

Congressman Rush Advocates For Economic Engagement with Africa

By US Export Council

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In recent weeks, Congressman Bobby L Rush (D-Ill.) has been vocal in his support of U.S. economic and trade development with Africa.

Rush, who is the chairman of the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, has both issued a letter to President Obama encouraging him to expand the United States' relationship with Africa and issued a statement on the subcommittee's joint hearing with the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health on U.S.-Africa Trade Relations: Creating a Platform for Economic Growth.

In his letter to President Obama, Rush states that he looks forward to working with the Administration to implement a mutually beneficial policy that will increase commerce and trade, especially for women, minorities, and small- and medium-sized enterprises.

The letter (PDF) reads in part http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/il01_rush/BLRLettertoPOTUS-6-17.pdf

I strongly encourage you to expand the commitment of the United States with sub-Saharan Africa. Our interest should far transcend the humanitarian concerns that have frequently underpinned U.S. engagement with the continent. Economic development, natural resource management, human security, capacity building, and global stability as well as traditional humanitarian assistance are inextricably linked.

Within the urgent, complex human and national security agenda of lowering poverty; disease; hunger; and abuse of women, children, and minorities, I fully support your aspiration to stimulate private sector development, two-way trade, and investment. Currently, there are thousands of American jobs that depend upon U.S. exports to Africa. There could be many more when Africa realizes its potential. In the near future, we wish to see a larger African middle class, more job opportunities, increased purchasing power for its consumers, and more exports to the continent.

Shortly after issuing his letter, Rush issued a statement emphasizing the Subcommittee's support for charting a more productive course between the United States and Africa.

Rush's statement includes the following highlights: http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/il01_rush/pr_090624_africa.shtml

"African economies are among the fastest growing, globally, and registered nearly 6% overall economic growth in 2007, the highest in 20 years. The continent's challenges are amplified by the current global financial crisis. Nevertheless, Africa could represent a growth center and a stimulus to the world economy if provided with the proper tools.

"The U.S. government and private sector should jointly promote Africa's economic development, U.S. trade with the region, and U.S.-Africa business partnerships.

"By increasing commerce and trade opportunities that include women, minorities, and small- and medium-sized enterprises, on both sides of the Atlantic, we will create a new zone of security and prosperity in Africa.

“I strongly encourage my colleagues to expand their commitment to expand trade and investment, spur economic growth, and create job opportunities for both the African and American workers.”

The US Export Council and The Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU) will be hosting a Round Table in South Africa with Government and Key Business Leaders from the both the US and Southern Africa in Johannesburg, August 19 - 21, 2009 at which time Congressman Rush is a featured speaker, says David Altman, Executive Director of The US Export Council in New York.

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