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Battling Modern Day Slavery

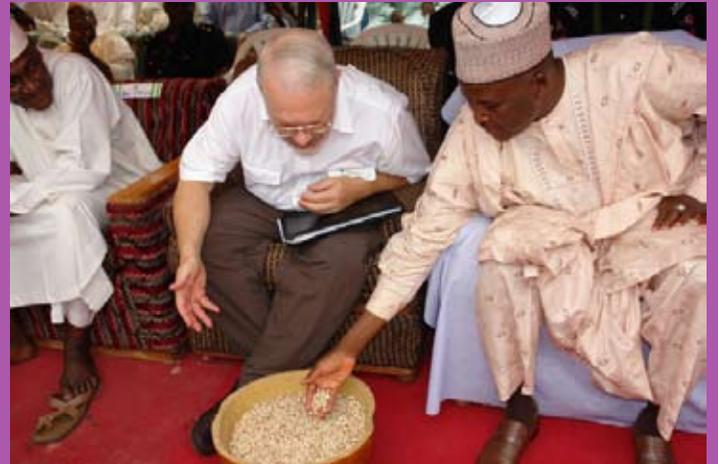
*Traffickers Use
Unsolicited Juicy
Job Offers and
the Promise of
City Life with
Easy Money to
Exploit the
Unwary*

Recently, water borehole projects and seed storage facilities constructed with funds from the American people in collaboration with two state governments and the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture were commissioned in Kaduna, Kano and Sokoto States. *Crossroads* Editor Idika U. Onyukwu captured some of the exciting moments at the various events.

American Projects Improve Lives in Sokoto, Kano and Kaduna States



Ambassador Robin Sanders prepares to commission the Mallamawa borehole project accompanied by Sokoto State Commissioner for Information Dahiru Maishanu and Goronyo LGA Chairman, Sokoto.



U.S. Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Walter Pflaumer and Kano State Acting Governor Engr. Abdullahi Gwarzo inspect samples of grains during the commissioning of the Sarina seed storage facility in Kano.



Ambassador Robin Sanders accompanied by Acting Kaduna State Governor proceed to commission the Zaria Seed Storage Facility in Kaduna Yakowa accompanied by the representative of the Emir of Zaria



A community member of the Goronyo local Government Area turns off water from the borehole spicket. The borehole is situated beside the local Mosque for easy access and safety.



Excited members of the eight cooperative societies that will run the Sarina Seed Storage Facility, Kano, pose in front of facility.



A traditional singer performing with his group in appreciation of the Mallamawa borehole project funded by the American people

Ambassador's Notes



U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria
Robin Renée Sanders

Working U.S. - Nigeria Partnership

Democratically. By working together to create strong partnerships starting right from the community level, I believe together we can tackle even the deepest and most stubborn challenges facing ordinary Nigerians.

I was reminded of this and at the same time given renewed optimism during my recent visit to Sokoto, Guzau, Katsina and Zaria to commission three U.S. funded borehole projects and two seed storage facilities, and to inspect a U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief supported comprehensive HIV/AIDS care public sector hospital at the Katsina General Hospital. The hospital is supported by GHAIN (the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative Nigeria) and implemented by Family Health International. In each of these projects, the collaboration among the United States through U.S. Mission in Nigeria, and the State, local governments, and community leaders was significant. These projects are tangible examples of the benefits resulting from the strong friendship between the people of America and the people of Nigeria.

In education, we are proud to help talented Nigerian youth study at high quality American secondary schools, colleges and universities. We know that when they return to Nigeria, they will use the skills, knowledge and experiences they gain in the United States to advance Nigeria's development.

Access to reliable energy supplies is a high priority for Nigerians. The U.S. EXIM Bank is collaborating with the Federal Government, commercial banks and other relevant private sector groups to develop alternative sources for funding Nigeria's energy needs.

We are proud to work under the "U.S.-Nigeria Framework for Partnership" with the many dynamic individuals and institutions within Nigerian society at all levels to make a positive difference for the Nigerian people. This edition of *Crossroads* -- my second since arriving in Nigeria, -- tells the story of several of these successful private and public partnerships. Long live the friendship and partnerships between the people of our two nations.

Ambassador Robin Renée Sanders

Dear *Crossroads* Readers, I often tell my audiences that the goal of the U.S. relationship with Nigeria is to build a partnership supported by four principal pillars: Investing in People, Economic Growth and Development, Peace and Security, and Governing Justly and

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Be Wary of People Who Promise Good Life in Cities and Foreign Countries, NAPTIP Executive Secretary Carol Ndaguba Warns



Mrs. Carol Ndaguba, Executive Secretary National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons

The United States estimates that more than 800,000 people are trafficked yearly across international borders and even more within their own countries. In Nigeria, children as young as six years of age are used, for example, as farm hands in cocoa plantations and laborers at quarry sites, contributing to the country's listing as a major source, transit and destination country for trafficked persons. Carol Ndaguba, Executive Secretary National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), spoke with *Crossroads* Editor Idika U. Onyukwu about the challenges. She warns youngsters and parents in particular to "look before you leap" saying the promise of a "good life" abroad or in the cities may just be the beginning of slavery.

Crossroads: The 2008 Trafficking in Persons Report again identifies Nigeria as a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking. Why and what are the challenges?

Carol Ndaguba: You have asked me two questions and I do not know whether they are related but let

me answer the first question. Well, Nigeria will remain as a source, and destination for trafficked person for a long time until the whole crime is eradicated. But what I will think is that at least NAPTIP has been able to create a lot of awareness. We have not just created awareness, but NAPTIP has been able to apprehend a lot of people and intercept a lot of victims

being taken across Nigerian borders and it is on a daily basis. We get these people and NAPTIP has been able to arrest a lot of traffickers and we are prosecuting them. In fact, we have over 60 cases in court now and we are still investigating quite a lot of arrested traffickers. We have gotten 25 traffickers jailed. So you can see it looks as if these things are on the

increase because of the awareness we have created. But really, I believe that it is on the decrease and very soon (a few years) we will not be talking about trafficking the way it is being talked about now.

Question: Creating awareness goes with enlightenment on the issue of human trafficking in Nigeria, what is NAPTIP's message to the public?

Answer: You find that people who get trafficked or parents who give out their children to traffickers actually know these people either as relations or friends and this makes it very easy for the traffickers. It will be difficult for a total stranger to come and tell you I am taking your child away to get him or her a job and you will agree. Because these are people they trust and are close to as neighbors and even their own children, it is easier for the traffickers. We have seen sisters trafficking sisters, so my advice to especially parents is this: it is not easier abroad than it is here (in Nigeria). When people tell you they are taking your children abroad to work, do not believe what they say. We have this message in one of our enlightenment posters, 'Look Beneath the Surface.' The promise of a good job is never the truth as victims end up being badly exploited. And you know the rest, victims end up being sexually exploited, turned into prostitutes. So in our enlightenment program, we keep telling parents to be less gullible. Parents should pay more attention to their children; they should bring them up by themselves. Eventually, it is better for them. Education, if not totally free now, is within reach. Most people can afford to give their children basic education in the villages, in the cities

and anywhere they are. We also advise parents not to be greedy. We tell parents to take things slowly; eventually they will overcome and not listen to these people who promise them sudden wealth. Some Nigerian sisters come back from Europe and tell their parents that they are taking their younger sisters to secure jobs at their work places. But they all eventually end up working as prostitutes in Europe. We try to impress on parents to look beneath the surface. Some of the parents we interviewed told us that their children have been gone for close to five, six, seven years and they have not heard from them. Our question to them is, can it be possible for your child to be up to some good after this long number of years without a word?

Q: We see on television most times returning victims being paraded and the bulk of them come from a particular state in the country, has anything changed?

A: Well, the situation has not changed. Most of the girls working abroad in prostitution are mostly from Edo and Delta States. But what I try to impress on people is when we talk about trafficking, we are always thinking about those people trafficked abroad for sexual exploitation. But there are a lot of such things going on here in Nigeria and no state is sacrosanct. Everybody has a form of trafficking on the other. You traffic people for sexual exploitation, you traffic people for labor exploitation or traffic people for domestic servitude, for street begging, for hawking on the streets. You find that most states are guilty of this, not just Edo or Delta States. We have people from other states who go to Saudi Arabia, to Libya, to Morocco and to all sorts of places and they are not from Edo or Delta States.

Q: As a motorist traveling from Abuja to Suleja, you notice this new trend of very small kids cracking stones from sunup to sun down. What



NAPTIP Intelligence Officer Amina Turaki leading a suspected trafficker Hussein Ibrahim to court for prosecution.

is NAPTIP doing to stop this kind of exploitation?

A: That is why I said what I said before; the exploitation of minors is in effect an offence under the law. For example in Ogun State, you find children working in the stone quarries. These children work almost 24 hours [a day], badly beaten up, given very little food and working under harsh weather, and you will be appalled at the ages of these children. The agency has been involved in repatriating hundreds of these children we pick up in the quarries. You find that some are even six, seven years old. You can just imagine the maltreatment of these children.

Q: Are their parents aware?

A: I think they are aware but you see what I think is that they pay the parents some money and these people are so poor that such meager sums mean a lot to them. The kids we intercept here [in Abuja] being moved from one state to another, are taken in their hundreds to go and work in farms in South West region states, mostly in cocoa farms. There are also other forms of child labor and lots of them are transported for domestic servitude. That is why the amendment to the NAPTIP Act has criminalized the issue of taking minors into your houses as domestic help, especially people not related to you. Why the law says this is you find that this [arrangement] fits trafficking in persons a lot. Because they [traffickers] bring these kids from neighboring countries like Togo and Cotonou, and bring them into Nigeria to work as house-help. You find out that people whose job



Nigerian children trafficked to Benin Republic and Equatorial Guinea being handed over to members of the Nigeria Police to be re-united with their families in Nigeria.

it is as their whole livelihood just distributing kids as house-help. If you need a house-help, you just call them or someone will tell you to contact “Mama Obiagele” or somebody who deals in distributing domestic servants and you can pick or choose from a pack of children as your house-help. You can image a situation like this. Instead of dealing in commodities, we are dealing with human beings and distributing them as cattle with nothing coming to these children. Because you do not know these children, the tendency is for these children to be maltreated and abused. You will be amazed at the number of reports we get at NAPTIP on a daily basis on the maltreatment of children.

First, these kids are not allowed to go to school. Second, they work from sunup to sundown, badly fed with little or no food, and beaten up at the slightest mistake. You will be amazed at how wicked some people can be. You see scars on the bodies of these children showing evidence of maltreatment and we get to see these children when cases like this are brought here and we pick-up the exploiter. So you can see that the issue of trafficking is so much in Nigeria. It is much worse here than what happens abroad.

Q: What examples have you set with these people you call “exploiters” of child labor?

A: We have not jailed anyone yet but we have investigated a lot of cases. Sometimes we end up removing the victim from them. But sometimes also we are a bit careful because this is not within our mandate seriously speaking. So until we amend our law, such abuses still fall under the Child Rights Act, and the Ministry of Women Affairs is charged with enforcing the Child Rights Act. However, NAPTIP is trying to see if this aspect of the law could be amended and added into the agency's area of influence. It is frustrating for people to bring such cases and you send them away because we do not have legal jurisdiction to handle such complaints. What we do is to send such cases to the Nigerian police or other relevant agencies for prosecution. We do not let them go scot-free. In places like Akwa-Ibom State, we have done enlightenment programs, advocacy visits and workshops. We found out that children are branded "witches." In fact, when a child is stubborn or is truant in school, such a child is said to be "possessed" and he or she is called a witch. And once they are branded "witches," they are beaten, starved and some are even killed and their parents are made to abandon the children. Sometimes you find about a hundred children abandoned and roaming the streets. These children become easy prey to traffickers. These are sometimes the kind of children sent in bulk to Central Africa to work in plantations and farms. So, trafficking of persons is quite common everywhere.

Q: What kind of assistance do you get as an agency?

A: We get external assistance from UNICEF, UNODC, the International Organization for Migration, the French, Swiss and Netherlands Embassies, the British High Commission and of course the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the American Bar Association. We also receive international assistance in integrating our victims like rehabilitation and so on. For example the American Bar Association has been of great assistance to NAPTIP towards that area.



Ambassador Mark P. Lagon, Director of U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons presents a plaque to Carol Ndaguba during the latter's courtesy visit to the NAPTIP office in Abuja.

Q: Last year at a press conference, NAPTIP announced with fan-fare the arrest of a prominent woman trafficker who carried her own obituary in the newspapers in order to evade arrest; what is the status of that case?

A: We arrested the lady and charged her again in court but before justice

could be delivered she died of HIV/AIDS complications. The trafficker is dead so we had to close the case.

Q: Tell us a little bit about yourself?

A: I am Mrs. Carol Ndaguba, a lawyer by profession and married with four grown-up children to veteran broadcaster Ikenna Ndaguba. Before being appointed the First Executive Secretary of NAPTIP, I was Director of Public Prosecution for the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Q: What has been the biggest challenge running NAPTIP?

A: My biggest challenge is not just one. It is difficult to pinpoint just one, but starting the Agency from scratch and bringing it to what it is today was perhaps a very big challenge. You can image an agency with nothing on ground, just an

announcement that I have been appointed the Executive Secretary of an agency and that was the beginning of NAPTIP. I had no office, no staff, no money, just me. So for me, that was a big challenge. And for four months NAPTIP operated from a one-room office at the Federal Secretariat. We were about ten pioneering staff then and I had to pull relevant people from the civil service to work with me. For me, that has been one of my biggest challenges. Only last week, I sat back and asked myself how did we get this far? Then I said to my staff, you all really need a pat on the back. I really needed to make a statement here as a woman in a country like Nigeria given a position many would say is in a man's world. Some said it is a law enforcement agency; a man should be the "appropriate" candidate for the job. So if you see this as a big challenge then, I am happy that I

overcame it.

Q: Nigeria is still classified as a Tier 2 country, and we have not seen the arrest of some "big fish" who run this illicit trade. Why?

A: NAPTIP has in the course of carrying out its statutory mandate rescued children ranging from 10-19 from being trafficked for forced labor and child prostitution. An example is the celebrated case of the 67 children from Niger State who were rescued from a container ferrying them to



Most trafficked children end up as street hawkers in urban cities.

Lagos for distribution as house help and street hawkers to various people. Again, like I told you before, we have over 60 cases still in court at different stages of completion. Well, I did not rate myself but if I am asked I will rate NAPTIP in Tier 1. The U.S. does the rating and I cannot question or dictate to the United States but I can assure you that NAPTIP is making a big stride in the world. In fact, NAPTIP's international outings have placed the agency as experts in combating trafficking for other African countries. Other African countries now emulate us. But like I said, we are still on Tier 2 which is even not a bad tier. Making Tier 1 is like making a first-class which comes with its own burden. You just have to be there because it will be too disgraceful to come down from there. We are making good progress right now and by next year, I will ask America "why?" if we do not make a Tier 1. ❖

The Demand and Supply of Human Trafficking

To make any anti-trafficking effort effective, both the supply side and the demand side must be targeted.

Demand Side

- * Those who exploit trafficked persons must be identified and prosecuted.
- * Employers of forced labor and exploiters of victims trafficked for sexual exploitation must be named and shamed
- * With regards to sex slavery, awareness-raising campaigns must be conducted in destination countries to make it harder for trafficking to be concealed or ignored.
- * Victims must be rescued from slave-like living and working situations, rehabilitated and reintegrated into their families and communities.
- * Anti-trafficking strategies and programs developed with input from stakeholders (civil society and NGOs)

- are also some of the most effective and likely methods to fight trafficking.
- * Coordination and cooperation -- whether national, bilateral, or regional -- will leverage country efforts and help rationalize the allocation of resources.
- * Nationals should cooperate more closely to deny traffickers legal sanctuary and facilitate their extradition for prosecution. Such cooperation should also aim to facilitate the voluntary and humane repatriation of victims.

Supply Side

- * The conditions that drive trafficking must be dealt with through programs that alert communities to the dangers of trafficking. Countries must improve and expand educational and

- economic opportunities to vulnerable groups, promote equal access to education, educate people regarding their legal rights, and create better and broader life opportunities.
- * Law enforcement agencies must vigorously prosecute traffickers and those who aid and abet them.
- * They must fight public corruption which facilitates and profits from the trade; identify and interdict trafficking routes through better intelligence gathering and coordination; clarify legal definitions of trafficking and coordinate law enforcement responsibilities; and train personnel to identify and direct trafficking victims to appropriate care.

<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/>

Human Trafficking is, in fact, Modern Day Slavery - LAGON

By Ambassador Mark P. Lagon, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of State and Director of the U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

In every country around the world, including the United States, there is evidence of trafficking in human beings. Men, women, and children are held in domestic servitude, exploited for commercial sex, forcibly recruited as child soldiers, or abused in factories and sweatshops. These forms of human trafficking are, in fact, modern-day slavery.

This year, America commemorates the bicentennial of the outlawing of the transatlantic slave trade. The same lie which underpinned the transatlantic slave trade of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, namely that some people are less than human, is the very lie that fuels human trafficking.

As the head of the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, I have seen firsthand the need to actively abolish this trade in people and I have seen the powerful impact when governments, NGOs, and individuals stand up to meet this need. I have also had the opportunity to visit Nigeria recently and meet with NAPTIP and other officials to discuss their hard work and efforts to address this issue. The U.S. Mission to Nigeria is actively involved in partnerships with NAPTIP on a number of fronts.

Consider Nirmala Bonat, an Indonesian maid who has relentlessly pursued justice in Malaysian courts for nearly four years since being brutally beaten and burned on her breast with an iron in 2004 by her Malaysian employer, for which the employer faces criminal charges. Despite having to stay in Kuala Lumpur sheltered by the Indonesian Embassy to continue with court proceedings and being humiliated in court on many occasions, she has stood her ground, refusing to go home and give up her case. In doing so, she has become an inspiration for abused trafficking victims worldwide seeking to claim their rights.

Victims of sex and labor trafficking include foreign nationals and U.S. citizens, women and men, and children and adults. Trafficking chiefly involves extreme exploitation through force, fraud or coercion, which can be both physical and psychological.

Aye Aye Win is a perfect example. A young Burmese woman who dared to search for work beyond her own tortured country, together with some 800 Burmese migrants, many children, Aye Aye was "placed" in a shrimp farming and processing factory. But it wasn't a job. It was a prison camp.

When she was caught trying to escape, she was dragged back to the camp, refused food or water, had her head shaved, and was beaten. Beaten. Tortured. Starved. Humiliated. Is this not slavery?

Those who commit or facilitate the crime of trafficking in persons—including fraudulent recruiters, exploitative employers, and corrupt government officials—must be held to account. In the last five years, over 100 countries have passed new laws or amended existing law to toughen penalties for human trafficking. Thousands of criminals around the world are now prosecuted when, just five years ago, only a handful wound up in jail.

Those the traffickers grossly exploit and control—including men, women, children, citizens, migrants, and refugees—must be accorded the same respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as is accorded to all persons. Their dignity must be respected and restored. One of the central aims of U.S. foreign policy—promoting democracy and just governance—depends on meeting these imperatives. Our commitment to building capacity and cooperation between nations is evidenced by \$528 million in international programmatic assistance since 2001.



Mark Lagon

Human trafficking is a crime that steals peoples' freedom and dignity. Millions more people are aware of human trafficking as a result of U.S. efforts to publicize the issue and warn potential victims.

A mirror must be held up to the so-called "customers" of the "sex industry" to realize how the demand for commercial sex can directly or indirectly fuel sex trafficking. With respect to labor trafficking, companies can play an important role in prevention by working to ensure that the products they provide for consumers are not derived wholly or in part from forced labor. Whether sugar cane produced with slave labor in Brazil, shrimp processed with the forced labor of Burmese migrants in Thailand, or apparel made in Jordan by migrant workers under debt bondage, consumers need to be aware of the tainting of production chains with this modern-day slavery.

As we continue to shed light on emerging global trends for trafficking in persons, we are steadfast in support for countries willing to partner with us in this global fight. Just as the transatlantic slave trade was abolished many years ago, so too can this form of modern-day slavery be abolished today. Let us remain committed to act as a voice for the many voiceless victims of this crime. Their bondage demands our attention and action. ❖

Reaching Out to Communities in Northern Nigeria



Sokoto State Commissioner for Information and Culture Alhaji Dahiru Maishanu, who represented Governor Aliyu Wamakko, turns on the tap for Ambassador Robin Sanders (right) after the commissioning of the Mallamawa borehole project, July 18.

*By Idika U. Onyukwu
Editor, Crossroads*

Ambassador Robin Sanders reached out to communities in northern Nigerian during a trip to Sokoto, Gusau, Katsina and Zaria, July 18 to 20. The purpose of the trip was to commission U.S. Government funded borehole projects and seed storage facilities, and to meet with government officials and traditional leaders.

In Sokoto, Ambassador Sanders,

assisted by the Sokoto State Commissioner for Information and Culture, Alhaji Dahiru Maishanu, commissioned three borehole projects. The solar-powered boreholes were constructed by the Humanitarian Assistance Unit, Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC), U.S. Mission Nigeria, at a total cost of \$243,470.

The three boreholes are located in remote arid villages of Sokoto State where clean drinking water is extremely scarce: Bangi village in Bodinga Local Government; Mallamawa village in

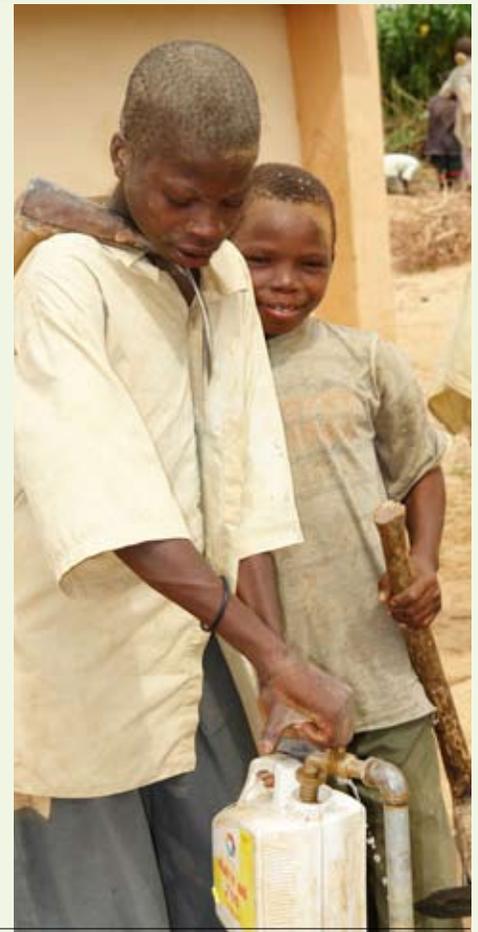
Goronyo Local Government and Kuruwa village in Tureta Local Government. A symbolic commissioning ceremony took place at Mallamawa village.

Yusuf and his younger brother Awolu, who rushed to fetch water immediately after the commissioning of the Mallamawa borehole project, said they cannot thank the American people enough for giving their village a "life-saving" present. Yusuf said in the past, his family depended on trapped flood-water for cooking and for other domestic needs.

During her visit to Katsina, Ambassador Sanders met separately with Governor Ibrahim Shehu Shema, business leaders, and His Royal Highness the Emir of Katsina Alhaji Abdulumuni Kabir Usman. She also visited the United States President's Emergency Plan for

supported comprehensive care sites in the state that provides anti-retroviral therapy service; treatment of sexually transmitted infections and opportunistic infections including tuberculosis; HIV testing and counseling; and palliative care.

Ambassador Sanders commissioned



Photos: Above clockwise; Ambassador Robin Sanders assisted by Kaduna State Deputy Governor Patrick Yakowa (left), commissions the Zaria seed storage facility in Kaduna. Right: Yusuf and his younger brother Awolu, fetch water from the newly commissioned Mallamawa borehole project in Sokoto. Left; Drummers performing in appreciation to the American People for the USG-funded borehole projects.



AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) supported comprehensive HIV/AIDS care public sector hospital at the Katsina General Hospital. The hospital is supported by the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative Nigeria (GHAIN) project, implemented by Family Health International (FHI).

The Katsina General Hospital is a secondary health facility. While its primary focus is serving Nigerians, the facility also provides services to nearby residents of the Niger Republic. It is one of three GHAIN

two seed storage facilities in Zaria and Giwa Local Governments of Kaduna State. She was assisted by the Kaduna State Deputy Governor Ibrahim Patrick Yakowa at the commissioning of the two projects in Zaria, Kaduna, which were turned over to the Galma Farmers Multi-purpose Cooperative Society. The Zaria seed storage facility is one of five U.S. funded facilities that provide safe and secure seed storage with educational facilities to communities throughout

Kano and Kaduna States and provide key infrastructure to support the self-sufficiency of communities in northern Nigeria.

At each event, Ambassador Sanders said the projects being funded by the U.S. Government reflect the high priority the United States places on investing in people. These projects are tangible examples of the benefits resulting from the strong partnership between the people of the United States and the people of Nigeria, Ambassador Sanders said.

Kaduna State Deputy Governor Ibrahim Yakowa, who is also a farmer, said the seed storage facility "gives us an assurance of a secure storage facility for the bumper harvest that farmers in Kaduna are expecting this year."

Nigeria's First AGOA Textile Shipment to the U.S.

Nigeria's first shipment of garments and food products bound for the United States under the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) was commissioned

recently by U.S. Ambassador Robin Sanders at a ceremony in Lagos.

During her speech at the F and D Garment Manufacturing Company Limited, the Ambassador commended

the Nigerian business community and noted her satisfaction in seeing Nigerian businesses take increased advantage of AGOA trade opportunities. The Ambassador also underscored the importance the United States "places not only on our existing business linkages with Nigeria but also on creating new trade linkages under our Framework for Partnership with Nigeria."

Signed in 2000, AGOA provides trade preferences for quota and duty-free entry of 6,500 different goods into the United States. It reinforces African reform efforts, provides improved access to U.S. credit and technical expertise, and establishes a high-level dialogue on trade and investment in the form of the U.S.-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Forum. ❖



U.S. Ambassador Robin Sanders (with U.S. Flag), at the commissioning of Nigeria's first AGOA shipment to the United States.

U.S. Provides \$1 Billion in Power Sector Credit Support

The U.S. EXIM Bank will provide a total of \$1 billion in credit to 14 Nigerian banks to support short- and medium-term insurance and guarantee transactions for U.S. power sector exports to Nigeria. EXIM Bank Board Member Joseph Grandmaison made the announcement during a recent high-level EXIM Bank delegation visit to Nigeria to conduct seminars in Abuja and Lagos on power sector financing.

The seminar in Abuja focused on power sector issues, project development, alternative financing options for Nigeria's energy needs, and equity opportunities within the banking and energy sector. Nigeria's Minister of State for Energy, Fatima Balaraba Ibrahim, was represented by the Director for Electrical Directorate Services, Alhaji Heylama Ngada. In addition to Grandmaison, EXIM Bank officials John Schuster, Director Power Sector, Structured Finance Division; Kamil Cook, Deputy General Counsel; and Nigerian-born Frances Nwachukwu,



Senator Mike Ajegbo posing a question to members of the EXIM Bank team on alternative power project financing for Nigeria.

Vice President Asset Management Division, led these valuable seminars.

Another key outcome of the trade mission was a new public-private partnership between the U.S. Mission Nigeria and co-sponsors First Bank

Plc. and Bank of Industry. Working together, they will provide export credit financing opportunities, information on U.S. goods and services, and technical assistance information for both large and small private sector projects.

<http://www.exim.gov>



USAID Nigeria Mission Director, Sharon Cromer (right) and NARUC representative Honorable Orjiakor, display signed copies of the Memorandum of Understanding to support Nigeria's electricity regulatory commission.

United States Government Assists Nigeria's Electricity Regulatory Commission

Nigeria and the United States have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on electricity regulation in Nigeria. U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria, Ms. Robin Renée Sanders witnessed the signing ceremony between the United States' National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and the Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC). The agreement will organize and implement a regulatory partnership between NARUC and NERC. The United States Government is supporting the collaboration with funding through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Michigan Public Service Commission will serve as the lead entity on behalf of NARUC under this partnership, which is

a part of NARUC's global regulatory network program. The partnership will serve as a vehicle for the exchange of



(L-r); NARUC representative Orjiakor, NERC Chairman Owan and Ambassador Sanders signing the MOU.

experiences and information between U.S. and Nigerian regulatory bodies, with the goal of improving regulatory practices and fostering long-term sustainable relationships between regulatory bodies in both countries. The regulators will cooperate with each other to ensure the exchange of information via executive and personnel exchanges, seminars and workshops. ❖

Ten Tips for Applying to Medical Schools in the U.S.

By Margaret Anyigbo

Mrs. Margaret Anyigbo, is an Educational Advisor at the U.S. Consulate General Public Affairs Section's Education Advising Center in Lagos. She recently participated in the Professional Advising Leadership (PAL) Fellows Program for 2008. PAL is a program designed for senior level education advisors giving them opportunities for professional development in the United States. It is sponsored by the Department of State and administered by the College Board in Washington, DC. Twelve Educational Advisors were chosen from U.S. Missions worldwide, with Margaret Anyigbo representing Nigeria.

Mrs Anyigbo says getting into medical school in the United States is highly competitive for any student, but even more so for international students. Of the 129 medical schools in the United States, only 50 enroll international students. She advises that any international student who is determined to apply should keep the following tips in mind:

1. Doctors are not all science majors.

Medical school admissions officers are interested in diverse educational backgrounds and appreciate students with a variety of talents and interests. Regardless of your major, be sure to take the biology, general and organic chemistry, physics, math and English requirements and have a good GPA.

2. Take the process seriously.

The process is expensive and should not be taken casually. It requires total commitment, maturity and intellectual ability. You will be under a lot of pressure.

3. Consider where you have your best chance of enrolling.

Research and apply to schools that will be the best fit; however, be sure



Margaret Anyigbo

to investigate how many international students have been enrolled in the past. You will have a better chance getting into private medical schools. State schools favor U.S. citizens and state residents.

4. Take the MCAT once.

Some medical school admissions view taking the MCAT multiple times negatively. Students should aim for a minimum score of 10 in each of the three sections.

5. Perfect the personal statement.



Students at a counselling session with Mrs. Margaret Anyigbo at EAC Lagos.

Prove you pay attention to detail by submitting a polished piece. Do not be shy. This is your opportunity to market yourself; be sure to highlight your achievements, strengths and leadership qualities.

6. Prepare for the interview.

The interview is an elimination process. Interviewers are not looking for standard answers but rather responses that distinguish the applicant. They want to find out how well students can think on their feet.

7. Choose references carefully.

The evaluation should be written by someone who can attest to your ability, someone like a pre-med adviser, science department professor or member of the university pre-medical committee. Submit a profile to the recommendation-writer, providing information he or she might not already know, such as your involvement in extracurricular activities.

8. Find an internship.

Admissions officers regard highly students who have volunteered or interned in a health care-related setting. From observing the medical profession first hand, you will learn whether it is the right fit for you and what specialty you might want to pursue.

9. Have a financial plan.

Financing medical school may be your biggest challenge. If scholarship money is not available, students must prove they have the ability to pay \$200,000 or get a co-signer.

10. Seek advice from others in the field.

Students should take advantage of their environment and discuss medical school plans with professors and classmates. Professors might have suggestions that guide students down the right path. Classmates and other pre-medical students going through the same admission process can share insight about the experience. ♦

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Participants at the pre-departure orientation program pose for a group photo. More than 3,000 Nigerians including scholars, students and mid-level career professionals have benefited from fellowship programs and study grants to the United States.

U.S. Studies Build Skills to Improve Nigeria

Over 40 exchange visitor grantees, including university faculty, student leaders, and career professionals from across Nigeria, attended a predeparture orientation for Nigerian scholars, students and mid-level career professionals, who have been awarded fellowships and study grants to the United States in 2008.

Embassy staffers and alumni of the U.S. Mission's various exchange programs conducted the orientation seminar. Practically focused, the seminar provided general information on U.S. cultural norms such as punctuality, smoking and tipping.

In a PowerPoint presentation on studying and living in the United States, Chinenye Uwadileke, Cultural Affairs

Assistant, provided in-depth information on several aspects of life in the U.S. including weather, food, health benefit plans, visa status, and housing. Exchange alumni also shared their experiences with the grantees, especially on how to go about academic and research work at U.S. colleges and universities.

Beneficiaries of exchange programs of the U.S. Mission are selected through rigorous exercises and an evaluation of the quality of their research proposals and leadership potentials.

Speaking during the orientation seminar, Ambassador Robin Sanders encouraged the selected participants to return home and share their experiences with colleagues and students. Education, she stressed, is key to Nigeria's economic

growth and development. Noting that Nigeria's future rests on education, Ambassador Sanders challenged the grantees to bring back the exposure, training and capacity building they acquire during their studies and positively channel their new skills into the development of their country.

Professor Nuhu Gworgwor of the University of Maidugri is among Nigeria's senior faculty members who have been awarded a nine month Fulbright Scholar Program grant. Dr. Gworgwor's Fulbright Program is sponsored by Bank PHB through the U.S. Mission's private partnership with leading financial institutions in Nigeria. ❖

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Students Advised to be Good Leaders

U.S. Mission Country Public Affairs Officer Atim George has charged students to be leaders in their own field. Ms. George spoke at the Graduation and Prize Giving Day ceremony of Pace Setters Academy held at the International Conference Center, Abuja on July 28. The ceremony marked the graduation of 200 students from the 6th and 12th grades. Representatives of the Minister of Education, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory and the Chief of Defense Staff also addressed the students and parents of Pace Setters junior and senior secondary schools.

In her goodwill message to the students, Ms. George used the acronym L.E.A.D. to explain how a good leader should function. Leaders, she said: “lead within their field — he or she is a learner. A good leader laughs and loves and leaders are educated people.” Leaders also act positively to change and improve situations, she said. The U.S. envoy stressed the importance of leadership to a society’s progress and



U.S. Mission Country Public Affairs Officer Atim George, presents a graduation plaque to one of the graduating students.

development, adding that good leaders exercise self discipline and are dedicated.

Ms. George, who holds the traditional title of “Yeye Araba” of Ile-Ife, highlighted the strong bilateral cooperation between the United States and Nigeria, emphasizing to the audience that Nigeria’s friendship matters to the people of

in Nigeria. Some have signified their intention to pursue their university education with institutions in the United States, he said. First Bank instituted a scholarship fund of N200,000 for the best performing students in mathematics and in the sciences. ❖

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"YES" Students Prepare for U.S. Education

Twenty-nine high school students and one teacher, selected for this year’s Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program from Nigeria, received a pre-departure briefing organized by the U.S. Mission to Nigeria in Abuja. The Educational Advising Center (EAC) at the Public Affairs Section Lagos organized a similar predeparture orientation session for seventy-five of its members departing Nigeria to attend various U.S. universities this fall.

Counselor for Public Affairs Atim George opened the Abuja briefing with a motivating parable, which taught the students to never forget that their backyard holds acres of diamonds and opportunity. She advised the students to utilize the rare opportunity of their one-year stay in the



A group photograph of "YES" students with staff of the U.S. Mission in Nigeria at the Abuja event.

United States to learn, interact and bring back skills of value to Nigeria that will make a positive difference to their communities.

The Lagos session began with Public Affairs Officer Tim Gerhardson congratulating the students on their achievements, some of whom have full scholarships to attend prestigious

universities like Harvard, Georgetown, Johns Hopkins and Mount Holyoke College.

Both orientations provided the students with a fundamental understanding of the culture and complexity of their host country and how they will make adjustments to U.S. society.

Several YES alumni were also on hand to share their experiences and

answer questions posed by the outgoing students. During the briefing, Dr. Saidu Yakubu, the IRIS Country Director for Nigeria, addressed the accomplishments of YES alumni and how their experiences in the United States have re-shaped the YES alumni and their communities. ❖

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U.S. Doctoral Student Shares Research Findings on HIV/AIDS and Marriage



Kathryn Rhine discussing her research findings on HIV/AIDS and marriage in northern Nigeria.

U.S. Fulbright-Hayes recipient and Brown University doctoral candidate Kathryn Rhine shared her research findings on HIV/AIDS and marriage in northern Nigeria with a group of participants in Kano and Jos. The U.S. Mission Nigeria co-hosted the event with the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA). Ms. Rhine talked about relationships and marriage and the spread of HIV/AIDS in the two northern cities of Kano and Jos.

Ms. Rhine opined that the best path for HIV positive people to take is to join a network of people living with HIV/AIDS. This way, if they are searching for a spouse, the network may help eliminate the worry of whether or not the loved one is positive or negative. Ms. Rhine's research suggests

that networking is an effective way to help women who are positive find compatible mates. Acknowledging that HIV positive women frequently have a difficult time disclosing their status, Ms. Rhine said they often lack confidantes to help them grapple with their problems. She spent years working with HIV positive women in order to find the best ways to help them deal with serious life challenges. Ms. Rhine told the audience, however, that she remains hopeful that networking programs will continue to help HIV positive women in the years to come.

A robust question and answer session followed the presentation. The seminar proved useful in raising not only awareness about HIV/AIDS, but also in identifying ways to address the challenges caused by the pandemic. ❖

Consular 2008 Diversity Visa Program Ends September 30, 2008

The Diversity Immigrant Visa (DV) Program, popularly known as the visa lottery, will end on September 30, 2008. Approximately 100,000 individuals from around the world were registered for further processing in the DV program, but only 50,000 slots are available. No one country can receive more than seven percent of the available diversity visas or 3,500 visas in any one year.

Applicants chosen to participate in the 2008 DV program were assigned numbers, and interviews were scheduled beginning with those who have the lowest numbers. As the 2008 DV program ended, visas were available only for applicants with DV regional lottery numbers below the specified allocation cut-off number. For Nigeria, that number is 18,450. If your number is higher than 18,450, you will not be called for an interview for a visa. For applicants whose number is below 18,450, you too may not be called for an interview if applicants with a lower number are successful in their applications for a permanent resident visa. More information about the available numbers can be found at http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/bulletin/bulletin_4310.html.

When DV winners are told of their selection in the Diversity Visa program, they are also informed that selection does not guarantee visa issuance. More entries are picked than there are available visas to ensure that if applicants with lower numbers do not complete their paperwork or do not meet the requirements for the visa, there are additional applicants available to participate in the program. Individuals selected for DV interviews who have questions regarding their cases may email the U.S. Consulate General in Lagos at lagosiv@state.gov.

The entry season for the 2010 DV program begins at noon EDT on October 2, 2008. See http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types_1318.html for details. ❖

U.S. Supports Leadership Conference for Military Officers

By *Idika U. Onyukwu*
 Editor, **CROSSROADS**

U.S. Mission Nigeria facilitated a leadership conference on military tactics and strategic planning for the 103 students of Class 16 of the Nigerian National Defense College (NDC). United States Colonel William Snow was the keynote speaker. Students at the NDC are predominately senior military officers from the Nigerian Army, Navy, and Air force, while others are senior Nigerian Police and civilian officers from the Ministry of Defense.

Officers studying at the NDC from nine other West African countries were also in attendance including officers from Ghana, Congo, Benin Republic, and Burkina Faso. This is the first NDC class to have a representative from Cameroon.

Colonel Snow discussed how the U.S. military planned, prepared



Colonel William Snow

and fought the Gulf War in 1991 with the help of allied nations. His presentation highlighted the importance of logistics planning and coordination and emphasized to the participants the need to consider economic and sociopolitical factors.

In Nigeria at the invitation of the U.S. Mission's Office of Defense Cooperation, Colonel Snow is the Commander, 100th Troop Command, California Army National Guard. He met first with Commandant of the NDC

Rear Admiral G. Jonah and presented him with a set of books and multimedia materials to strengthen the NDC library.

Admiral Jonah commended the efforts of the U.S. in assisting the Nigerian armed forces, saying that in addition to "building stronger U.S.-Nigeria military cooperation, the leadership seminar has strengthened relationships and interactions between participants from Nigerian and those of other West African countries."

Praising Colonel Snow's discussion of the role played by the United States during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm in Kuwait and in the Persian Gulf region, Colonel S. Akofur from Ghana said there were a lot of lessons learned from the deployment and redeployment of so many troops and their equipment during the two military operations. ❖

Africa Endeavor Closing Ceremony Marks End of Successful Africa Endeavor 2008



U.S. trainer in a discussion with participants at Africa Endeavor

With the flags of twenty-five participating countries and organizations flying on the parade ground at the Nigerian Air Force Base, Abuja, the Africa Endeavor 2008 communications interoperability and information exchange exercise came to a

successful close. The week consisted of nation-to-nation sharing of technology, numerable radio tests to locations around the world, and most importantly the interaction and relationships formed among nations. Learning to work together to overcome language barriers, cultural differences, and

the challenge of making equipment from many different countries and manufacturers operate seamlessly together, the exercise ended with great success.

As the troops formed their ranks on the parade field, the Honorable General Azazi, Chief of Defense Staff,

Nigeria; U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Robin Renée Sanders; and General Ward, Commander, United States Africa Command; took their post as the reviewing party.

Ambassador Sanders in her remarks to the exercise participants touched on the key element of Africa Endeavor saying, "...good communication is the backbone of any successful undertaking..." She praised participants for the progress they made ensuring reliable communications are available during joint operations. To conclude the ceremony, the reviewing party acknowledged each nation and organization by awarding them with the Africa Endeavor pin. ❖

<http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>

2008 United States Election CAMPAIGN UPDATE

United States at "Turning Point" as Voters Go to Polls November 4 Major shifts in U.S. society suggest 2008 election particularly significant

By Eric Green
America.gov Staff Writer

The 2008 U.S. presidential election campaign will reflect dramatic changes in American society, political analysts tell America.gov.

Iowa State University political science professor Steffen Schmidt said the 2008 vote will be a "watershed, seriously important election."

The election would be important, he said, even without a global terrorism threat, or that the presumed presidential nominees are Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama, who could be the first African-American U.S. president.

Important elections occur "when there is a general shift in the paradigm [basic structure] of society," Schmidt said. Examples in U.S. history

The Vice Presidential Candidates



2008 Democratic VP Candidate

Senator Joe Biden of Delaware (Age: 65) is a former presidential candidate and is

the fourth-longest serving Democratic Senator.

He provides 26 years of experience. He is the Chairman of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and would provide tons of foreign policy knowledge to the ticket--something Obama desperately needs. -His age balances out well with Senator Barack Obama. Biden is Catholic and hails from a blue-collar world.



include the 1861-1865 Civil War and the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Schmidt said 2008 is a "threshold year when the full impact of globalization is making itself felt in full force, and the U.S. economy has now shifted so that most Americans are no longer working in stable lifelong jobs." Instead, Schmidt said, "we are becoming a very fast-moving, innovative and

novel economy -- the first 21st century economy."

The election, he said, marks the "end of the cheap energy period and the need to shift to new energies and technologies which can be accelerated or slowed by good or bad national government policies."

These challenges face "whoever becomes U.S. president in 2008," Schmidt said.

Schmidt said older Americans will be "critically important in 2008 simply because their numbers are huge and they are facing the economic [income, job and pension] and health consequences of the 21st century economy and they are very concerned" about those issues.

The candidate who "can see what the next 50 years will require to keep us competitive, wealthy, and strong and who can articulate that to voters will win the election," said Schmidt.

2008 Presidential Debates

First presidential debate:
Friday, September 26
University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS

Vice presidential debate:
Thursday, October 2
Washington University in St. Louis,
MO

Second presidential debate:
Tuesday, October 7
Belmont University, Nashville, TN

Third presidential debate:
Wednesday, October 15
Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY

DO YOU KNOW?

Once a small gathering of party leaders at a saloon, the political convention has evolved into a major political event.

Republican Party VP Candidate



2008 Republican Party Vice-Presidential Candidate

Governor Sarah Palin was on August 29, 2008, in Dayton,

Ohio, picked by Senator John McCain, the Republican presidential candidate as his running mate. Governor Sarah Palin is the governor of Alaska. She made history on December 4, 2006, when she took office as the 11th governor of Alaska. She is the first woman to hold the office. Palin has described the Republican party platform as "the right agenda for America."

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