

First-Ever Joint House-Senate Briefing



The Subcommittees on Africa and The African Diplomatic Corps

WASHINGTON -- Leadership Africa USA was honored to celebrate the first-ever joint House-Senate Congressional conversation between the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs, and the African Diplomatic Corps on Africa's development priorities to improve U.S. Africa relations.

The event was held at the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center at the U.S. Capitol on November 16, 2011. The event was addressed by Congressman Chris Smith ([Remarks](#)) who serves as Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa Global Health, and Human Rights; Donald Payne, Subcommittee Ranking Member; Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs Chairman Christopher Coons and Subcommittee Ranking Member Johnny Isakson.

The event was largely made possible by members of the African Diplomatic Corps and we were further honored by Ambassador Faida Mitifu of Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chairman of the African Ambassadors Group, who shared a consensus statement on behalf of the 40 African Ambassadors in attendance. "We welcome this opportunity to share our views with you on some issues, which are of great importance to our continent," Mitifu said. "Africa and the United States share a unique bond of friendship which can be traced into history." ([Remarks](#))

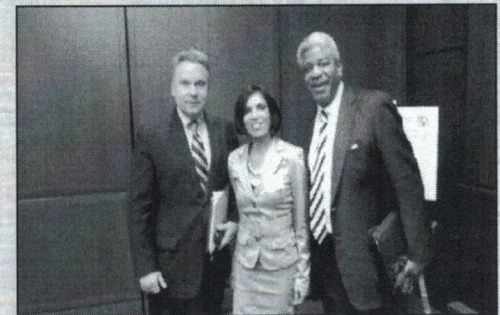
Leadership Africa USA felt strongly that such an event needed to happen because of the importance of informed leadership, on African issues to effectively address the issues on AGOA and trade, agriculture and food security, energy, infrastructure and good governance which were all major themes at this historic event. Mitifu said, "Good governance represents an essential element on the path towards economic growth, human development and political stability."

Ambassador Somduth Soborun of Mauritius also made remarks at this historic conversation and he acknowledged the importance of AGOA. "The African Growth and Opportunity Act is undoubtedly the most comprehensive trade and investment package from the United States towards the Sub Saharan African region," Soborun said. ([Remarks](#))

The addressing of these issues was of extreme importance, as it allowed the African Diplomatic Corps to speak with members of Congress on issues that directly affect them and the people of Africa. "Too often, we in Congress have only brief encounters with the African diplomats in Washington," Smith said. "A fuller, ongoing interaction would be of help to both Members of Congress and diplomats in building U.S. - Africa relations that are mutually beneficial." Through exemplary leadership, Congressman Chris Smith and other members of Congress were able to come together with the African Diplomatic Corps to forge a commitment to address the developmental priorities of Africa.



From left to right: Congressman Donald Payne, Chairman Christopher Smith, Senator Chris Coons and Senator Johnny Isakson



Chairman Christopher Smith, Shehnaz Rangwala, and Walker A. Williams, Leadership Africa USA



From left to right: Ambassador Faida Mitifu, DRC, Congressman Donald Payne, Chairman Christopher Smith, Senator Chris Coons and Senator Johnny Isakson

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