

**ACSS Workshop on Preventing Youth Radicalization in East Africa
Welcome Reception
January 23, 2012, at 9:00 am
Remarks for DAS Karl Wycoff**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Ambassador Bellamy, thank you for your kind introduction. And many thanks to you and the staff of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies who worked hard from the initial concept for this program to develop the themes with U.S. government partners and bring us all together today. Following the success of the Workshop on “Preventing Terrorism: Developing Comprehensive Solutions to the Challenges of Radicalization” held in Dakar in April 2011, ACSS will guide us to explore new directions, sharing perspectives and ideas to address concerns about youth radicalization.

This is an amazing time to be engaged with African audiences. From the highest levels of governments to school children in remote villages, the energy and enthusiasm of Africans for their future resonates across the continent. Building from President Obama’s address in Ghana in 2009, Secretary Clinton and the Department have focused on broad principles and goals in Africa: first, promoting democracy and good governance, second, expanding economic opportunity through growth and development, third, strengthening public health and education, fourth, helping to prevent, mitigate and resolve armed conflicts, and fifth, partnering to address transnational challenges, such as narcotics trafficking, climate change and violent extremism. Our Bureau’s budget for fiscal year 2011 for foreign assistance to Africa totaled \$7.9 billion. This funded investments in programs and activities that supported progress across all of these broad goal areas.

Within this agenda that is broadly focused on supporting African people, we've reached out in particular to women and young people. President Obama's Forum with Young African Leaders in August 2010 led the effort to connect to young Africans and learn about their interests, concerns and ideas for the future. Some may have felt threatened by that initiative, but, just as it is back home in the United States, developing and empowering the next generation and working together is the only way to creatively deal with the enormous challenges before us.

And the challenges are enormous and complex. Looking out over the audience this morning, I'm struck by the group's diversity, assembled from 11 countries and various international organizations. Each of us probably arrived with a different vision of what "youth radicalization" means, and what the root causes and possible responses might be. Nevertheless, there is ample room for African nations to work together among themselves and with international partners in specific ways that all recognize as necessary and valuable. While local context is important and there isn't a "one size fits all" answer to the problem, reaching across borders can be a powerful tool and example. After all, the terrorists and those who promote violent extremism act regionally and globally.

The U.S. Government's Partnership for Regional East African Counterterrorism, or PRACT, seeks to develop relationships for long-term engagement with African counterparts and build capacity within local institutions to address the evolving threats in the region. This interagency, multi-year initiative brings together law enforcement, military, development and public diplomacy expertise and resources. Regional fora that come together on a wide range of issues – within East Africa, the African Union, or new networks of young African leaders, such as the African

Leadership Network and Africa 2.0 – are a great way to share best practices and generate new ideas.

Some of you represent military or security institutions in your home countries, some of you come from government ministries, and others work with non-governmental or civil society organizations. All of you bring valuable perspectives and insights to the table. Using an interagency approach, or “3-D” as we say for “diplomacy, development and defense,” we can deal with the heart of an issue in a sustainable way. It’s not easy. Collaborating within governments is sometimes more difficult than collaborating with other governments - I know from Washington experience. Still, it’s the only way to know that you have all the issues before you, along with all the talents to address them.

Military power, intelligence operations and law enforcement alone will not solve the long-term challenges we face, the challenges that push and pull young people around the world toward violent extremism. More force is not going to prevent young men and women from embracing violence as a solution to political and social problems. They need viable alternatives to channel their frustrations, satisfy their ambitions and to challenge injustices using peaceful means. A lot more work remains to be done, and this is where we are now focusing much of our effort.

The U.S. Government already has successful partnerships with African governments and non-governmental organizations that can serve as models of “outside of the box” programming. For example, our embassy in Kampala funded Uganda’s Muslim Center for Justice and Law to produce a human rights handbook. In fact, the head of that organization – Jaffer Senganda – is here today. This handbook will assist local Muslim leaders to articulate issues of human rights,

good governance, accountability, and responsibility, not only in Uganda's diverse Muslim community, but throughout Uganda, especially among young people.

And in Nairobi, the U.S. Embassy joined hands with a Kenyan youth organization on a program that is creating links between the largely Somali community of Eastleigh and local government and law enforcement professionals. This effort addressed the alienation that makes communities vulnerable to criminality and extremism. You'll have the opportunity to talk with a representative from the Eastleigh community, since Shine (SHEE-neh) Abdilahi Ali, leader of the Somali rap group Waayaha Cusub (WAA-ya-ha ooh-soob) - The New Era, is here for the workshop.

As the youth population of Africa continues to grow, it's easy to see a future full of threats in which youth are a "problem" to be solved. But I hope this workshop gives us the courage and intellectual curiosity to see the challenge from the other side, that is, to bring young people into the discussion to jointly develop their future and the future of their countries and continent. We need to create a narrative that includes the voices and talents of young women and men, rural and urban populations, traditional and new media. We must use the 21st century's interdependence, connectivity and mobility to our advantage to develop trust and inclusive societies.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this morning. Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedules at home to dedicate a week to get to know your compatriots and counterparts from neighboring countries who share your concerns and are dedicated to the challenges that we all face together.

Have a good week! Thank you.