

CROSSROADS

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A Newsletter of the United States Mission, Nigeria



A baby in
the womb
can be
protected
from HIV
infection
even if the
mother is
HIV positive



● **Special Edition**

U.S. Mission to Nigeria

2009 World Aids Day Awareness Activities



DCM Dundas McCullough being decorated with a U.S.-Nigeria PEPFAR partnership pin



Information on women's health



Display of products for hospital waste disposal



Registration and data collection for blood donation



Blood donation as humanitarian service

Ambassador's Notes



*U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria
Robin Renée Sanders*

Dear Crossroads Readers,

On World AIDS Day, we honor the millions of people around the world who have been impacted by the AIDS epidemic – those who are living with HIV, those we have lost, and the caregivers, families, friends and communities who have provided support. This World AIDS Day edition of Crossroads honors and celebrates these people.

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is the largest

commitment in history by any nation to combat a single disease, and the United States is unwavering in our commitment to our partner nations. Since the beginning of the PEPFAR program in Nigeria in 2004, the American people have committed nearly \$1.5 billion dollars to provide health and human development support and other assistance to Nigeria to fight HIV/AIDS.

PEPFAR support for HIV prevention, treatment and care programs has achieved encouraging results in Nigeria. Through September of 2009, PEPFAR has provided compassionate care and support for nearly 2.2 million Nigerians and 355,000 orphans and vulnerable children. PEPFAR programs to prevent mothers from passing the virus on to their children have assisted Nigerian women during more than 1.5 million pregnancies. Today, more than 286,000 men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS around the country are receiving life-saving antiretroviral treatments via direct support from PEPFAR.

"Universal access and human rights" is the theme of this year's World AIDS Day. In Nigeria, PEPFAR is helping develop the sustainable, long-term capacity needed to achieve the goal of universal access to prevention, care and treatment services for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. PEPFAR encourages country-owned strategies to ensure a

locally-driven response to the pandemic. That is why we support the development of Nigeria's National Strategic Framework for HIV/AIDS 2010-2015 and are working with Nigeria to establish a Partnership Framework on HIV/AIDS 2010-2015 for PEPFAR's engagement with Nigeria in coming years.

This issue of Crossroads highlights some of the ways in which the American people and the people of Nigeria are working together to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and to care and treat those already affected by this disease. Inside, you'll find stories about mother-to-mother support groups helping to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS and community support for a farm run by and for people living with HIV/AIDS. An article on the Institute for Human Virology, Nigeria illustrates how partnerships between PEPFAR and local organizations build capacity.

This edition also features informative HIV/AIDS-related interviews with U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator Ambassador Eric Goosby and Nigerian Minister of Health Professor Babatunde Osotimehin, as well as an article on prevention programs. Finally we take a look ahead at the Partnership Framework on HIV/AIDS 2010-2015.

Enjoy!

Robin Renée Sanders

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Inside This Issue

2009 World AIDS Day, Acknowledging the Gains of a Strong Partnership.....	4
Farming Nourishes PLWHA Support Group	6
America Seeks Partnerships with Strong Democracies.....	7
U.S. Mission Nigeria Signs Memorandum of Discussion to Expand Projects in Education, Agriculture and Health in Katsina State.....	9
Global Reading Program Promotes U.S.-Nigeria Educational Partnership.....	13
U.S. Mission Nigeria and Jos Interfaith Communities Refurbish Dadin Kowa Peace Zone Recreation Center through Voluntary Service.....	14
Dan Hoyle's Solo Show "Tings Dey Happen".....	15
U.S. Embassy College Fair Offers Students Tools for 21st Century Success in Education.....	16
You Can Succeed in Business if you have Passion and Commitment.....	17
Nigeria Has Made Progress in Ten Years - U.S. Chargé McCullough.....	18

Cover photo: Thanks to Mrs. Grace Ungbian and Mrs. Rose Leo for consenting to the use of their photos and those of their babies to tell the success story of PMTCT.

2009 World AIDS Day, Acknowledging the Gains of a Strong Partnership

Five years ago, 40 year old Mrs. Grace Ungbian of Giri village and her close neighbor Mrs. Rose Leo, 32 of Gwagwalada, would have perhaps given up on any chance

for joyful marital bliss, let alone child bearing. Thanks however, to the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) program of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in partnership with the Government of Nigeria, today the two HIV positive women are not only happily married, but have babies born free of the HIV virus.

Mrs. Ungbian's nineteen month old daughter, aptly named Divine Favor, and Mrs. Leo's eight month old son, christened Miracle Emanuel Christopher, are clear testimonies to the progress that has been made in Nigeria in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

To underscore the importance of this achievement and acknowledge the joint efforts of Nigeria and America in fighting this disease, Ambassador Robin Renée Sanders visited the Asokoro District Hospital on December 3 to commemorate World AIDS Day 2009.

Ambassador Sanders interacted with pregnant women as well as nursing mothers and support pilot groups that are helping to mentor pregnant women in communities to access PMTCT services. She paid tribute to their courage and assured them

that "The American people are working together with the people of Nigeria to help Nigeria reach the goal of universal access to care, treatment and support for all Nigerians affected by HIV/AIDS."

Since 2004, the PEPFAR program has committed nearly \$1.5 billion to combat HIV/AIDS in Nigeria alone and more than \$18.8 billion worldwide to fight the disease. These funds have been used in part to support programs to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV and to provide early infant diagnosis and treatment. Through implementing partners like the Institute for Human Virology, Nigeria, PMTCT programs have assisted Nigerian women during more than 1.5 million pregnancies.

On this particular occasion at the Asokoro District Hospital on December 3, Ambassador Sanders placed less emphasis on numbers and focused on the most important part of these programs – the beneficiaries, whose bundles of joy were evident in their bulging stomachs or the little ones strapped on their backs or carried on their laps.

Ambassador Sanders praised the great work of the health care professionals at the facility and toured the PEPFAR supported Early Infant Diagnosis Lab, which is making a difference in newborn survival. The lab has empowered doctors to screen newborns and has trained more than 4,500 scientists and technicians.



Mrs. Grace Ungbian
and her daughter

Through PEPFAR, the American people have established nine of these early infant diagnosis labs in Nigeria.

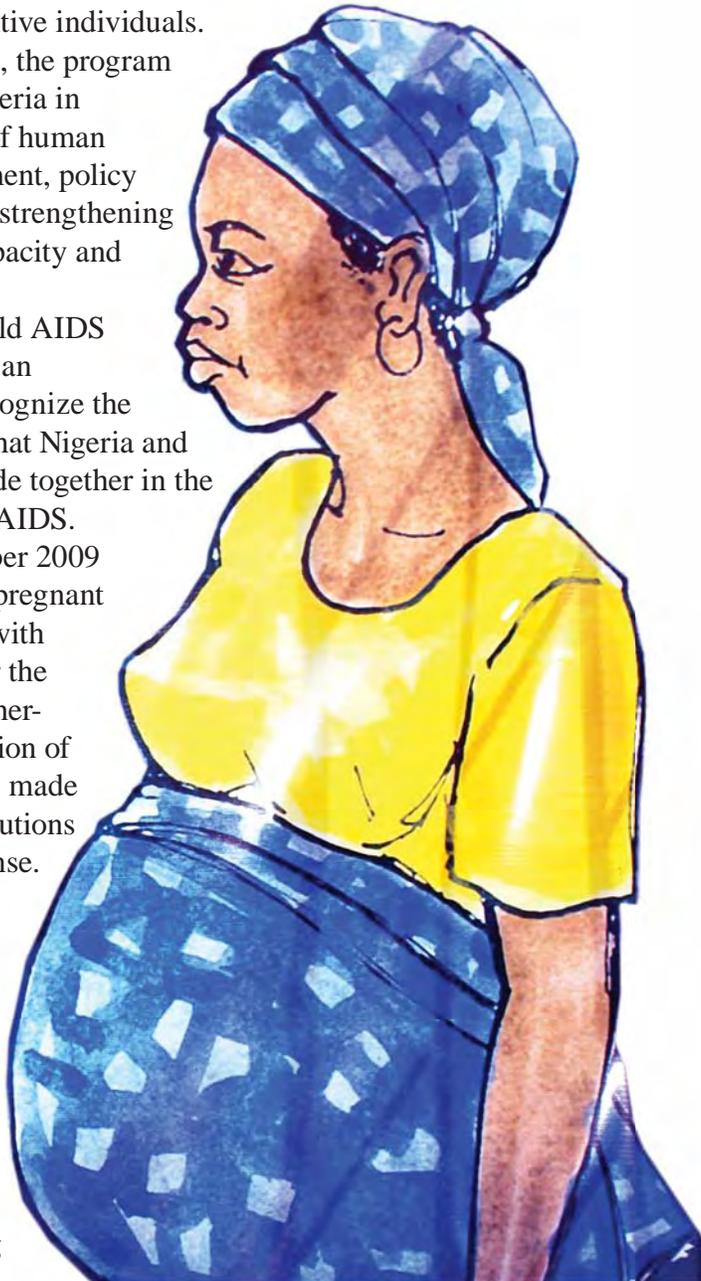
In Nigeria, PEPFAR has achieved encouraging results, such as free diagnosis and antiretroviral treatment for people infected with HIV (including pregnant women); community outreach for HIV awareness and prevention; and care and support to children orphaned by AIDS, as well as other vulnerable children. In addition, it has provided diagnosis and treatment of TB to HIV positive individuals. Equally important, the program has supported Nigeria in the critical areas of human capacity development, policy development, and strengthening health systems capacity and effectiveness.

The 2009 World AIDS Day program was an opportunity to recognize the significant gains that Nigeria and America have made together in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

As of September 2009 in addition to the pregnant women provided with health services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, PEPFAR has made significant contributions to Nigeria's response. Examples of these contributions include: more than 39 million people reached with community outreach programs promoting Abstinence, Being

Faithful, Correct and Consistent Use of Condoms (ABC), and other related preventive strategies; approximately 4.5 million people reached with HIV counseling and testing services; and about 290,000 men, women and children who are receiving antiretroviral therapy via direct PEPFAR support.

Although obstacles and challenges remain, the PEPFAR program has helped women living with HIV to nurture and care for the most precious miracle in their lives, a newborn child that is free from the HIV virus.



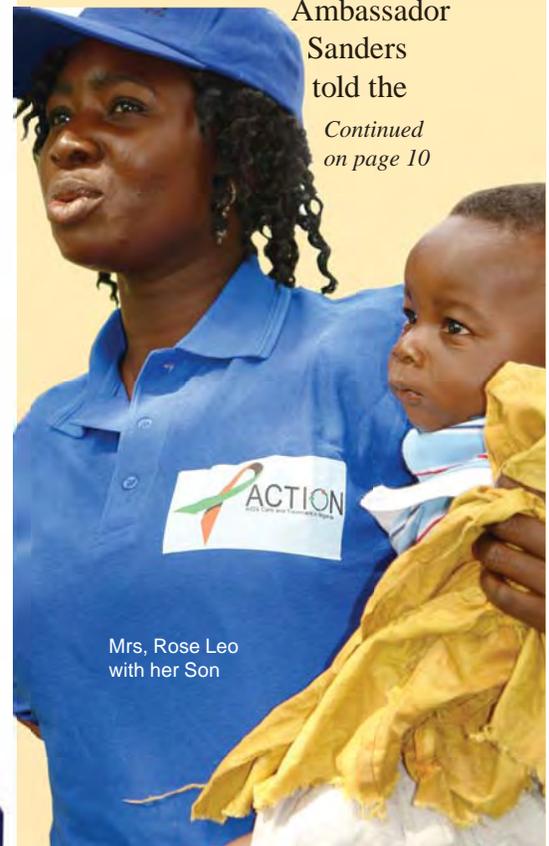
PEPFAR PMTCT Helps Keep Babies HIV Free, Mothers Tell Ambassador

To mark World AIDS Day 2009, U.S. Ambassador Robin Renée Sanders met with mentors from the ten PEPFAR Mother-to-Mother Support pilot groups at Asokoro District Hospital on December 3 and paid tribute to their courage and dedication on behalf of millions of Nigerians who have been impacted by the AIDS epidemic. Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission (PMTCT) programs supported by PEPFAR – the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief – have assisted Nigerian women during more than 1.5 million pregnancies.

This year's World AIDS Day theme is "Universal Access and Human Rights."

Ambassador Sanders told the

Continued on page 10



Mrs. Rose Leo with her Son

A cross section of PLWHA members sharing a meal at the farm



Farming Nourishes PLWHA Support Group

Most people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in Otukpo in Benue State, Nigeria are poor. A great number of them have lost either their jobs or the strength to work because of ill health. But this is not so for members of the Otabo Support Group of PLWHA, who are running a four-hectare farm in Akpegede village in Otukpo. The support group not only provides nutritional support but also encourages members to take their medications and adhere to their clinic visits, including covering for each other for farm work when there is a clinic day to attend.

The farmland was donated three years ago to the support group accessing IHVN/PEPFAR HIV medication, care and support at the General Hospital, Otukpo by Chief Ondoko Ocheibi on behalf of his

community. The donation was to enable them to feed and care for their members “and to show our appreciation to the Government of United States and the Institute of Human Virology, Nigeria which located a treatment support program close to us,” adds Jeff Ondoko, on behalf of his father. “We have seen how HIV has wasted the lives of many people in Akpegede including two of my siblings. Sowe resolved in my family to help the people living with HIV in our community.” He says his late brother and sister were not as fortunate to access free HIV medicines as one of his younger brothers, Elaigwu, who is still alive and serves as the farm manager of the Otabo Support Group.

Aaron Alechenu Ali-Abubakar, 43, is the President of the 200-member support group. “The main crop in our

farm is cassava because from it we can get a lot of things to share amongst our members. From this farm, we have garri and cassava to eat; fresh leafs from the cassava stems to make soup because we learnt it contains a lot of iron and vitamins.”

Ali-Abubakar, who began antiretroviral therapy (ART) in 2006 when his CD4 count was 180, says that with the drug, care and support from IHVN/PEPFAR in collaboration with Otabo Care Givers, the non-governmental organization that established the group, “most of us can now live normal lives and even think of going to farm.” With the ARV medication he receives and an adequate diet, his CD4 count has gone up to 650.

Mrs. Christiana Oga who founded and coordinates the Otabo Care Givers – a non-governmental organization that is supported by

America Seeks Partnerships with Strong Democracies Says Ambassador Sanders

Citing the strong friendship between the people of America and the people of Nigeria, the U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria in a major policy speech at Umaru Musa Yar'Adua University (UYU) urged Nigeria “to continue strengthening its democracy and institute election reforms, to hold free and fair elections in 2011, and to rely on its constitution and constitutional processes, especially during difficult times.”

Amb. Robin R. Sanders also assured her UYU audience “that the people and Government of the United States of America share in your prayers and good wishes for the speedy recovery of President Yar’Adua.”

The Ambassador was on a three-day trip through north Nigeria, beginning at the palace of the Sultan of Sokoto, where she helped flag-off the Sultan’s Polio Immunization Plus Days. At the Sokoto “American Corner” she met Nigerian alumni of several U.S. exchange programs. In Birnin Kebbi she met with the Emir of Gwandu and the Deputy Governor and toured U.S. funded projects at Sir Yahaya Hospital, part of the American government’s \$460 million PEPFAR HIV/AIDS program for Nigeria. At UYU in Katsina Amb. Sanders and the Governor of Katsina State also signed a memorandum describing ongoing U.S. and Katsina cooperation in education, agriculture, and health.



U.S. Ambassador Robin Renée Sanders administers oral polio vaccine at the Sokoto launch of Child Health Week supported by the Sultan of Sokoto (Standing behind the Ambassador)
© Christine McNab

America's Partnership With Nations With Strong Democracies

U.S. Ambassador Robin Renée Sanders, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina

(as delivered)

Assalaamu alaykum. Barkanku da safe.

It is my honor to join so many distinguished individuals – academics, scholars, and religious community leaders, and students this morning.

It is also a pleasure to be back in Katsina again. I come at a time when I know your thoughts are with your President, the former Governor of Katsina, for whom this beautiful new university was named. Be assured that the people and Government of the United States of America share in your prayers and good wishes for his speedy recovery, as do I personally.

Therefore, it is a special privilege, to speak here this morning. The city of Katsina has its own proud history as a

center for education, dating back through colonial rule when the first secondary school in the whole of northern Nigeria was established here. Even before that, Katsina and Daura are recognized everywhere as historic seats of Islamic culture and learning.

Just a few minutes ago, the Governor and I signed a Memorandum in which the U.S. Mission to Nigeria and Katsina State Government agreed to continue our discussions on ways to cooperate and expand projects in education, agriculture and health – including, in particular, assistance to help the University increase its books and resources in the library and access to information through technology resources. We live today in a global village – as we have so often heard – meaning we all need to work at being better global

citizens. With programs like these, the American people are reaching out to establish links with states like Katsina to build bridges of mutual understanding and respect.

As President Obama has said during his speech in Cairo, America and the American people have embarked on a New Beginning not only with the Muslim world but with all diverse people of the world. Because, we, as Americans, must do several things better:

- We must respect our global neighbors, as I offer my respects to you here today;
- We must listen without arrogance or malice, so that our children can grow up in a peaceful and empowering environment;
- We must learn from one another, so that we can walk together and work together hand-

Continued on page 10



The Sultan of Sokoto and U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Robin Renée Sanders launch Child Health Week.
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U.S. Mission Nigeria Signs Memorandum of Discussion to Expand Projects in Education, Agriculture and Health in Katsina State

The U.S. Mission in Nigeria has signed a Memorandum of Discussion (MOD) with the Katsina State Government in support of the latter's efforts to improve agriculture, healthcare and education. Speaking during the signing ceremony conducted at Umaru Musa Yar'Adua University, Katsina, (UMYU), U.S. Ambassador, Robin Renee Sanders said the U.S. Government is committed to assisting African countries, including Nigeria, to solve their numerous developmental challenges.

Ambassador Sanders said the selection of Katsina State as one of the beneficiaries of this gesture was informed by the genuine desire of the governor to improve the lives of his people, pointing to ongoing agricultural, healthcare and education projects between the various U.S. Government agencies and the state government.

She described the signing ceremony as a significant step towards strengthening the existing relationship between the U.S. Mission and Katsina State Government, and called on both parties to work towards its successful implementation. She expressed her determination to facilitate the sustenance of this relationship for mutual benefit to the people of the United States and Katsina State.

In his remarks shortly after signing the MOD, the Katsina State Governor Barrister Ibrahim Shehu Shema commended the U.S. Mission for offering to assist



Ambassador Sanders exchanges signed MOD with Gov. Shema of Katsina State

his administration in its efforts to improve the lives of the people, and urged Ambassador Sanders not to relent in bringing such rare opportunities to Katsina State. He assured the Ambassador that all the ongoing projects would be completed to logical conclusion.

The Memorandum of Discussion covers three key sectors, namely agriculture; healthcare and education under which the U.S. Mission will facilitate training and provision of infrastructure for the state's agriculture and healthcare sectors, and assist the state university identify U.S. academic institutions that will be interested in forming linkages and partnerships to improve the standards of the state tertiary institutions.

Ambassador Sanders later delivered a lecture on America's Partnership with Nations with Strong Democracies at the Auditorium of UMYU. The lecture, which was attended by the Governor and many members of his cabinet as well as over 500 students and lecturers of UMYU and other

neighboring academic institutions, outlined the foreign policy objectives of the Obama administration, especially the new partnership with the Muslim world.

Ambassador Sanders emphasized the administration's commitment to building partnerships with countries and governments that have a genuine desire to improve their economies and build infrastructure needed to raise the standard of living of the people. She also expressed the administration's preference for dialogue with those opposed to its policies with a view to promoting mutual understanding that can pave way for a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Ambassador Sanders used the occasion to highlight the four key pillars of the U.S. Mission activities in Nigeria, namely, investing in People, Economic Growth and Development, Governing Justly and Democratically, and Peace and Security, and expressed delight that all of these have been captured in President Yar'Adua administration's Seven Point Agenda.

Farming Nourishes PLWHA...

Continued from page 9



Manager Eliagwu

IHVN/PEPAR to provide home-based care services to clients in Otukpo – says her NGO is expanding opportunities on the farm to include the growing of vegetables, groundnuts, maize, beans and tomatoes. “In fact we are intending to have a piggery in the farm as soon as we receive support from individuals and organizations that can share this burden of providing hope to vulnerable members of our society.” She reveals that because of complaints of lack of money and adequate diet to keep fit, it became

desirable to acquire farmland. “We approached the Akpegede community for land and they freely gave us this farm to care [for] their vulnerable folks.” For example, Aladi Inyanda, 30, and her three-year old son would have succumbed to street begging to survive but for the IHVN/PEPFAR collaboration with Otabo Care Givers. Aladi is jobless and the father of her son has run away because of her HIV status. “But thank God that my son and I receive free HIV drugs from General Hospital, Otukpo and care from Otabo. Look at my son; he has added weight because of the Plumpy Nuts (Donated by Clinton HIV AIDS Initiative – CHAI) I receive here.”

PEPFAR PMTCT Helps Keep Babies HIV Free...

Continued from page 5

group of about 60 HIV+ women that universal access is not about programs and clinics alone. “It depends on women like you to encourage expectant mothers in your communities to seek testing for HIV during pregnancy and to take advantage of counseling and support services available through PMTCT programs.”



Ambassador Sanders making remarks during a PMTCT HIV/AIDS site visit in Abuja on December 3, 2009

known for in Nigeria and in the U.S.

Based on these same ideals, President Obama promised in Cairo that the U.S. would pursue fresh partnerships with governments, citizens, community organizations, and with religious, business, and youth leaders in the areas of education, economic development, science and technology, and health. These same areas are the focus of the work that the U.S. Mission to Nigeria is doing to ensure we have A New Beginning here between the people of the United States of America and the people of Nigeria, in general, and in Katsina State in particular. My government has outlined what the New Beginning priorities are for Africa. They are:

- Promoting and strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law;
- Encouraging long-term

Continued from page 11

America's Partnership With Nations ...

Continued from page 8

in-hand;

- But most of all we must understand each other, so that your nation and my nation – meaning Muslim and Christian Nigerians as well as Muslim and Christian Americans and all those around the world – can live in peace, harmony, and prosperity.

President Obama has often acknowledged the world's intellectual debt to Islam for its promotion of racial equality, its respect for other religions and for its historic contributions to education, innovation, science and medicine--things your University is beginning to be

development and growth;

- Assisting in the prevention and resolution of conflicts;
- Working closely together with African nations to address both old and new challenges.

In pursuing these goals, however, what is most important for us as Americans is to remember to listen and to learn from you – meaning the students, civil society, the press and our government partners. I am speaking here today in order to begin what I hope will be a growing dialogue between the U.S. and the citizens of Nigeria.

We all know that solutions to Africa's problems, helping the Continent to reach its full potential, won't come quickly or easily and must come from Africans themselves. The same thing rings true for Nigeria. However, I can today reaffirm the commitment of my government

and the American people to work together with you under the U.S.-Nigeria Framework for Partnership under which the Memorandum I signed with your government falls, which will also assist in the areas of health, education, agriculture and much needed election reform. Overall, President Obama has promised that we would work with countries like Nigeria to strengthen democracy and governance; human rights, especially the rights of women; support religious freedoms; fight corruption, promote economic development, and enhance region-wide peace and security. Now, I want to say a little bit about the Niger Delta and your amnesty program. The international community has been pleased with the effort to date to try to restore peace in the region and we encourage movement on reintegration and rehabilitation

so that there is a comprehensive approach to lasting stability in the area.

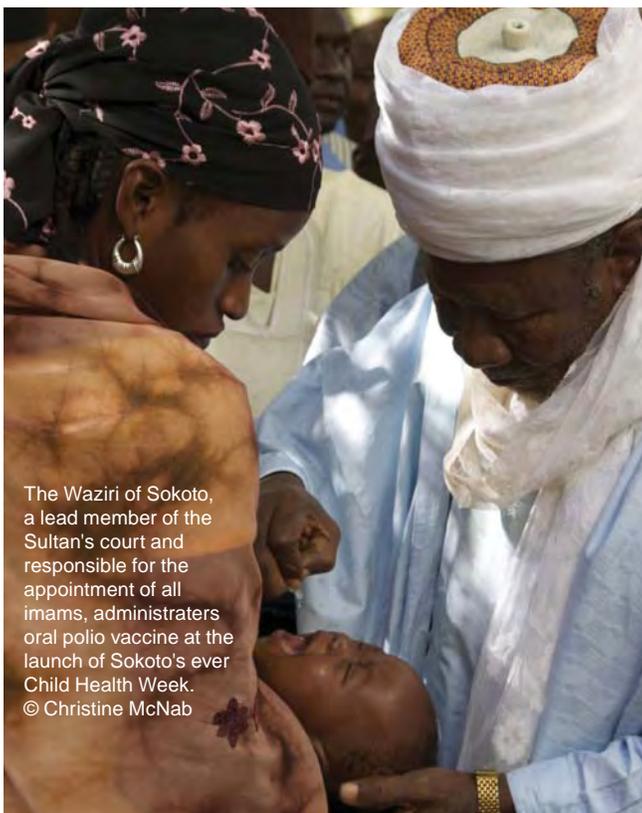
I have worked in Muslim countries from Sudan to Senegal and am committed to the same hopeful message articulated by President Obama - we want to build bridges of mutual understanding and respect, particularly with the Muslim world. Traveling in this country I have

met with many Nigerians who hold similar views. Many of the goals, aspirations, and broad visions for the future expressed by President Obama are things I know you also want for Nigeria – especially a government of, by and for the people, that respects the constitution, the rights of minorities and all religions, that is committed to combating corruption and willing to put the interests of the people above those of politics.

In the last two decades, dozens of African countries have embraced democratic rule by implementing electoral reforms, conducting free and fair elections and expanding the freedom of people to associate and discuss publicly what might be best for the future of their country. Passionate political debate is a necessary and a healthy sign of any mature democracy, and just such a debate is currently underway in Nigeria. In the newspapers, on television, in the chambers of government and on the streets, Nigerians are talking about their common future. The United States wishes you well in this dialogue, and we are confident that your laws, your Constitution, and your country's hard-won commitment to democracy will all ensure that Nigeria has a bright future. But keep in mind this is not easy.

A democratic government is one that strives to represent the best interests and goals of its people. President Obama has challenged leaders all over the world to abide by the highest standards of public trust (and I quote):

A government of the people



The Waziri of Sokoto, a lead member of the Sultan's court and responsible for the appointment of all imams, administrators oral polio vaccine at the launch of Sokoto's ever Child Health Week.
© Christine McNab

and by the people sets a single standard for all who would hold power: You must maintain your power through consent, not coercion; you must respect the rights of minorities and participate with a spirit of tolerance and compromise; you must place the interests of your people and the legitimate workings of the political process above your party. Without these ingredients, elections alone do not make true democracy.

I have heard from Nigerians that these are your values as well. Although the words were said by the President of the United States, I believe we all can agree that they ring true for each and every person for every nation - and for each and every one of you who believes in the democratic experience.

Another important pillar of democracy involves fighting corruption. Money and power can corrupt even the best among us. According to the World Bank \$1 trillion dollars is paid every year around the world in bribes, and the United Nations has reported that over \$400 billion dollars has been looted from within Africa alone. This is public money -- your money, and money which is not spent on health care, education, roads or job creation; ...this is money not spent on improving the lives of those people that government claims to represent.

In Katsina, I know that your Government is doing wonderful things to address these key social sector issues. This new University and today's Memorandum of Discussion that your Governor and I have just signed are a testament to this commitment to democratic principles.



During Sokoto's first-ever Child Health Week, vouchers for insecticide treated nets are distributed along with polio vaccine. These nets protect families from mosquito bites, which can transmit malaria.
© Christine McNab

Another pillar of democracy, is respect for all religions. Nigeria is a religiously diverse nation with rich traditions from both the Muslim and Christian faiths. My President has stressed that "people in every country should be free to choose and live their faith based upon the persuasion of their minds, hearts and souls." There is a great deal of respect for religion in Nigeria – mosques and churches stand side by side in villages and towns, as Muslims and Christians study side by side in peace and harmony, underscoring the freedom of religion that is firmly anchored in your Constitution.

Last week, was Worlds AIDS Day and it was celebrated around the globe. The U.S. contributes enormously to HIV/AIDS programs here in Katsina and all throughout Nigeria with an annual contribution of over \$460 million.

In this region I know that agriculture is important, so I want to assure you that we have focused on that sector for Katsina under this new Memorandum of Discussion with your state government. My government has committed to providing over \$25 million each year to support food security programs in Nigeria and

will be looking to enhance our agriculture programs in Katsina State under our food security efforts.

The strong friendship between the people of America and the people of Nigeria exists because we share common principles of justice and progress; tolerance and dignity; and respect and understanding. Through this partnership signed today we will continue to support you here in Katsina and throughout Nigeria, as you-- a diverse people --work to strengthen your democracy and institute election reforms , as we count on you to hold free and fair elections in 2011, and rely on your constitution and your constitutional processes especially during difficult times.

Again, for the students here today, I wish you well in your studies and I look forward to this new partnership we have with the University. I also look forward to our enhanced work in health and agriculture here in this great state of Katsina. I restate my prayers for a speedy recovery of your President and I leave you today with best wishes for the nation.

Thank you!

Shuk-ran, Nagode.

Sharon Draper addressing the students at the U.S. Embassy in Abuja



Global Reading Program Promotes U.S.-Nigeria Educational Partnership

Reading Across Continents is a cross-cultural reading program that promotes a reading culture and builds mutual understanding among American, Nigerian, and Ghanaian youths. As part of the program, ten U.S. high school students spent three weeks in Nigeria with students of Loyola Jesuit.

Reading Across Continents exposes participating students to the historical, political and social factors that influence and enhance the understanding of selected novels. Students are expected to have read three novels each set in one of their countries. A

central part of the program is to develop literacy leaders who are selected from each national group. It also aims to achieve two objectives – stimulate interest in reading and to stimulate interest in culture among students. This year’s program features the novels of three renowned authors - NY Times Best Selling Author Sharon Draper, internationally acclaimed Nigerian author Chinua Achebe and award winning Ghanaian author Professor Ama Ata Aidoo.

Sharon Draper and the U.S. student participants visited the U.S. Embassy in Abuja on October 26, where Ms. Draper presented

an autographed copy of her book *Copper Sun* to the U.S. Mission. In her remarks, she encouraged the students to learn from the positive traits demonstrated by the lead character of *Copper Sun*. U.S. Ambassador Robin Sanders also met with the students and participated in the book presentation.

Reading Across Continents is fully funded and sponsored by United States Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, while the International Reading Association (IRA), a non-governmental association organizes the program.

U.S. Mission Nigeria and Jos Interfaith Communities Refurbish Dadin Kowa Peace Zone Recreation Center through Voluntary Service

Volunteers from throughout the Jos interfaith community joined U.S. Mission personnel on Saturday, October 17 for an Interfaith Day of Service to clean up and refurbish the Dadin Kowa Peace Zone for recreational use by the youth of Jos.

The event, sponsored by the U.S. Mission, was attended by the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), Mr. Dundas McCullough, and a Representative of the Plateau State Commissioner for Youth and Sports Development, Mrs. Eunice Mailafiya.

During the five hours of activities, volunteers installed a volleyball net, replaced and repaired several basketball nets and rims, painted new lines on the courts and cleaned up the surrounding areas.

DCM McCullough said the work done demonstrated outstanding teamwork and team spirit. "This has been just one more example of how the partnership between Americans and Nigerians can produce positive results," he stated.

The recreation center refurbishment showed how much volunteers coming together from different backgrounds, different countries, and different cultures, but with a common purpose and goal are able to accomplish by working together.

"There is a tremendous sense of satisfaction in volunteering, and contributing back to your



DCM Dundas McCullough and Mrs. Eunice Mailafiya cutting the ribbon to declare the refurbished Basketball Court Open

community to create a space that you can enjoy with others," DCM McCullough emphasized.

DCM McCullough also presented basketballs, volleyballs and soccer balls to representatives of the Peace Zones and Peace Clubs. Responding to the gesture, Mrs. Eunice Mailafiya praised the U.S. Mission community service initiative and promised to help the youth in Jos and the environs to sustain the concept as a means of uniting ethnic groups to ensure peace in Plateau State.

This activity supports a USAID-funded Basketball for Peace program initiative. This program operates in Kaduna, Kano, Plateau, Rivers and Delta states by establishing "Peace Zones" and "Peace Clubs" as a means of reducing violence among youth and providing an alternative activity, namely basketball, as a way to attract and integrate youth from the community. Both

Christian and Muslim youth participate in the program as well as staff from the state Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Peace Clubs have been established in selected secondary schools near each Peace Zone (basketball court). Each Club has regular monthly meetings to organize activities to engage students and other youth and families living in the community.

Schools host cultural events including drama skits, the writing of poems and peace songs for prizes, cultural dance, peace messages and slogans. These schools have become the center of events and are role models for other schools and youth in the area.

Plateau state has seven Peace Zones with five located in the Capital city of Jos. The Plateau State Government has pledged to establish "Peace Clubs" in all the secondary schools in the State.

Dan Hoyle's Solo Show "Tings Dey Happen" Receives Critical Acclaim in Nigeria

Former American Fulbright Scholar Dan Hoyle returned to Nigeria in September 2009 on a U.S. State Department sponsored tour performing his critically acclaimed solo-performance, "Tings Dey Happen." The show's tour, part of the State Department's Public Speakers' Series, was staged in Calabar, Lagos, Abuja, Jos and Bauchi. The Jos performance was part of the First American Film week held in the Plateau State capital.

Dan Hoyle's performance is an account of his experiences in the Niger Delta while on a Fulbright scholarship researching oil politics in 2005. While there, he mixed with the people most affected by the discovery of oil in the region and learnt to speak Pidgin English. "Pidgin English," he said, "is a way of understanding what is happening in the Niger Delta."

The show attracted an audience

from all levels of society, including Nigerian government officials, multinational oil company managers, civil society groups, artists and intellectuals, as well as the motorbike drivers, bus conductors, roadside preachers, market women, day laborers, aspiring entrepreneurs, youth group leaders and fisherman whose lives and shared experiences inspired much of what later became "Tings Dey Happen".

Most attendees at the show said "Hoyle's ability to recreate all he has absorbed in the Niger Delta and his combination of mime, body language, local slang, voice, facial gestures and sound-bites to create the wholeness of the Niger Delta situation is spectacular." Mr. Afolabi Adesanya, Director General of the National Film Institute in Jos, praised Dan Hoyle's skills as a solo artist remarking, "For those of us from the

theater industry, we know that it's not an easy thing to do a one-man show that involves so many characters. We must appreciate the extraordinary skills and intelligence of Dan Hoyle for creating this show."

"Tings Dey Happen" received rave reviews from Nigerian entertainment writers, most of whom described the show as entertaining and an insightful treatment of oil politics in the Niger Delta. They also hoped that the humor and empathy would help push forward a meaningful outcome in the ongoing dialogue between the Nigerian government, its citizens, especially those in the Niger Delta, and oil companies.

A native San Franciscan, Dan Hoyle is also the creator of two other hit shows, "Circumnavigator" and "Florida 2004: The Big Bummer", both performed in his unique form of journalistic theater. The shows each enjoyed extended runs at The Marsh, a breeding ground for new performance in San Francisco. His new show, "The Real Americans," debuts at The Marsh in January, 2010.



Dan Hoyle
entertaining his
Nigerian audience

U.S. Embassy College Fair Offers Students Tools for 21st Century Success in Education



US recruiter Rebecca Solomon explains Education USA to students at the EAC 2009 College and Career Fair in Abuja

U.S. Mission Educational Advising Center (EAC) held its 11th College and Career Fair in Abuja from October 06 -07, 2009 with Rebecca Solomon of Western Michigan University describing the event as “impressive, well organized and a great opportunity for Nigerian students to know all about studying in the United States.” More than one thousand high school students from over forty secondary schools attended the undergraduate fair which kicked-off on Tuesday, October 6, 2009 at the Nikon Luxury hotel, Abuja.

Through the EAC Abuja, Nigerian students in 2009 received

a total of \$1.7 million USD in financial aid from different U.S. educational institutions.

In declaring the EAC Career and College Fair open, Edward Flynn, Public Diplomacy Officer underscored the theme of this year’s fair -“EducationUSA: Tool for 21st Century Success,” stating the importance of the fair and how it seeks to enhance and invest in people as well as solidify the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Nigeria and the United States.

Five states side recruiters from Penn State University, Western Michigan University Suffolk University, Hult Business School

and Case Western University; including twenty -five alumni representing various U.S. Colleges and Universities, provided information on school admissions and the process of studying in the United States. A U.S. Mission Consular Officer also provided guidance on student visa and other travel arrangements for students planning to study in the U.S during the event.

The Graduate Fair, which for the first time was open to the public, was held the next day on October 7, 2009 with over three hundred and fifty participants from various professional bodies and institutions. In addition to U.S. university recruiters, alumni, and Ford Fellows, participants from Nigerian institutions and academia participated in this event. Prominent among the participants were the former Senate President of Nigeria Senator (Dr.) Ken Nnamani and a representative of the Executive Director of Petroleum Trust Development Fund Nasir Danupawa.

The U.S. Mission Charge d’ Affaires in his opening remarks highlighted some of the ways that the US government has collaborated with the government of Nigeria in educational development.

The Petroleum Development Trust Fund (PTDF) and Nikon Luxury Hotel Abuja collaborated with the U.S. Mission in sponsoring this year’s fair.

You Can Succeed in Business if you have Passion and Commitment, U.S. Speaker Tells Nigeria Business Women



Elaine Robnett-Moore teaching jewelry and bead making at the National Women Center, Abuja

The art of Jewelry making and how to trade professional service for goods and services, were some of the tricks of the trade U.S. Speaker Ms. Elaine Robnett-Moore taught more than 100 women interested in small business enterprises. They attended a lecture on jewelry making and business development at the National Center for Women Development, Abuja on October 9. The event was sponsored by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Mission to Nigeria in collaboration with the National Center for Women Development.

Elaine Robnett-Moore is a designer and creator of Jewelry art with more than 20 years

experience. She is President of the Beads Society of Greater Washington, D.C.

In a presentation titled “Success by Design,” Elaine said commitment, passion and consistency in whatever you do were the major ingredients for succeeding in business. Do what you love and there will be those who love what you do,” Elaine told the participants.

She noted that several of the cash needs in starting up a business can be traded off with professional services in return. The women who attended the lecture were from diverse backgrounds and included members of the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA).

Omelogo Nnadi of Channels Television said the encouragement she got from the speaker convinced her that she could succeed in business. More so, this workshop made her believe that there is something someone could do and Elaine’s personal experience is a good place to start Omelogo stressed.

A year ago, Elaine held similar workshops in Calabar, Lagos, Jos and Abuja. She proceeds to Kaduna for a three-day hands-on training workshop on jewelry making. Elaine would conclude her tour of Nigeria with another two-day workshop on jewelry making at the National Center for Women Development in Abuja.

Nigeria Has Made Progress in Ten Years - U.S. Chargè McCullough

While problems remain in energy, media independence and the criminality in the Niger Delta area, Nigeria has made improvements in the last ten years with several new institutions showing great potentials for national development according to U.S. Chargè d'Affaires

Abuja Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ABUCCIMA) to sensitize members of the diplomatic community on the forth coming "Made-in-Nigeria Domestic Trade Fair" slated for Friday, October 9, in Abuja.

Looking back as a returning diplomat to Nigeria, McCollough

attributed to the opportunities and potentials in Nigeria.

McCollough is making his second tour to Nigeria as Chargè after a first tour as the U.S. Embassy Economic Counselor in 1998 in Lagos.

The Heads of Mission from Spain, Japan, Mexico, Malaysia, Brazil, Tanzania, Netherlands,

and Ghana attended the meeting while South Africa, Jamaica, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea sent representatives.

Established in 1986, ABUCCIMA works to promote and protect the interest of commerce and industry within the Federal Capital Territory and to encourage greater understanding, cohesion and unity among businesses

and business organizations. The agency is affiliated to the Nigerian Association of Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture.

Read full text of the Chargè speech at: http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/prog_10082009.html



Chargè McCullough speaking at the Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry meeting

Dundas McCullough.

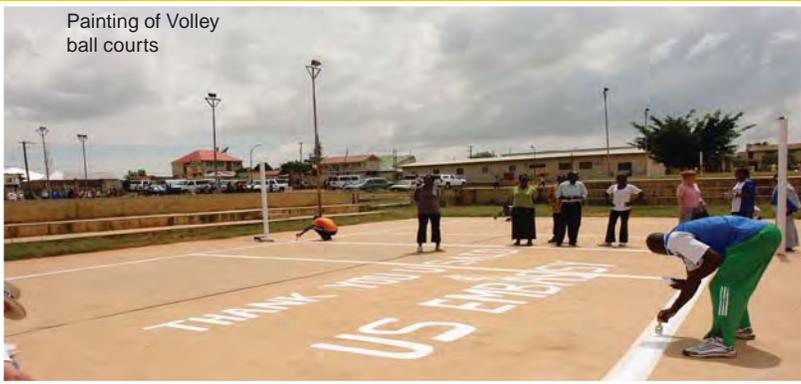
"Even on corruption, there has been relative progress,... from a dead last in 2000 by Transparency International rankings to 121 out of 180 in 2008" said McCullough.

The Embassy Chargè spoke yesterday at a Diplomatic Luncheon organized by the

noted that major positive changes have taken place within the aviation industry, education, banking and monetary policy, the telecommunication sector while U.S. corporate giants like General Electric, Microsoft, Cisco, John Deere and IBM have dramatically increased their business presence in Nigeria, a sign McCollough

U.S. Mission to Nigeria-Organized Interfaith Day of Service in Jos

Painting of Volley ball courts



Fixing basketball hoops



Painting of basketball courts



DCM Dundas McCullough presenting basketballs to representatives of the Peace Zones.



IRC Membership News

The mission of the Information Resource Centers (IRCs) is to advance the Mission's Public Diplomacy goal of having American values respected in Nigeria by identifying, partnering with, and strategically disseminating information to Nigeria's institutions and contacts that influence policy and public opinion on issues central to U.S. interests.

Vol. 2 No. 10

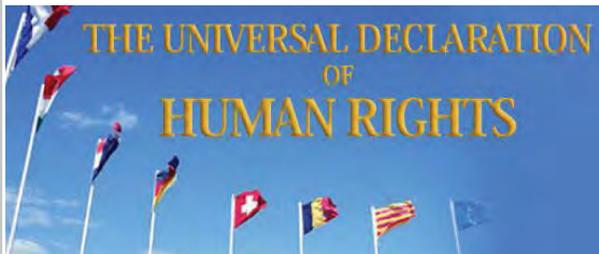
November/December 2009



Read the latest information on the United States' participation at COP-15, plus your chance to comment on the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen. http://www.america.gov/cop_15.html. There are more relevant articles on climate change at http://www.america.gov/climate_resources.html



President Obama has accepted the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. Read the acceptance speech here at <http://is.gd/5jdHm>. Learn more about Obama the award with videos, photos and other remarks at <http://is.gd/5jdDH>



This seminal document helped define human rights, but the future of those rights depends on the efforts of governments, nongovernmental organizations and individuals the world over. Read more at <http://www.america.gov/un-declaration.html>

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