide the reliable and affordable  
6 energy that Africa needs to leapfrog from where  
7 they are to where they want to be. Thank you  
8 so very much.

9 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Kathryn.  
10 I would now like to turn to Mr. Scott Cameron  
11 from Prosper Africa.

12 MR. CAMERON: Thank you very much.  
13 And I really appreciate the opportunity to  
14 respond to this important recommendation. As  
15 many of you know, Prosper Africa works with our  
16 17 partner U.S. government agencies and  
17 departments to increase two-way trade and  
18 investment across a range of priority sectors  
19 in Africa including the energy sector.

20 At the African Leadership Summit,  
21 Prosper Africa was proud to convene and  
22 catalyze more than \$15 billion in trade and

1 investment commitments from across the public  
2 and private sectors. This included \$4 billion  
3 in energy commitments with the focus on  
4 renewable energy, energy efficiency, and  
5 circular economy projects in Africa.

6 Moving forward, we are committed to  
7 working with our partners to deliver on these  
8 commitments. We support the recommendation to  
9 establish a working group in collaboration with  
10 our Prosper Africa partner agencies.

11 And in addition, I wanted to  
12 highlight two relevant Prosper Africa services  
13 that businesses and investors can make use of  
14 today, not only in the energy and environment  
15 sector, but many of the key sectors we've  
16 discussed throughout our conversation today.

17 First, our team of Prosper Africa  
18 advisors is standing ready to advise investors  
19 on opportunities across the energy sector and  
20 others. We can help investors identify and  
21 assess bankable projects and investments that  
22 fit their mandates, and we can make referrals

1 to partner agencies particularly for guarantees  
2 and insurance that reduce the cost of capital  
3 for projects. Our advisors work in close  
4 collaboration with Power Africa as well as our  
5 partner agencies including EXIM and DFC.

6 Second, the Prosper Africa U.S.  
7 Institutional Investor Program exposes large  
8 investors such as pension funds, endowments,  
9 insurance companies, and others to Africa risk  
10 and connects them with credible managers and  
11 transactions.

12 Through this program, we facilitate  
13 some of these transactions like \$100 million  
14 investment in the first hydro-project in West  
15 Africa as well as a \$276 million bond issuance  
16 that just closed a few weeks ago. We look  
17 forward to moving ahead in this partnership  
18 with the interagency and all of you on these  
19 critical issues to maximize these  
20 opportunities. Thank you.

21 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Scott. We  
22 are running a little late on time, so I would

1 like to now turn back to Deputy Secretary  
2 Graves.

3 MR. GRAVES: I will be very brief.  
4 Let me just say that the recommendations that  
5 you provided are fantastic. I agree that  
6 they're needed and that we can leverage  
7 multiple interagency resources to do this.

8 Just being a little bit of Homer  
9 here, Patent and Trademark Office and National  
10 Institutes of Standards and Technology are huge  
11 resources in this space to drive U.S. clean  
12 tech as well as -- I didn't say this earlier,  
13 the Minority Business Development Agency  
14 focusing on small and underserved businesses in  
15 this country, do more on Africa.

16 In my view, there's a multi-pronged  
17 expert promotion program for the U.S. clean  
18 tech industry. And as we work closely with  
19 Department of Energy, and, literally, I think I  
20 can check right now, 48 hours ago, and he --  
21 actually, 48 hours ago, I was meeting with  
22 Deputy Secretary of Energy Dave Turk, you can

1 see, he just emailed me. We were talking about  
2 --

3 CHAIR WRIGHT: I can verify.

4 MR. GRAVES: We were talking about  
5 this very issue. Secretary Granholm gave me a  
6 call over the weekend. We're also bringing our  
7 resources together with the Department of  
8 Energy and with all of interagency partners.

9 We have a network of over a hundred  
10 U.S. export assistance centers across the  
11 country that can connect U.S. companies with  
12 the products and services -- excuse me -- the  
13 companies -- we can connect with these -- with  
14 companies across the country and help to bring  
15 the products and services to the continent in  
16 ways that we can amplify the work that you're  
17 doing, or help to bring new products and  
18 services to market.

19 Our ITA has some new innovative  
20 approaches to this work. Our Office of Energy  
21 and Environmental Industries at ITA is  
22 supporting U.S. competitiveness in clean tech

1 through our enhanced advocacy for all of you  
2 all who were in that industry, promotion of  
3 foreign direct investment in U.S. companies.  
4 And if you don't know about it, we have our  
5 Select USA Conference coming up in just a  
6 couple of weeks, the largest opportunity to get  
7 foreign direct investment into the United  
8 States.

9 Part of our effort is our recent  
10 partnership with the State Department to launch  
11 a new clean tech strategies strategic projects  
12 fund that will support innovative programs to  
13 assist U.S. clean tech exporters and to support  
14 developing country trade partners to deploy  
15 technologies that address climate change.

16 There are 19 countries are in Africa  
17 that are eligible for support through the fund,  
18 and our teams at ITA and at State Department  
19 will carefully consider and consult with every  
20 relevant interagency partner on how we can take  
21 your ideas and bring programs and resources to  
22 bear on all of these efforts. Did I go quickly



1 enough?

2 CHAIR WRIGHT: You did.

3 MR. GRAVES: Thank you.

4 CHAIR WRIGHT: Takreem, turning over  
5 to you.

6 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,  
7 Rahama. So now for the last set of  
8 recommendations for financing and  
9 infrastructure, I invite John Nevergole to  
10 provide a summary.

11 MR. NEVERGOLE: Thank you, Takreem.  
12 Good afternoon. It's good to be here with you  
13 today. This is an exciting time. I have never  
14 seen African countries and the private sector  
15 more eager to build relationships with American  
16 companies. And that's a testament to President  
17 Biden and the Administration. You set us up to  
18 succeed. You stepped up at a time when there's  
19 a global competition to be the leading partner  
20 with Africa politically and economically. And  
21 that's why we're here today.

22 On behalf of the Finance and

1 Infrastructure Subcommittee, it's my privilege  
2 to share our recommendations so that we have  
3 the right tools to fully unlock that promise.  
4 We don't have time to go into every  
5 recommendation, but let me draw attention to  
6 just a few in each category.

7 First, updating and establishing  
8 financial tools for U.S. companies to be more  
9 competitive. We urge you to bring the  
10 Export/Import Bank in line with our European  
11 allies. We applaud its reauthorization, but  
12 when it was not authorized, other export credit  
13 agencies evolved. Our recommendations will  
14 align EXIM with current market conditions so  
15 American companies can be competitive.

16 The most important update is to  
17 allow EXIM to calculate export credit value  
18 which determines the coverage ESA can provide  
19 just like our European allies do. This means  
20 including all products destined for the project  
21 that are bought outside the country where  
22 work's being performed whether it's from the

1 U.S. or other countries.

2           Until project sponsors are able to  
3 get a fully wrapped funding solution when using  
4 EXIM, like they do with other ESAs, U.S.  
5 companies will miss out on export opportunities  
6 and job creation. We understand the intent  
7 with the current policy, but in practice, it's  
8 better for U.S. exporters to get 25 or 30  
9 percent of a project versus nothing.

10           Our report offers other essential  
11 ways to improve EXIM such as clarity on loan  
12 tender in the beginning of a project, and  
13 direct resourcing for long-term coverage and  
14 local cost. But this first change is the most  
15 important for U.S. companies to be competitive.  
16 I'll quickly draw your attention to two other  
17 recommendations in this category.

18           First, we urge you to allow DFC to  
19 provide funding to government and government-  
20 owned entities. Without it, we're taking the  
21 largest counterparty in an African country off  
22 the table for U.S. companies to work with.

1 And, second, we urge you to establish new  
2 blended finance tools to encourage and mobilize  
3 one of our most vital assets to invest in  
4 Africa, our financial markets. An Africa-  
5 focused investment fund with catalytic capital  
6 from the U.S. government would mobilize U.S.  
7 private markets to follow.

8 Let me turn now to our second  
9 category of recommendations. We urge you to  
10 optimize existing government resources to help  
11 achieve our goals for the partnership for  
12 global infrastructure and investment. One way  
13 is by shifting resources and giving a broader  
14 mandate to USTDA. Another is by expanding  
15 Commerce's U.S. foreign commercial service  
16 presence in Africa. And third, is enhanced  
17 communication on support available from the  
18 State Department's PGII team.

19 Finally, we urge you -- we urge the  
20 U.S. government to negotiate more bilateral  
21 investment treaties and double taxation  
22 treaties with African countries where

1 appropriate. These treaties would attract U.S.  
2 private sector investment and reduce the  
3 political risk of doing business in Africa.

4 Before ending, I want to leave you  
5 with one more thought. Time and again in  
6 history, American companies have stepped up  
7 when they needed to, and we have every  
8 confidence that if you implement these  
9 recommendations and provide us the tools we  
10 need to succeed, we will do it again. American  
11 companies will win, and we'll ensure our  
12 African partners win too. Thank you for your  
13 time. And, Deputy Secretary Graves, thanks for  
14 hosting us here today.

15 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,  
16 John. So now I invite discussion among council  
17 members starting with our co-chair Peter  
18 Sullivan.

19 CHAIR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Takreem.  
20 In the interest of time, I won't say much. But  
21 I do feel that the U.S. is at an extreme  
22 competitive advantage in finance and in

1 financial innovation. And, you know, many of  
2 the recommendations that we've put forward, you  
3 know, encompasses those innovations. And I  
4 would, you know, advocate that we look strongly  
5 at that and become very much a leader in the  
6 financial innovation for Africa. Thank you.

7 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,  
8 Peter. Gad Cohen.

9 MR. COHEN: Thank you. Just to  
10 emphasize some of the key aspects of our  
11 recommendations, all of which were designed to  
12 increase private sector investment and trade  
13 between the U.S. and Africa. And one of them  
14 is to improve the enabling environment for  
15 American companies by increasing the number of  
16 bilateral investment treaties as was mentioned  
17 by John with African countries.

18 Today, there are only nine such  
19 treaties and only four double taxation treaties  
20 with African countries. The other is to  
21 increase project preparation resources, and in  
22 particular, widening USTDA's scope of

1 intervention, especially for U.S.-led projects  
2 as part of the global partnership on  
3 infrastructure and investment. Again, with the  
4 goal of developing bankable projects that  
5 catalyze the export of U.S. goods and services.

6 Finally, and to tie it all together,  
7 as more often than not, the principle  
8 counterparts in our transactions are African  
9 governments or parastatal companies. We also  
10 see the need to expand the foreign commercial  
11 service footprint in Africa to level the  
12 playing field. I now turn to Mr. Siberell.

13 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you.  
14 Bill Killeen.

15 MR. KILLEEN: Thank you. All the  
16 points that John has outlined in the  
17 infrastructure and financing section are of  
18 paramount importance. To emphasize, though, on  
19 two items that have been raised with real-world  
20 implications for an SME, one, when using EXIM  
21 services, Acrow Bridge is required to use U.S.  
22 flag vessels under the MARAD regulations.

1           On a recent opportunity where we've  
2 presented budget figures, freight costs for  
3 shipping the steel highway bridges to the  
4 destination port on a U.S. flag was \$31  
5 million. Had we had the flexibility to use a  
6 non-U.S. flagged vessel, our freight costs  
7 would have been \$12 million. That's a 260  
8 percent premium. So due to the freight dollar  
9 differential, Acrow was not competitive on that  
10 particular opportunity.

11           Second, being able to quote in  
12 currencies of the African continent would  
13 assist the likes of an Acrow to be more  
14 competitive. And I think very importantly, it  
15 would also assist the local governments by  
16 insulating them from the currency fluctuations  
17 that appear in the markets.

18           So that's it. Thank you. And I  
19 guess I would be introducing Siberell -- Mr.  
20 Siberell.

21           MR. SIBERELL: Thank you very much.  
22 I'd first of all like to add my thanks to the



1 administration officials present today for your  
2 time and engagement on these recommendations.  
3 And I'd like to emphasize the importance of our  
4 recommendation that DFS be allowed the  
5 flexibility to lend to governments or  
6 sovereigns and creditworthy state-owned  
7 enterprises.

8 In Bechtel's work delivering large  
9 scale infrastructure projects in multiple  
10 markets around the world, the customer is  
11 almost always a government entity or a state-  
12 linked body like a power utility. If we want  
13 U.S. companies to participate in large scale  
14 infrastructure in Africa in a meaningful way,  
15 we really need to apply all of our tools, and  
16 DFC can be a very powerful one.

17 I'd also like to urge a more open  
18 view toward government-to-government agreements  
19 that provide a path for U.S. companies to  
20 compete more successfully for infrastructure  
21 projects of national importance. These  
22 agreements are often welcomed by partnering

1 governments as a statement of commitment by the  
2 two governments to enhance bilateral trade and  
3 investment.

4 Other governments, our competitor  
5 governments, are taking advantage of such  
6 mechanisms to positive effect. But they've not  
7 be a regular feature of U.S. commercial  
8 engagement. And thank you very much, and I'll  
9 pass it back to Takreem. Thank you.

10 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you.  
11 Can I invite Deepak Chopra? You're on mute.

12 MR. CHOPRA: Can you hear me now?  
13 Can you hear me now?

14 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Yes.

15 MR. CHOPRA: Okay. Sorry about it.  
16 I just want to thank everybody. It's a real  
17 pleasure to be doing that. OSI the company,  
18 one of the core products we make is in  
19 security. We are the world's largest supplier  
20 of security products for airports, border  
21 crossings, ports.

22 I believe with the experience we've

1 had, one of the things we all talk about  
2 infrastructure investment, we need to work with  
3 the African countries to enhance and improve  
4 their security at ports, border crossings,  
5 airports so that the commerce, people going  
6 back and forth, they can all get the benefit of  
7 it. You can't do commerce, you can't do  
8 business with countries if you don't have the  
9 infrastructure built at ports and borders, and  
10 crossings.

11 So any investment that can be made  
12 by help from the U.S. government would be a big  
13 help to enhance and update the technology, not  
14 just for security, but one of the things we all  
15 forget about it is that these kind of  
16 inspections and security also work to the  
17 advantage of what I call GDP expansion of the  
18 country for the imports coming in so that the  
19 duty evasion and wrongful way of going, all the  
20 duty offsetting can be avoided.

21 We think that as the infrastructure  
22 investment is done by the U.S., it would be a

1 great help to enhance the technology at  
2 airports, border crossings, and airports to  
3 make the African countries updated.

4 And one of the things which is a  
5 great asset is, think about it, if they can  
6 share customs data with the European countries  
7 and the U.S., the shipping can become faster,  
8 the people going back in and out can go faster,  
9 and the customs clearance can be done faster  
10 than the ships leave and come to a U.S. port or  
11 a European port so that the commerce becomes  
12 more advantageous.

13 With that, I'll just say thank you.  
14 And one of the things that U.S. can do right  
15 now is to offset our other competition, which  
16 is China, which have done a lot in Africa for  
17 different loans and stuff to get the  
18 infrastructure, their Silk Road, their train  
19 that they are talking about, we as America  
20 should be encouraging the African countries to  
21 update their technology and to open their  
22 borders for better technology. Thank you very

1 much.

2 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,  
3 Deepak. So now I invite administration  
4 officials to provide comments starting with  
5 Undersecretary Graves.

6 MR. GRAVES: Thank you very much.  
7 This topic or set of topics I think is relevant  
8 to pretty much all of the members of the PAC in  
9 one way or another, so I want to thank the  
10 subcommittee for incorporating all of the  
11 various interests of the PAC in representing  
12 private industry. And I want to commend the  
13 council on zeroing in on some very precise,  
14 specific recommendations. It's very useful for  
15 us, the more precision that you provide.

16 On behalf of Commerce, I want to  
17 acknowledge your recommendation to expand the  
18 commercial service footprint in Africa. I know  
19 that the PAC has recommended this in the past,  
20 and that's a strong endorsement I think of the  
21 good work that having -- that our team has  
22 done. And also having strong commercial

1 diplomats on the ground is in advocating for  
2 U.S. businesses and navigating the markets, and  
3 building long term relationships.

4 We're actually in the process of  
5 considering options for expanding our footprint  
6 in Africa. Of course, that is dependent on our  
7 friends in Congress and their willingness to  
8 give us additional resources.

9 And while expansion is a major  
10 priority for us and for the President, I'd also  
11 be very interested to hear at some point, not  
12 today obviously, any advice, guidance that you  
13 have individually or a PAC on how we can  
14 strengthen the services that we provide in our  
15 teams themselves.

16 I'd also like to comment on your  
17 assessment in the report on the need for more  
18 flexibility in financing and demonstrated  
19 bankability of infrastructure projects in  
20 Africa. Our team, I know Ambassador Phee's  
21 team at State Department as well as our  
22 colleagues across the administration, Director

1 Ebong, Hazeen and the EXIM team, Andy, and the  
2 DFC team, a range of other parts of the  
3 Department are going to be reviewing these  
4 recommendations very carefully.

5 We'll also explore options for  
6 augmenting G2G engagement with our African  
7 partners specifically to focus on enhancing  
8 capacity for building high standards on  
9 projects that play to the strengths of all of  
10 your businesses and U.S. business strengths  
11 overall. With that, I will turn it back.  
12 Thank you.

13 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you,  
14 Deputy Secretary Graves. So I now turn to  
15 USTDA Director Ebong.

16 MR. EBONG: Thank you, Takreem.  
17 I'll keep this very short. I want to also  
18 acknowledge and thank the PAC for the  
19 recommendation to increase USTDA's project  
20 preparation resources and scope. These are  
21 critical for defining the technical  
22 requirements and attracting the financing for

1 U.S.-led infrastructure projects in Africa.

2 The Biden Harris Administration has  
3 recognized the strategic importance of our work  
4 as well as our record of success of working  
5 with the U.S. private sector to develop  
6 sustainable infrastructure in Africa while  
7 supporting U.S. jobs and exports. This is  
8 reflected in the President's budget request for  
9 fiscal year 2024, which includes a record  
10 budget proposed for USTDA.

11 Increased resources like these will  
12 enhance our ability to collaborate with U.S.  
13 industry to advance the goals of the  
14 partnership for global infrastructure and  
15 investment including closing that  
16 infrastructure gap in Africa using American  
17 goods and services. Thank you.

18 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you. I  
19 now invite Helaina Matza from PGII.

20 MS. MATZA: Thank you very much. We  
21 appreciate the PAC's recommendations in how we  
22 can optimize USG resources to achieve the goals



1 of PGII whether that's from better resourcing  
2 tools to develop bankable projects, to quality  
3 standards, to adjusting policy positions and  
4 tools that aren't quite meeting your needs yet.

5 Our PGII office is meant to be a  
6 resource and one of the first points of contact  
7 for the private sector to discuss and identify  
8 the best USG or partner tools available to  
9 advance your infrastructure priorities. In  
10 fact, Director Ebong and I were already having  
11 a conversation on the margins of today about  
12 how we can better leverage USDA project  
13 preparation tools. So recommendations already  
14 hard at work, and part of what we're doing.

15 But we're also working in very close  
16 coordination on another recommendation you  
17 included for us, both with EXIM and the Mineral  
18 Security Partnership on how we can do more  
19 deployment around critical mineral project  
20 preparation including bringing several USG  
21 resources to bear to support the development of  
22 cleaner, battery-grade processing for nickel

1 and beneficiation in Tanzania which the Vice  
2 President was able to launch just the other  
3 week.

4 I welcome the opportunity to follow  
5 up with the PAC members to better understand  
6 how we can communicate our role and the range  
7 of USG tools and resources available in line  
8 with the recommendations you 've provided. And  
9 John already has me on the hook for that, and  
10 we're looking forward to it.

11 In addition, I just want to raise  
12 one other point. The PGII also aims to act as  
13 a coordinating hub not only within our own  
14 system, but with our g7+ partners to help map  
15 out our comparative advantages on public  
16 resourcing tools to better determine where it  
17 makes sense for each partner to intervene.  
18 This can mean that the U.S. government provides  
19 financing for a project with companies from the  
20 E.U. and vice versa.

21 Our respective G7 partners fund  
22 various interventions in the region, and

1 together the goal is to make a greater economic  
2 impact, both on our economic goals, and  
3 development priorities as well. So really  
4 important for cases where the G7 tools may be  
5 able to help you more. We want to serve as a  
6 place where we can connect you to those  
7 opportunities. One quick example is that we're  
8 working to advance projects in Angola, DRC, and  
9 Zambia that involve U.S. companies, but also  
10 those from France, Portugal and Australia.

11 We're going to continue to work to  
12 set up the mechanisms to improve information  
13 sharing and project pipeline with our G7  
14 partners as well as all the governments and  
15 countries that we work in, and ensure that that  
16 information is readily available to our private  
17 sector partners. We hope to make some of these  
18 announcements coming up on the margins of the  
19 G7 later this month, and continue to take in  
20 feedback from you. Thank you.

21 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you.  
22 And now I invite Hazeen Ashby from EXIM.

1 MR. ASHBY: Thank you so much for  
2 allowing us to be here today. As America's  
3 official export credit agency, Congress has  
4 mandated EXIM's mission to support American  
5 jobs by facilitating the export of U.S. made  
6 goods and services.

7 We hear you. We see your  
8 recommendations, and we understand it. But I  
9 will remind -- I will say it again, Congress  
10 has mandated that EXIM's mission is to support  
11 American jobs by facilitating the export of  
12 U.S.-made goods and services.

13 Since its creation 89 years ago,  
14 EXIM has played a critical role in fostering  
15 economic opportunities for U.S. manufacturing  
16 and American jobs. Currently, our president  
17 and chair, Reta Jo Lewis, has taken bold steps  
18 to modernize the agency and strengthen American  
19 supply chains along our USG partners like the  
20 Department of Commerce to advance the  
21 competitiveness of U.S. manufacturing within  
22 our statutory limitations.

1           Chair Lewis' broad goals since  
2 arriving at EXIM a year ago have focused on  
3 three goals. For setting EXIM's relationship  
4 with exporters and buyers around the world,  
5 renewing the agency's commitment to supporting  
6 the creation of jobs in the U.S., and  
7 rebuilding EXIM's priorities to meet the  
8 challenges that are before us in this new era.

9           As part of our Congressional mandate  
10 to increase financing to sub-Saharan Africa,  
11 EXIM fully recognizes that Africa is an  
12 important region for business opportunities and  
13 job creation for U.S. exporters. In fact, in  
14 her first year, Chair Lewis has traveled to the  
15 continent twice. Last month she attended the  
16 regional ANTAM event in Kenya, and then joined  
17 VP Harris in Zambia right after the VP  
18 announced EXIM's intent to sign a \$500 million  
19 MOU with Tanzania, which Chair Lewis on  
20 Tuesday. Last November, Chair Lewis  
21 participated in the Africa Investment Forum in  
22 Cote d'Ivoire, the Berne Union in Rwanda in

1 COP27 in Egypt.

2           Then at the U.S.-Africa Leaders  
3 Summit, EXIM signed MOUs in excess of a billion  
4 dollars. I am pleased to announce that when we  
5 sign our MOUs, they are undergirded by deals.  
6 And our team is already currently working to  
7 underwrite several transactions under those  
8 MOUs.

9           Thanks again for inviting EXIM to be  
10 part of this conversation. We'll continue to  
11 work to support American jobs and U.S.  
12 manufacturing per our congressional mandate.

13           VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you. I  
14 now recognize Andrew Hersowitz from DFC.

15           MR. HERSOWITZ: Thank you. And  
16 thanks to the PAC-DBIA and for the  
17 acknowledgement of Power Africa which was  
18 launched ten years ago. But really around the  
19 same time that the original PAC-DBIA was  
20 created, which helped us shape a lot of these  
21 initiatives including Power Africa and Prosper  
22 Africa. So these types of meetings are

1 absolutely critical to helping the U.S.  
2 government come up with tools that respond to  
3 what your needs are.

4 And so we're most successful when  
5 you bring us the deals, but we're also most  
6 successful when you identify the obstacles to  
7 the deals. And you tell us what's needed, and  
8 you tell us, you know, how we can help. And  
9 that's what made Power Africa and Prosper  
10 Africa successful. And hope that will continue  
11 to be the case. So we really appreciate these  
12 recommendations.

13 A couple of things that are  
14 different about DFC from what OPIC did, which I  
15 think are really critical to helping advance  
16 this agenda. Number one is the fact that we no  
17 longer have a U.S. nexus. While, intuitively,  
18 you might think that that means that that's not  
19 beneficial to U.S. companies, it's actually  
20 quite the opposite.

21 One of the things that we've learned  
22 is we've significantly expanded our client

1 base, but when DFC is able to participate in  
2 infrastructure projects that are brought to us  
3 by non-U.S. companies, it allows us to get  
4 certain trade and investment leads which we can  
5 share with U.S. companies. So it actually  
6 increases the opportunities for U.S. companies.

7 The other major distinction between  
8 DFC and OPIC is that we don't have a  
9 requirement to earn a return in the same way  
10 that OPIC did which means that we have the  
11 flexibility to take on more risk. We can price  
12 our transactions to advance development and to  
13 advance our foreign policy goals.

14 And we're only getting used to doing  
15 that right now. We're doing more and more.  
16 We're really thrilled with how successful we've  
17 been to date in terms of expanding our  
18 portfolio and doing more and more deals. But I  
19 think we're going to be doing a lot more in the  
20 coming years.

21 To address the specific  
22 recommendation about DFC, having the authority



1 to provide financing to sovereigns, I just want  
2 to point out that we actually have that  
3 authority right now. And I just would want to  
4 caution people to remember that one of the  
5 things that distinguishes our model from the  
6 People's Republic of China is the fact that we  
7 don't want to contribute to the sovereign debt  
8 of the countries that we're trying to benefit.

9 So while we have that authority, we  
10 would use it very, very sparingly in only  
11 really compelling cases that are going to  
12 advance a significant foreign policy or a  
13 significant development goal.

14 Similarly, with state-owned  
15 enterprises, we have supported transactions  
16 with state-owned enterprises. During COVID,  
17 for example, we supported regional banks that  
18 were owned by sovereigns so that they could  
19 expand their liquidity. And we're looking at  
20 other transactions for areas that are  
21 critically important like fertilizer.

22 So we have this authority, but we

1 also want to make sure that we remain credible  
2 when we tell host governments that we're not  
3 seeking to contribute to their sovereign debt  
4 and push them up against their IMF debt limits  
5 and creating sovereign debt traps. So we  
6 appreciate this input, we look forward to the  
7 continued conversations. And just keep up the  
8 great work. Thank you.

9 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you. I  
10 now invite Cameron Alford from MCC.

11 MR. ALFORD: Yeah. Thank you very  
12 much. And thank you to all of the members. If  
13 I can quickly just build on Andy's comments  
14 about the importance of earlier  
15 recommendations.

16 You all may know that the idea for  
17 the American Catalyst Facility for Development  
18 was born out of an earlier PAC-DBIA  
19 recommendation that MCC and the former OPIC  
20 worked together on developing blended finance  
21 investments in Africa. And so now ACFD, this  
22 partnership between MCC and DFC is operational,

1 and we are incorporating into our programs.

2 And I want to -- we appreciate that  
3 the PAC has recognized the importance of the  
4 ACFD as a tool for facilitating investment on  
5 the continent. And so consistent with the  
6 recommendation, we certainly look forward to  
7 exploring how to further expand its use. Thank  
8 you.

9 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you.  
10 So now let's hear from Eric Meyer, Deputy  
11 Assistant Secretary for Africa at Treasury.

12 MR. MEYER: Thank you. And I just  
13 want to start by thanking the PAC for the  
14 tremendous work and the efforts that went into  
15 pulling together these recommendations.  
16 They're incredibly important to the work that  
17 we all do to support the administration's  
18 strategy for deepening the United States'  
19 economic relationship with Africa.

20 I also have to say I was really  
21 pleased in listening to the recommendations  
22 across all the sectors to see how much this

1 aligned with the messages that Secretary Yellen  
2 heard during her trip to Africa in January  
3 where she met with American investors and  
4 entrepreneurs in almost every sector that the  
5 PAC has identified as a priority here.

6 The recommendations in this section  
7 point to the need for creative solutions to  
8 support the flow of private capital into hard-  
9 to-finance spaces. And then related to that, I  
10 want to comment a little bit on the blended-  
11 finance component.

12 The fact of the matter is that in  
13 many emerging economies, some amount of  
14 concessional financing is needed to mobilize  
15 private capital even for high-quality, well-  
16 prepared projects. And therefore, we at  
17 Treasury support the development of blended-  
18 finance solutions that adhere to best  
19 practices, and that drive investment towards  
20 sectors critical for development.

21 Turning to recommendation two, I  
22 just want to say we welcome that American

1 businesses here see the opportunities in the  
2 work under PGII to close Africa's  
3 infrastructure financing gap, and we see  
4 tremendous opportunities there to build on that  
5 across the government and the private sector.

6 Finally, let me make a quick comment  
7 on one of the recommendations in recommendation  
8 three, one of the specific recommendations  
9 there related to double taxation treaties. And  
10 I just want to throw out maybe a little bit of  
11 a caution here.

12 Based on our review of the existing  
13 literature, we're not sure that double taxation  
14 treaties are the best way to stimulate  
15 investment. And there are a couple of factors  
16 that Treasury takes into account when deciding  
17 where and when to pursue double taxation  
18 treaties.

19 This is based on the level of U.S.  
20 investment in a country, but probably most  
21 importantly, whether those investments are  
22 experiencing unrelieved double taxation issues.

1 And that's an important driver of where and  
2 when we dedicate the resources. There's also a  
3 part of that related to the net effect of the  
4 treaty on American tax revenues, which we  
5 cannot underestimate. But thank you and we'll  
6 take on board these.

7 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you.  
8 Now for the final comments in this section, I  
9 recognize, again, Osvaldo Gomez-Martinez from  
10 USTR.

11 MR. GOMEZ-MARTINEZ: Again, thank  
12 you. I'll be brief since I'm the last person  
13 listed on this conversation. With regards to  
14 the recommendation on negotiating bilateral  
15 investment treaties, USTR shares an interest in  
16 creating -- enabling investment climates for  
17 U.S. investors to dip in our trade and  
18 investment ties with our African partners.

19 Beyond focusing on initiatives that  
20 just facilitate more investment, we are  
21 particularly more interested in promoting high-  
22 quality investment that creates sustainable and

1 inclusive economic growth, and benefits  
2 workers, consumers, and businesses of all  
3 sizes.

4 The U.S.-Kenya strategic trade and  
5 investment partnership that we are currently  
6 negotiating with Kenya is I think one example  
7 of such an effort. On that note, I yield back.  
8 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 VICE CHAIR EL-TOHAMY: Thank you.  
10 So now I turn back to you, Rahama.

11 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Takreem.  
12 I would like to go back to the Energy and  
13 Environment Subcommittee and invite John Irons  
14 of Power Africa followed by Ms. Claire Ehmann  
15 of the SBA to offer their remarks.

16 MR. IRONS: Thank you. I'm  
17 extremely proud to be representing all of our  
18 interagency partners who make fantastic  
19 contributions to Power Africa. And I wanted to  
20 say though, especially that in order to achieve  
21 our development objectives, which are increased  
22 energy generation, access to power, and

1 emissions reductions, we can only achieve those  
2 if we have -- if our private sector partners,  
3 we have 180 private sector partners, we can  
4 only achieve those development objectives if  
5 our partners are successful.

6 So everything we do is based on  
7 trying to improve the ability for private  
8 sector partners to access markets, to expand  
9 markets. And so that is really key to our  
10 whole business model, so we very much welcome  
11 the recommendations and looking forward to  
12 being part of the working group.

13 And also looking forward to your  
14 advice. As Andy said, you know, we started  
15 with a lot of private sector input. We've  
16 always had the private sector partners. So  
17 when we look forward to our next ten years, we  
18 will, you know, it's key to have that private  
19 sector input. So we look forward to doing that  
20 report. That's it. Thank you.

21 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you. Claire.

22 MS. EHMANN: Thank you so much.



1 It's an honor to be here to speak at the PAC.  
2 It's an honor to be maybe the last speaker too.  
3 So our mission at the Small Business  
4 Administration, our Office of International  
5 Trade is really to enhance the ability of U.S.  
6 small businesses to compete in the global  
7 marketplace.

8 Small businesses make up 97 percent  
9 of all U.S. exporters to Africa. Aligned with  
10 the Administration's climate goals, this year  
11 we have a priority focus on sustainability and  
12 supporting small business clean technology and  
13 environmental exports.

14 We are working very closely with the  
15 Department of Commerce on a series of webinars  
16 focusing on export opportunities for U.S. small  
17 businesses in the environment and clean  
18 technology sectors. The first of these  
19 webinars is on May 11th, and it will focus on  
20 opportunities to Africa. Please spread the  
21 word.

22 We think this aligns very well with

1 recommendations one and three outlined by the  
2 PAC in the report. It also supports SBA's  
3 ongoing work to reach underserved and diaspora  
4 communities, in particular the African  
5 diaspora. The SBA has counseling and advice,  
6 export promotion grants, and export financing  
7 loans designed for small businesses to help  
8 them take advantage of export opportunities.

9 So we're very proud to be part of  
10 this very important initiative. And I must  
11 say, it's really wonderful to see small  
12 business co-chairing the PAC. So thank you  
13 very much, and back over to Rahama.

14 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Claire.  
15 Well, we're nearing the end of our  
16 conversation. I would like to thank my fellow  
17 PAC members for their continued commitment to  
18 our important agenda, and all of the work that  
19 the staff reps do to ensure that the private  
20 sector voice is included in U.S. trade  
21 engagement with Africa.

22 I also want to thank our interagency

1 colleagues who make our collaboration  
2 successful. Deputy Secretary Graves, we want  
3 to thank the leadership at Commerce. We want  
4 to thank Secretary Raimondo, DAS Richardson for  
5 reauthorizing and reappointing the PAC. And  
6 not only doing that, but really having a strong  
7 commitment to diversity and inclusion.

8 We look forward to working with you  
9 in the coming year to make sure that our agenda  
10 is achieved. And we know that the success of  
11 our efforts will lay the foundation for a  
12 future where both the U.S. and Africa thrive  
13 together as strong, interdependent partners.

14 So now I would like to move to  
15 adopting our recommendation, and I would like  
16 to make a motion to adopt the recommendation.  
17 Can I get a motion to second that?

18 MR. AMOO: I'd like to second that  
19 motion.

20 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Franklin.  
21 So now we will do a voice vote. All those in  
22 favor, say aye.

1 (Chorus of aye.)

2 CHAIR WRIGHT: All those not in  
3 favor, say aye. And do we have any abstentions?  
4 All right. It sounds like the report has been  
5 adopted. Peter, I would like to now turn to  
6 you for closing remarks.

7 CHAIR SULLIVAN: Thank you, Rahama.  
8 I wanted to thank my fellow members for sharing  
9 the PAC recommendations. And for the U.S.  
10 government officials for their engagement and  
11 responses.

12 With these adopted recommendations,  
13 I'd like to reiterate, the PAC is ready and  
14 willing to work with the U.S. interagency on  
15 the implementation of the items discussed  
16 today. But that's just the start, and we look  
17 forward to continuing to build on the momentum  
18 the Biden Administration's focus on a stronger  
19 U.S.-African commercial engagement and the  
20 demonstration of a strong and visible  
21 partnership between the U.S. public and private  
22 sectors.

1                   I would like now to invite Deputy  
2 Secretary Graves to give his final remarks.

3                   MR. GRAVES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.  
4 I want to thank the chairs and the vice chair.  
5 And most importantly, on behalf of President  
6 Biden and Vice President Harris, I want to  
7 thank all of the members of the PAC-DBIA for  
8 your collaboration, the guidance that you've  
9 provided.

10                   It is absolutely vital that you  
11 continue to give us your best thinking, your  
12 best advice for us to do everything that we'd  
13 like to do in partnership with our friends  
14 across the continent. You've given us a lot of  
15 work to do, you've given us a lot to think  
16 about. And I am excited to see everything that  
17 we can do as we work together creatively to get  
18 to those steps of practical implementation.

19                   But, Rahama, as you already  
20 mentioned, the term is not over. The PAC's job  
21 is still ongoing. We have 13 months left in  
22 the current first term of this administration.

1 And I know that the Secretary and I, and my  
2 colleagues across the interagency are excited  
3 to continue to tap into the depth of practical  
4 expertise, the knowledge that you all bring to  
5 the table every day.

6 So we will consult with our  
7 colleagues across the interagency, certainly  
8 working with our good friends here at the White  
9 House to -- and we'll get back to you very soon  
10 with the clear, very clear, next steps so that  
11 you can continue your work for the remainder of  
12 your term. So thank you so much.

13 CHAIR WRIGHT: Thank you, Deputy  
14 Secretary. And we can't end this meeting  
15 without thanking Giancarlo for wrangling all of  
16 us and all his hard work. And also Fred over  
17 there in the corner. And now the moment we've  
18 all been waiting for, the meeting is adjourned.

19 (Whereupon, the above-entitled  
20 matter went off the record at 6:26 p.m.)  
21  
22

A			
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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: PAC-DBIA

Before: US DOC ITA

Date: 04-13-23

Place: Washington, DC

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate complete record of the proceedings.

*Neal R Gross*

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Court Reporter

**NEAL R. GROSS**

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