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CROSSROADS

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A Newsletter of the United States Embassy, Nigeria



**YES to
Education
YES to Global
Understanding**

Ambassador Campbell Flags Off Book Donation Program in Kano

On June 2, 2007, US Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell initiated a large US book donation program to 60 schools in Northern Nigeria. The ceremony took place at the Dala Government Girls Secondary School, Kano. Accompanying the US Ambassador were the Office of Defense Cooperation Chief, Lt. Col. Luis Perozo and the Embassy Information Resource Officer Henry Mendelsohn. Below are photos taken by **Crossroads** Editor Idika U. Onyukwu at the book donation ceremony.



Ambassador Campbell is greeted by the District Head of Dala His Royal Highness Aminu Ado Bayero.



Excited Permanent Secretary of Kano State Ministry of Education heartily shakes Ambassador Campbell for the book donation.



District Head of Dala His Royal Highness Aminu Ado Bayero receiving the US Government for the book donation.



Ambassador Campbell in a group photo with staff and students of Government Girls Secondary School, Dala, Kano.



Ambassador Campbell is dressed in a typical traditional Kano attire in appreciation for the US Mission efforts to Kano State.



Ambassador Campbell briefs the press immediately after flagging off the book donation program in Kano.

Ambassador's Note



US Ambassador
John Campbell

Nigeria Has Made Good Progress

politics and history. As I say goodbye, permit me to recall the remarkable progress Nigeria has made over the last three years, as well as the challenges the country has faced as it struggled to consolidate its democracy based on the rule of law.

In the field of education, Nigeria has established a vibrant system of private universities to complement the public university system and this augurs well for Nigeria to re-establish the pre-eminence of its academic institutions.

Closely allied with this, is the push to make Nigeria's artistic heritage better known outside of Africa. The recent collaboration with Northwestern University, the Library of Congress, the US Embassy and Arewa House – Kaduna to catalogue, preserve, and advertise Nigeria's wonderful collection of Islamic manuscripts is a good case in point.

Despite the imperfections and the disappointing short-comings of the just-concluded general elections, Nigeria experienced the first transition from one civilian government to another in its history in a relatively peaceful manner. On the economic front, the country has managed to liquidate its debt to international donors, making it the first country to qualify for the International Monetary Fund's Policy Support Instrument which provides technical support to the country's economic policy makers.

Nation building, like democracy, is a continuous process and for Nigeria's ambition to become one of the twenty largest economies by the year 2020 to succeed the Government of Nigeria, and its foreign and domestic partners must address the political, social and economic grievances in the Delta, and reform the electoral process.

This issue of *Crossroads* is a continuation of our resolve to partner with Nigeria to support educational exchanges and economic development to different parts of the country. You will also read the increasing acceptance and impact of the YES educational program among Muslims in Northern Nigeria. I leave Nigeria with fond and lasting memories of its people, their religiosity, their unbridled aspirations and the enormous sacrifices they make daily to secure a better future for themselves, and their children. God bless Nigeria and God Bless the United States of America. ❖

Dear *Crossroads* Readers, This will be my last *Ambassador Notes* after a three year tour as Ambassador to Nigeria. However, Nigeria will not be far from my mind, since in my next assignment I will serve as Ambassador in Residence at the University of Wisconsin where I will teach courses on Nigerian

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African students interact with Iowans as part of the Youth, Exchange and Study (YES) Program.

In Iowa, Young Nigerian Students Learn to Change the World

*By Robert Anderson Iowa View
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When Aisha Garba arrived in Iowa nine months ago, she was much too shy and too steeped in the Hausa culture of her native Nigeria to speak directly to adults.

So last weekend when the 16-year-old proudly summed up her school year in Ames by saying, "I feel special, that I can change the whole world," many of us in the audience were filled with admiration and pride - not just for Aisha, but for a program sponsored by the U.S. government that helps young people from around the world to become the kinds of leaders the world sorely needs.

At a time when headlines and

campaign speeches mirror the rhetoric and divisiveness of war, it is easy to forget that our government promotes programs that seek other, long-term approaches to settling differences. One such effort, Youth, Exchange and Study (YES), arranges for Christian and Muslim students from countries having a significant Muslim population to spend a school year in the United States. The program has generated scores of success stories such as Aisha's. But it is a program that is in danger of being phased out in Iowa, simply because not enough people know about it.

Aisha's background is typical for YES students. At home she attends school, where there are 70 or more students in a classroom that has few, if any, books or educational materials.

Instructors, who can never be sure they will receive their next paychecks, teach by giving lengthy lectures and mete out discipline with a heavy hand (or worse). A student's only hope is to take good notes and study hard for the national exams that will determine his or her future.

Still, Aisha adapted well to her new environment in the United States. Her confidence blossomed over the past year as she participated in a community theater production, earned decent grades in a World Study class at Ames High School and survived in a school recognized for the number of presidential scholars it has produced.

Yusuf Bindi, another YES student who attended a much smaller high school in Iowa, was astounded that

the school would release students 10 minutes early on the final day so that they could say goodbye to him. Sandra Longpoe's classmates in Guthrie Center also wished her well, but only after helping her to raise nearly \$500 to support an orphanage in her home state.

Many students participated in sports and speech contests. A few made the National Honor Society. But most struggled to adjust to a new culture and to succeed in a radically different educational system.

Now, about the challenge for Iowans: Iowa Resource for International Service, or IRIS, an Ames-based nonprofit organization, has brought 75 African students to Iowa over the past four years. A pioneer in the YES project, it is one of only four organizations nationally to manage an exchange and the only organization that focuses on sub-Saharan Africa. The State Department would like us to expand our efforts by bringing an additional 50 students from Nigeria and Tanzania next school year. We have traveled to the two countries and selected students,

but finding host families has been a challenge.

Still, we believe Iowans will volunteer if they know about the program and the opportunities that it provides for African students and our own young people to learn about the world outside their own communities.

This year, those opportunities included joining Iowa students in the World Food Prize Youth Institute, a Global Leadership Conference, and the Capitol Youth Project. Just as important, they visited elementary schools, service clubs, and church groups to speak about Nigeria and Islam. They have already begun to change the world.

Unlike participants of traditional exchange programs, the students will continue their activities after returning to their home countries. Iowa Resource for International Service designed this program using a state-to-state model, allowing our organization to work with alumni for many years after they leave Iowa.

Students have formed peace clubs, completed environmental projects,

and taught conflict-resolution skills to their classmates. They're also setting up computer-training centers in areas where computers are scarce. Best of all, Christian and Muslim alumni are working together.

These students are in the United States not through their parents' wealth, but on scholarships provided by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of our State Department. YES is a bipartisan effort developed by Senators Ted Kennedy and Richard Lugar as a response to the 9/11 attacks. They believed that young people must play a greater role in promoting international understanding, democracy, and peace.

We agree and we hope that Iowans will be willing to help them. Since the students will arrive in Iowa in August, IRIS desperately needs to find hosts soon. ❖

Robert Anderson of Ames, a former lieutenant governor of Iowa, is founder and president of Iowa Resource for International Service.

<http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>

Be Positive and Maintain an Open Mind, Nigerian Students Advised

Thirty Nigerian Students from five states in northern Nigeria will participate in the fifth session of the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program in the United States. The students, six from each state—Bauchi, Kaduna, Plateau, Sokoto and Taraba—departed Nigeria on August 6, 2007 for a year's study in various secondary schools in the state of Iowa.

At a pre-departure orientation program organized by the Cultural Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy in Abuja on Thursday, July 19, the students were advised to be positive, and maintain an open mind that would enable them to interact with their



Some of the thirty-six YES students listen to pieces of advise during a pre-departure orientation organized by the Cultural Section of the US Embassy, Abuja.

host communities.

In his remarks to the students and accompanying teachers, US Embassy Cultural Attaché Mr. Henry Mendelsohn said, "Four YES alumni have secured admission to US colleges. Many of them have also completed the secondary certificate exam with excellent results and are studying in Nigerian universities."

Mr. Mendelsohn said that life will never be the same again for all the YES alumni. "They have become role models within their communities, represented their families, schools, and country's creditably in the US, and gained exposure that will help them throughout their lives," he emphasized. Alumni students who shared their American experiences



Dr. Sai'du Yakubu, IRIS Nigeria Country Director.

agreed with Mr. Mendelsohn, as their stay in America has changed their perspectives on life, and given them the opportunity to share Nigeria's story with America.

Embassy Summer Intern, Brooke DeKoninck, asked the students to understand and adhere to the value that Americans attach to time, honesty, communication, competitiveness, and energy.

This year's group is comprised of 18 Muslims and 12 Christians; 16 females and 14 males.

Administrators of the program have maintained a balanced mix of Christian - Muslim and female-male students.

So far, 76 Nigerian high school students and 8 teachers have participated in the program.❖

The YES Program

The YES program was introduced by the US Department of State in 2003 to promote mutual understanding between United States and the Muslim world.

The program targets secondary school students in their fourth year and who are from predominantly Muslim countries all over the world.

The program aims at helping the students become more familiar with life, culture and education in the United States.

Selected students spend one academic year in a US high school, an equivalent of Nigeria's senior secondary school under the care of host families in four major cities in Iowa, United States.

The USG funding amounts of the program is over \$10 million appropriated by the US Congress in 2003.

Nigeria is among the 13 countries worldwide participating on the program with Sokoto State as one of the pioneer States. The other state is Kaduna.

The program was expanded to Plateau and Taraba States in 2005 and to Bauchi in 2006.

The current group now going to the US on August 5 consists of 16 girls and 14 boys, and has 6 students from each of the five states..

76 Nigerian secondary school students have participated in the program since inception in 2003.

Sokoto State Government has been of tremendous financial and moral support to the program especially at inception when many parents and religious leaders were very suspicious of its mission. The Governor enlisted his son into the program in 2003 and his administration has been making financial contribution to support local travels of the state

delegates to Lagos and Abuja.

Results: Most of the participants on the YES program came back with improved speaking and writing skills. Four of them have secured admission in US institutions to pursue their undergraduate studies. Several of them are undergoing an undergraduate studies in Nigerian universities.

They have better understanding of the US culture and society.

They try to replicate some of the positive values they imbibe during their stay, such as promotion of religious tolerance, peace among diverse religious groups, and voluntary service to communities.

One of the alumni of the YES program, Abdulhafeez Lawal, was selected by ECA as Alumni of the month in February of 2006.

The Nigeria YES alumni won a Disney Award for Global Youth Leadership in 2006.❖

Memoirs: The America I Saw

Temitope Morenike Ojo is financially disadvantaged, but academically gifted. She attended Loyola Jesuit College, Abuja, on full scholarship following her excellent performance at the National Common Extrace Examination in 1998. She captures the whole essence of the United States Students Achievers Program. Morenike is presently a Pre-Med, year-two student of Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts. In this narrative, she recounts her first American experience.

The voice of the flight attendant booms over the speakers as it heralds the arrival of flight NWL5102 from Amsterdam into Detroit Airport, Chicago. For many aboard the airplane, it was a normal route to end the long summer; but to me, it marked the beginning of a new life, a new phase, a new beginning. As I stepped out of the plane, I realized that I was entirely on my own with the responsibility of my future in my hands. It was pretty scary, but an intriguing sensation.

My first glimpse of America was on the television back home in Nigeria; however, now that I was standing on American soil, it was nothing like Hollywood movies where only famous superstars are featured. What I was experiencing were very normal people hurrying to catch their flights and running to meet their families after being away for a while. As I waited for my connecting flight to the international airport where my college classmates expected to pick me up, I acquainted myself with the environment around me. At first, I was so wary and skeptical about everyone that passed around me and had the notion that everyone was giving me a look over. After careful observation, I noticed that no one was concerned about my presence. Everyone was going about their own business, bringing back a sense of confidence, which was when I really held on firmly to the reality of being the master of my existence. In my mind, I convinced myself of not only surviving, but also triumphing in my new world.

After I arrived at Bradley airport in Connecticut, I collected my luggage and searched for people from my



Morenike Ojo (right) with a classmate at Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts.

college, but saw no one. I got concerned and asked the information personnel to make an announcement. As the announcement rang over the speakers, the doors facing me burst open. I saw a trolley being pushed towards me by a lady wearing a smile and an orange t-shirt with "Welcome to MHC" written on it. She was here with some college students to take me and other new international students to Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts. I felt a sudden rush of relief and safety that brought me to the brink of tears. The welcome crew was very friendly and engaged us in conversation. The array of new students was very diverse. They were from France, Nepal, England, Spain, India, Ghana, and other nations of the world. Our group could pass for a UN gathering, save for our attire, and confused, and tired looks.

As we drove to Mount Holyoke

College, I looked out of the window and noticed a good mix of modern structures and old buildings. It looked like a travel back in time; only there were paved highways and travel routes and people in modern dress. My college is located in South Hadley, a small rural town with a large expanse of land compared to the small population. We traveled past farms with grazing animals, solitary houses, public establishments, convenience stores, and shopping malls. I was jolted out of my reverie when someone beside me exclaimed, "We are here!" There stood Mount Holyoke College in the early dusk of Friday, the 1st of September 2006 looking like a benevolent mother welcoming her children into her safe haven. As we drove through the gates and towards the campus center, I looked at the features of this 170 year old institution, as I savored the idea

of making this place home for four years.

Four months and ten pounds later, I have completed a semester of Integrated Biology and Chemistry 160, Anthropology 105, and World Regional Geography 105. I joined the varsity track and field team, clashed with a different culture, made wonderful friends whose origins

could write a world history book, experienced unpredictable weather, and had headaches over meals that I could not relish. I have explored a wonderful community that exudes hospitality and love from the welcoming century-old buildings to the friendly faces of professors, staff, and students I encounter daily. The college workload is challenging but

enjoyable, as there are fun ways to learn and study in the classrooms. Also, the self-sufficiency of Mount Holyoke College assures me of receiving a fulfilling and top-notch education, as well as mapping out a terrific path for my future with the help of a selfless faculty.

I would be insincere if I say I do not miss my home back in Nigeria; however, I can confidently say that I have found a place where I know that all I have to offer as a human being can be cultivated and nurtured to reality, a reality that will affect the whole world around me in a positive way. Columbus called it the New World. Century-old immigrants have called it the "Land of the Free." I call the United States of America my Land of Accomplishments, a place where my efforts will yield fruits that will awe the world. ❖

— <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> —



U.S. Embassy Country Public Affairs Officer Atim George gives a pep-talk to students going for studies in the US during a pre-departure orientation session.

The US Student Achievers Program (USAP)

The United States Students Achievers Program (USAP), was established in 2004 by the Embassy Educational Advising Center to ensure that all talented students, regardless of economic background, have equal access to information about merit-based international student financial aid and the admissions process to colleges and universities in the United States. These students normally require complete financial assistance to cover the cost of tuition, books, meals etc. In its first year (2004) USAP sponsored five Nigerian students, most of whom received full finding to various US universities.

USAP recruits students throughout Northern Nigeria on the recommendation of their headmasters

who require an extensive application process similar to that of highly selective colleges in the United States.

This year, more than 100 "O level" students from all parts of Northern Nigeria applied, and the EAC will select ten students who will enroll in fall 2007.

USAP students reflect the best of Nigerian youth, based on academic potential, leadership roles, community service and extracurricular activities. They aspire to broaden their horizons and return home to Nigeria.. Their only barrier to higher educational opportunities is finance.

The Educational Advising Center (EAC) works closely with USAP students to assist them at every step of the college selection, application, and orientation processes. ❖

— <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> —

Three Beneficiaries of U

The Educational Advising Center (EAC), US Consulate General Lagos on July 31, 2007 presented three Nigerian students who are beneficiaries of the United States Achievers Programs (USAP) at a press briefing in Lagos. The three students received four year scholarships to study in the United States as part of the USAP program.

Public Diplomacy Officer Mary Lou Johnson-Pizarro, and Education Advisor Ifeanyi Olagbaju explained the objectives of the USAP, launched last year at the EAC-Lagos advising center. The EAC works with ten intellectually-talented, but economically disadvantaged Nigerian students each year to assist them through the application process to secure admission and scholarships for colleges and universities in the United States. USAP works closely with students to increase their chances of admission and receiving scholarships. ❖



Staff of the US Agency for International Development, the National Institutes for Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department for Defense pose with their award certificates with US Ambassador John Campbell.

PEPFAR Nigeria Wins Global Award on HIV/AIDS

By Idika U. Onyukwu
Editor Crossroads

In one of his last acts as US Ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell was the special guest at an award ceremony to honor five US Agencies – the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States Agency for International Development, Department of Defense, National Institutes for Health, and the Public Affairs Section for their contributions in checking the spread of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. The Spirit of PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief) Award is an exceptional recognition and the most coveted award given by the office of the US Global AIDS Coordinator. It honors country teams that have exemplified the precepts of the spirit of PEPFAR. This year, PEPFAR Nigeria was selected as one of the best teams.

In his opening statement,

Ambassador Campbell said PEPFAR Nigeria has made significant contributions to Nigeria's response

Funding PEPFAR Nigeria:

Nigeria is a priority country for the US Government which is presently the largest HIV/AIDS donor in the country. HIV/AIDS funding increased from a modest \$2.7 million in FY 1999 to \$25.5 million in 2003. With the advent of President Bush's Global HIV/AIDS Initiative (GHAI) in 2004, the US government (USG) funding has increased tremendously as follows:

- * \$26 Million for COP 2004 with the USAID portion at \$13 Million
- * \$79 Million for COP 2005 with USAID portion at \$48 Million
- * \$163 Million for COP 2006 with USAID portion at \$68 Million
- * \$305 Million for COP 2007 with USAID portion at \$137 Million.

to the growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS. "Since its inception in 2004, evidence show that Nigeria's PEPFAR efforts are paying off – prevalence rates in this country are holding stable, and every day we are getting more and more people the treatment they need," Ambassador Campbell said.

Ambassador Campbell, assisted by Acting Mission Director of USAID Latanya Mapp Frett, presented certificates to employees of the five agencies that won the Spirit of PEPFAR Award. The award was originally given to the Nigeria team in Rwanda.

The award citation acknowledged PEPFAR Nigeria's effectiveness in working to achieve Emergency Plan goals, supporting sustainable and innovative programs, cooperating across agencies, engaging new partners, coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders, and communicating these efforts to the Nigerian public. ❖

■ <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> ■

US Boost Seed Storage in Garko and Darki Communities in Kano

Gov't Girls Secondary Dalla Gets Essential Books

“Support for education is a high priority for the American government, and represents a significant aspect of our foreign assistance around the world,” said US Ambassador John Campbell during the flag-off ceremony for a large US book donation program to 60 schools in Northern Nigeria. The ceremony took place at the Dala Government Girls School, Kano, on Saturday June 2.

On Sunday, June 3 Ambassador Campbell commissioned US constructed seed storage facilities at Garko LGA and Darki LGA, Kano State.

Books

The donation of school books was the first in a series of donations to 60 secondary schools in Northern Nigeria. The donations will take place over the next several months.

Each set of books consists of 198 titles and focuses on:

- * The African American Experience. This collection contains books focusing on the African American experience, intended for students in grades 4-9. A second set contains biographies of key African Americans in US History and are appropriate for grades 4-9.

- * Secondary Ambassador Collection. This collection contains over 100 books and items for teachers and is a combination of US History, geography, biographies, science, fiction and sports. The books are appropriate for grades 5 and above.

The books are published by Scholastic Press in the United States and are all in English. Scholastic, the global children’s publishing, education and media company, has a corporate mission supported through all of its divisions of helping children around



US Ambassador John Campbell accompanied by the Chairman of Garko Local Government Council, proceed to the venue of the book donation, on June 2.

the world to read and learn. It recognizes that literacy is the cornerstone of a child’s intellectual, personal, and cultural growth for over 85 years. Scholastic has created quality products and services that educate, entertain and motivate children, and are designed to help enlarge their understanding of the world around them.

The books will be donated to schools in Kano, Katsina, Bauchi, Gombe, Niger, Borno, Sokoto, and Maiduguri. Altogether the donation will include 11,880 books and weigh over 2 and ½ tons.

Seed Storage Facilities

Northern Nigeria has an extremely arid climate that provides inhospitable environs for the growth of crops. Communities in

Northern Nigeria have been vulnerable to economic hardships in the past, which results from timing fluctuations between harvest cycles and market cycles. Because of this, the need to secure seed storage, crop management education, and facilities is critical

The seed storage project will provide safe and secure seed storage with educational facilities to 5 communities throughout Kano and Kaduna States Nigeria, and will provide key infrastructure to support the self-



Ambassador Campbell is greeted by the District Head of Dala, His Royal Highness Aminu Ado Bayero.



Ambassador Campbell comments as he unveils the plaque for the Darko Seed Storage facility in Kano. Left is the Chairman of Garko Local Government Council.

sufficiency of communities in Northern Nigeria.

This is a joint project with Kano and Kaduna State Governments and US Office of Defense Cooperation, the United States Agency for International Development,

* Garko, Garko LGA Kano State, Nigeria.

To be commissioned at a later date:

* Sarina, Garko LGA Kano State, Nigeria



Some of the processed and packaged seed grains that will be stored at the Darko Seed Storage facility in Kano. A greater quantity of unprocessed grains will also be stored.



International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and United States Department of State.

Sites have been provided by IITA through de-confliction with the individual Local Government Authorities and were deemed appropriate for the construction of the seed storage facilities.

Seed storage facilities commissioned during Ambassador Campbell's Kano trip included:

* Darki, Wudil Local Government Area (LGA) Kano State, Nigeria

* Yarumfa, Giwa LGA Kaduna State, Nigeria

* Zaria, Zaria LGA Kaduna State, Nigeria

The Humanitarian Assistance (HA) Program is a stand-alone project sponsored by The US European Command (EUCOM). The primary objectives of this program are to: strengthen international relationships, improve infrastructure for the host nation and ameliorate significant suffering. ❖

■ <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> ■

The Ambassador Special Self-Help Program

The Ambassador's Special Self-Help (SSH) Program provides small grants to community development activities in Nigeria. It is designed to help communities help themselves. Under this program, projects must originate in the community and the community must make significant contributions to the success of the project, such as land, labor, money, materials, ongoing supervision, and other resources. Currently, the American contribution to any one project ranges from USD\$3,000 to \$USD10,000. Smaller requests are also welcome.

All funds under the SSH Program are disbursed in Naira.

Project Selection Criteria

The SSH Program assists in improving the economic and social conditions of a community. Self-Help project proposals selected for funding generally incorporate the following criteria:

- * Respond to the initiative and aspirations of the local community,
 - * Involve a significant local contribution in cash, labor or material,
 - * Be maintained and operated by the local community,
 - * Improve basic economic or social conditions in the community,
 - * Be completed within 6 months and not require additional funds to maintain, and
 - * Have visible benefits for the community and be self-sustaining.
- These criteria should be used as a guideline for SSH applicants.

Send project applications and inquiries for the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Program to the following address:

Special Self-help Coordinator
 United States Consulate General
 2 Walter Carrington Crescent
 Victoria Island, P.O. Box 554
 Lagos, Nigeria

Email: lagossh@state.gov



Photo left; The traditional ruler of Birnin-Kebbi commissions the Rikoto Area Zuru Grinding Mill project. Right; A recipient of the Ambassador's Special Self-Help project happily pose with her grinding machine.

Ambassador's Self-Help Project Lightens the Burden of Kebbi Women

On June 27, 2007, the US Embassy commissioned a grinding machine project and donated sewing machines to the Kebbi Alliance for Positive People (KAPOP), as part of the Ambassador's Special Self-Help Program.

The Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund provides small grants to community development organizations throughout Nigeria for a variety of important projects, such as the grinding mills and sewing institute founded by KAPOP under the leadership of Peter Dondondo.

The Ambassador's Self-Help Projects originate in the local community who contribute land, labor, money, materials, and other resources to the success of the projects.

The Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund is designed to help people help themselves by supporting projects that work to improve economic and social conditions.

Through this program, the American Embassy in Nigeria has partnered with numerous community development organizations

throughout the country to install food processing equipment, construct live-stock shelters, and build boreholes among other projects.

KAPOP's grinding mill project helps women increase the productivity of milling "fura," a staple diet food, which is usually produced through a very labor intensive process, but can now be done by machine and in their homes. These grinding mills will improve the quality of life for the community by generating income to support the women who have benefited from them, as well as their families.

The Ambassador's Special Self-help Program also contributed, in conjunction with the British High Commission and the Anglican Church of Nigeria, to the establishment of the Desete Tailoring Institute in Zuru. The building houses twelve sewing machines, and employs two male, and two female trainers.

Many members of the community have committed themselves to the success of these projects, contributing their time and hard work to make these development plans a reality. The American Embassy thanks you all for your efforts. ❖



The traditional ruler of Birnin-Kebbi poses with some of the donated items.

New Visa Revalidation Process Announced

To better serve visa applicants, the U.S. Embassy in Abuja has modified the current visa revalidation program to an appointment-based system and has established a new student visa appointment system. The final day for the current revalidation walk-in program is Thursday, June 28, 2007.

Beginning Wednesday, June 27th, visa applicants who qualify for the revalidation program may send an e-mail to one of two newly-created addresses requesting an interview appointment. Within 3 business days, applicants will receive an e-mail response from the Embassy Abuja

Consular Section with their interview date.

Applicants who wish to renew their full validity, multiple-entry, non-immigrant visa that is either still valid or expired within the last 12 months should send their appointment request to AbujaVisaRenewals@state.gov. The request must include the applicant's full name as it appears on their visa and the red visa number located in the lower right-hand corner of the visa.

Student visa applicants should send their appointment request to AbujaStudentVisas@state.gov. The

request must include the student's full name as it appears in their passport and the SEVIS number, found on their I-20 form. Continuing students may use either e-mail address to request a visa appointment.

Any visa applicant that has already secured a visa appointment on-line will not be affected by these changes and should honor their existing appointment date.

Please visit the Embassy's website at <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> for additional information and instructions on the new visa revalidation and student visa appointment programs.❖

US Gov't Donates Vehicles to ECOWAS

On August 9, at the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) Secretariat Abuja, US Charge d' Affaires Robert Gribbin presented vehicles valued at over \$85,000 USD to the Commission's President Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas. The vehicles boldly emblazed with ECOWAS standby force insignia and logo, include a 15 passenger Toyota bus, a cargo van and a motorcycle, yet to be delivered,

configured for courier and escort duty. The donation will assist the ECOWAS Standby Force to address its greatest logistical challenge to deploy promptly in the event of a regional crisis.

In handing over the keys of the vehicles which were provided by the US Department of State Africa Bureau and the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program (ACOTA), Charge Gribbin said the gift is the direct result of the

very successful 2006 ACOTA-ECOWAS multinational command post exercise during which ECOWAS commanders and staff made significant progress in establishing a brigade-size peace keeping force.

The US Charge d' Affaires Robert Gribbin also said ECOWAS is globally acknowledged as one of the first regional economic communities on the continent to fulfill its commitment to the African Union through its standby force.❖

Remembering Hurricane Katrina

On August 29, 2005, a vast coastline of towns and communities was virtually destroyed. One of America's great cities was submerged; and many lives lost in one of the worst natural disasters in America's history. On this National Day of Remembrance of Hurricane Katrina August 29, we honor those who did not survive the fury of the storm and those who continue to put their lives back together in its aftermath. We also remember the heroism of ordinary citizens who touched our hearts with their bravery and compassion and moved our whole Nation to action.❖

Embassy Abuja Looses Staff



Julius Igoche

On July 17, the management and staff of the US Embassy, Abuja lost a vibrant colleague Mr. Julius Igoche to the cold hands of death. Described as quiet, reliable and always willing to help, Mr. Igoche died while playing a game of soccer at a local pitch in Abuja. He joined the US Embassy, Abuja on April 23, 2000 and worked in the Information Section of the Public Affairs Section of the Embassy. Mr. Igoche was buried in his home town Etokwu-Uko, Olamaboro LGA, Kogi State on Saturday, July 21. He is survived by a son and wife, Mrs. Dorcas Igoche.❖

US Embassy Hosts International Discussion on Judicial Corruption



(L-r), US Embassy Country Public Affairs Officer Atim George, Justice Ishaq Bello, Justice Binta Nyanko and Charge Robert Gribbin at the international conference through DVC

Federal Judge Diane Wood discussed Judicial Corruption with a panel of Nigerian legal practitioners and journalists on July 26 in Abuja. The event was a Digital Video Conference (DVC) organized by the Embassy's Public Affairs Section in Abuja and linked from African Regional Service, Paris. Two eminent Jurists, Justices Ishaq Usman Bello and Binta Nyako of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court, Abuja, provided informed perspectives on the subject, since they are currently adjudicating a spate of high profile corruption cases involving former state governors and other high ranking government officials.

Drawing upon her wide experience as a judge of the United States Court of Appeal for the Seventh Circuit, Judge Wood discussed the twin problem of judicial corruption and independence of the Judiciary in the United States. She suggested that a strict code of conduct for US judges makes it difficult for them to compromise their integrity. This code forces judges to surrender a great deal of their privacy by making

public their family records, financial transactions, and any form of financial involvement including financial holdings, such as stocks. These documents, including pro-bono cases, are posted on the Internet for public consumption. This ensures that litigants are safeguarded from judges presiding over cases in which they have a special interest.

Justice Bello, the designated anti-corruption judge of the FCT and also the Head of the Criminal Trial Division of the FCT Judiciary, said preventing corruption within the Nigerian legal system was like the proverbial saying of "trying to prevent a goat from not eating yam." He did, however, remark that with the establishment of the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), things have changed. He mentioned that former governors who misused their offices are currently facing charges of corruption and misapplication of public funds. To sustain the fight against corruption and shield judges from corrupt influences, Judges Bello suggested that

judges should enjoy better welfare packages. He also advised that society must have an attitudinal change towards the giving and receiving of bribes since the legal system is a direct product of the society.

The new Charge d'Affaires Robert Gribbin who was attending his first DVC program, opened the program and welcomed the participants.

Responding to Justice Bello's presentation on the work being done by the Nigerian Judiciary against corruption, Judge Wood

said governors abusing their offices were not unique to Nigeria. She cited a former governor of Illinois and media mogul Conrad Black who were recently sent to prison for corrupt practices while in office. Judge Wood said this was possible because the US Judicial Code of Conduct is effective. Among other things, the Code of Conduct for the US Judiciary protects judges from powerful people and from undue influences which ensure that judgments are neither predetermined, nor that they go to the highest bidder.

At the questions and answer session, participants raised the ethical and moral question problems which might confront US Judges, many of whom are elected rather than appointed.

More than 45 participants including members of the National Assembly, the Nigerian Bar Association led by its Abuja Branch Chairman Barrister Muyiwa Akinboro, and the Federation of Women Lawyers Abuja Chapter Chairperson Chinelo Irielle attended the DVC dialogue. Embassy Country Public Affairs Officer Atim George moderated the event. ❖

President Bush Rededicates Islamic Center



U.S. President George W. Bush (R) speaks, as Director of the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C. Abdullah Khouj watches, during the rededication ceremony on June 27, 2007. Photo credit: REUTERS/Larry Downing

On June 27, 2007, President George Bush rededicated the Islamic Center of Washington on its 50th anniversary, a place where he last spoke the week after September 11, 2001. The President underscored the message of respect and inclusion, a message that President Dwight D. Eisenhower also expressed when he dedicated the Center fifty years ago. He reaffirmed support for the wonderful diversity of faith that enriches America and reaffirmed the country's determination to stand together in pursuit of freedom and peace.

In reinforcing the importance of America's relationship with the Islamic world, the President announced the appointment of a special envoy to the Organization of Islamic Conference, as a demonstration of respect for OIC member states and the importance of a high-level dialogue. This is the first time that a US President has made an appointment to the OIC.

The special envoy will be named in the coming weeks.

OIC is a leading voice for the diverse Muslim states of the world; moreover, the OIC Secretary General Ihsanoglu (Ih-saan-oh-loo) is a strong voice of reason and tolerance.

President Bush said: "Today we gather, with friendship and respect, to reaffirm that pledge – and to renew our determination to stand together in pursuit of freedom and peace. We come to express our appreciation for a faith that has enriched civilization for centuries. We come in celebration of America's diversity of faith and our unity as free people. And we hold in our hearts the ancient wisdom of the great Muslim poet, Rumi: 'The lamps are different, but the light is the same.'"

While emphasizing the America's deep respect for Islam and all people of faith, President Bush called for "men and women of conscience" to stand together and condemn violent extremists who "seek to use religion as a path to power and a means of

domination."

It is worthy to note that the United States is a diverse, inclusive society where people can live and worship as they choose without intimidation and suspicion. Freedom of religion is the first protection offered in America's Bill of Rights. "This is the promise of our Constitution, the calling of our conscience, and a source of our strength," President Bush said in his speech.

America has a long history of support to Muslim communities across the globe, particularly in times of war and natural disaster. Americans have come to the aid of victims of devastating earthquakes in Pakistan and Iran, and Tsunami victims in Indonesia and Malaysia. The US has also defended Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo, and today confronts genocide in Sudan. "Americans of all beliefs have undertaken these efforts out of compassion, conviction, and conscience," Bush said.

■ <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov> ■



US Embassy Office of Defense Cooperation Chief, Colonel Luis Perozo presents the Major Haydon Best Performing Students Award to Master Princewill Ezeaja. At right is Head Teacher of St Therese's School, Rev Ssiter Tina Nwosu.

Winners of Major Haydon Best Performing Students Award Emerge

If it were possible to see the other side of life after death, late Major Joe Haydon would have been a very happy man on July 28th as the St. Therese's Catholic Nursery and Primary School Bwari, Abuja, immortalized his memory with a prestigious award. The Best Performing Students Award was named at the St. Therese's 7th Graduation and Prize Giving Day. The former US Embassy Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) Chief was among the passengers who perished in the Bellview Airline accident on October 23, 2005. Major Haydon was instrumental in securing funds to build a three-storey classroom block at St. Therese's which was commissioned on January 28, 2005 by the Office of Defense Cooperation Humanitarian Assistance Program. Most of the 2007 graduating class spent their final year in the new classroom built by ODC.

Lieutenant Colonel Perozo, Chief, Office of Defense Cooperation, represented US Embassy Charge

Robert Gribbin. The ODC chief expressed the gratitude of the Embassy community for the very special way the school has honored one of its fallen heroes, "It is a kind gesture which speaks volumes of the warmth he must have felt as he worked with members of the Bwari community as Chief of the Office of Defense Cooperation," Colonel Perozo said. The HA Program provided \$238,000 for the construction projects and also provided furniture and equipment through the Excess Property Program. The new classroom was built as a complimentary project to the Maternity Hospital built in 2001 and dedicated by former US Ambassador Howard



Excited pupils of ST. Therese's Catholic at the school's graduation ceremony.

Jeter.

St. Therese's Catholic Nursery and Primary School Bwari serves the children of the community regardless of faith or ethnicity. Head Teacher, Reverend Sister Tina Nwosu, said the school has been permitted to implement the Universal Basic Education program by the Federal Ministry of Education and the present graduates will begin their Junior Secondary School session in September.

Since the school opened, enrollment has expanded from one hundred and fifteen to four hundred students. The staff has also grown from twelve to thirty four. Facilities at St. Therese's Catholic Nursery and Primary School include science and home economics laboratories, a research library, and ten computers for student use.

Colonel Perozo presented prizes to ten students including, Princewill Ezeja who won the Major Haydon Best Performing Students Award, which will now become an annual event. ❖

U.S. First Lady Laura Bush Boosts Health, Education in Africa

Underscores US Generosity with a Personal touch

By Lea Terhune
USINFO Staff Writer

Winding up an eventful trip to Africa, U.S. First Lady Laura Bush voiced support and promised more aid for nations struggling with HIV/AIDS and malaria, and to those striving to raise literacy levels. She completed her five-day tour in Mali June 29, after visits to Senegal, Mozambique and Zambia.

In Zambia, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Mark Dybul, who accompanied Bush on her trip, announced that U.S. aid to that country would be increased by \$266 million over five years.

“We need broader efforts to fight the AIDS pandemic and to prevent new infections, especially in Africa where there are 70 percent of AIDS orphans,” he told journalists in Lusaka on June 28. The money will come from the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

Dybul added that Zambia originally was slated to receive \$534 million in the first four years of the PEPFAR program; however, that amount will be increased to \$800 million.

Laura Bush toured Zambian projects funded by PEPFAR, the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and an umbrella group of companies called the Global Business Coalition. That organization works with government and nongovernmental organizations to implement aid programs. The First Lady announced that 500,000 mosquito nets would be distributed to protect people from malaria, a disease that often takes a greater toll



First Lady Laura Bush meets Ambassador Girls’ scholarship winners at Grand Medine Primary School in Dakar, Senegal, June 26. President Bush’s Africa Education Initiative is working to provide 550,000 scholarships to girls throughout Africa by 2010. (© White House photo)

than AIDS in Zambia, according to the Zambia Malaria Foundation.

At Lusaka’s Regiment Basic School, Bush and her daughter, Jenna Bush, inaugurated a PlayPump, a combination merry-go-round and water pump which harnesses young exuberance to provide a reliable source of clean water. It frees the children from having to bring water from home each day.

The two projects are examples of the public-private partnerships the Bush administration has promoted in the developing world. The mosquito net distribution project draws in entities as diverse as the Coca-Cola Company, Johnson & Johnson, the Case Foundation, and the National Basketball Association, whose NBACares foundation is a partner in Nothing But Nets, a grassroots campaign to prevent malaria deaths in Africa.

A message the First Lady repeated throughout her tour of Africa was

the importance of faith-based groups.

“Religious institutions bring a personal healing touch to the fight against AIDS,” she told a gathering at the Mutata Memorial Center. The center, through a network of volunteers, provides home-based care for those infected with HIV/AIDS for orphans and vulnerable children. It educates about HIV/AIDS transmission and protection, and is supported by RAPIDS, a consortium of organizations including World Vision, the Salvation Army, Africare, Catholic Relief Services, and the Population Council.

Her trip began in Senegal, where she and Jenna visited Fann Hospital in Dakar with Senegal’s First Lady, Viviane Wade. The hospital treats people living with AIDS, bolstering their nutrition. Steve Bolinger started a garden at the hospital when he was in the Peace Corps, and remained afterward to found Development in Gardening (DIG), a nongovernmental

organization that helps HIV/AIDS victims maintain an exceptional quality of life. Both hospital and garden programs are funded partially by USAID.

Bush told reporters on the flight to Senegal that it is important for Africa that the cooperation between the United States government and African governments “on the ground” be effective and try “to stretch the money the furthest so that the most people get help.”

At the African Education Initiative (AEI) scholarship awards ceremony at Dakar’s Grand Medine Primary School, the First Lady was joined by Grammy-winning Senegalese musician Youssou N’Dour, also a U.N. goodwill ambassador and advocate for improvement of African health.

“An investment in education, no matter how significant, is always worth it,” former educator Laura Bush told the audience. Adding education helps governments fulfill their obligations to their citizens. In this endeavor she said, “The American people are proud to partner with you.”

The AEI helped provide nearly half a million books to children in Senegal. Bush said that over the summer, AEI will deliver another 800,000 textbooks to Senegalese children. “Educated citizens will keep themselves in better health, and pass their knowledge along to their communities and to their children,” she said.

A highlight of her trip to Mozambique was the announcement that \$507 million would be given from the US-funded Millennium Challenge Corporation to help build infrastructure and tackle malaria. While in Maputo, the First Lady toured facilities of members of the Inter-Religious Campaign Against Malaria in Mozambique. A pediatric hospital and a women’s support group, Positive Tea, were among her stops. Promotion of malaria spraying



First lady Laura Bush chats with children at Flame center in Lusaka, Zambia June 28. She also toured an AIDS treatment center and launched an anti-malaria campaign in Zambia as she highlights U.S. - funded efforts to combat disease in that southern African nation. (© AP Images)

and handing out insecticide-treated mosquito nets was part of her program.

Women’s empowerment was another focus of the First Lady’s Africa tour. She participated in a roundtable on the subject in Mozambique, and visited two facilities in Zambia, Flame and WORTH, that work with vulnerable children, single mothers, widows, and the elderly to give them more options in life. WORTH offers microcredit schemes that finance small business ventures.

Bush expressed admiration for the dedicated caregivers, many of whom are volunteers who go out to the sick and educate people about HIV/AIDS, a disease which still carries a heavy stigma in Africa.

Her final stop was Bamako, Mali, where she visited an AEI-funded school and highlighted Millennium Challenge Corporation compact with the government that aims to reduce poverty through a five-year, \$460.8 million economic development program. ❖

Ambassador Girls' Scholarship Program (Fact Sheet)

- * The Ambassadors Girls’ Scholarship Program (AGSP) provides 550,000 scholarships to school children, mostly girls, in sub-Saharan Africa.
- * The objective of AGSP is to support retention of girls in school. Forty countries including Nigeria, currently participate in the program and 120,000 scholarships have already been awarded to girl scholars in Africa.
- * In Nigeria, AGSP is implemented in all six geo-political zones in 13 states: Borno, Cross River, Edo, Enugu, Gombe, Imo, Kano, Lagos, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Sokoto, and the FCT. The scholarship in Nigeria includes tuition fees, textbooks, school supplies, uniforms, PTA levies and food items.
- * When US First Lady Laura Bush visited Nigeria in January 2006, she met with several AGSP scholars at the Model School in Abuja.
- * US Agency for International Development supports AGSP through the Africa Education Initiative Ambassadors Girls Scholarship Program.

Two Communities in Kano Receive Seed Storage Facilities

Most parts of Northern Nigeria experience extreme arid climate that provides an inhospitable environment for the growth and storage of crops. The need for secure seed storage, crop management education, and facilities is high. Communities in these areas have been vulnerable to economic hardships resulting from timing fluctuations between harvest cycles and market cycles. Part of that challenge was addressed on June 3, when US Ambassador John Campbell commissioned seed storage facilities in two communities - Darko and Darki in Kano State. The project was a joint partnership between the Kano, Kaduna State Governments, the US Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and United States Department of State. Photos were taken by **Crossroads** Editor Idika U. Onyukwu.



Ambassador Campbell hands over the keys to the Garko seed storage facility to Hajia Tabawa Dahiru Chairperson Cowpea Farmers Association, Garko, Kano.



Local leaders pose with Ambassador Campbell after the commissioning of Garko seed storage facility in Kano, June 3



Ambassador Campbell making his remarks at the commissioning of Darko Seed Storage facility in Kano.



Ambassador Campbell presents keys to Darki Seed Storage facility to the leader of the Farmers Association.



Excited ODC Chief Lt. Col. Luis Perozo joins traditional dancers at the commissioning of Darki seed storage facility, Kano



Ambassador Campbell acknowledges greetings from villagers who watched proceedings from the top of a tree.



Happy July Fourth

A Fourth of July parade on Wednesday, July 4, in Abuja, highlighted the celebration marking the 231st Independence Day anniversary of the United States of America. US Ambassador John Campbell led the “Yankee Doodle” parade with puppy Miss Pixie. Left is Embassy Community Liaison Officer Michelle Ward. Photo by Idika Onyukwu

August	Calendar of Events	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
					1 <i>Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja & Lagos)</i>	2 <i>Media Briefing (Abuja)</i>	3	4
		5	6	7 <i>Media Briefing (Lagos)</i>	8 <i>Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja & Lagos)</i>	9 <i>Media Briefing (Abuja)</i>	10	11
		12 <i>International Youth Day</i>	13	14 <i>Media Briefing (Lagos)</i>	15 <i>Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja & Lagos)</i>	16 <i>Media Briefing (Abuja)</i>	17	18
		19	20	21 <i>Media Briefing (Lagos)</i>	22 <i>Study in the U.S. classes (Abuja & Lagos)</i>	23 <i>Media Briefing (Abuja)</i>	24	25
		26 <i>Women’s Equality Day</i>	27	28 <i>Media Briefing (Lagos)</i>	29 <i>Remembrance of Hurricane Katrina</i>	30 <i>Media Briefing (Abuja)</i>	31	

Please note that ALL events on this calendar are STRICTLY by invitation. For enquiries please call 09-461-4373 or 01-263-3395.