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PRESS RELEASE

Two Batswana Attend U.S. President Obama's Forum for Young African Leaders

Yarona FM Radio Personality Itumeleng Ramsden and the Director of the Botswana Network on Ethics, Law and AIDS (BONELA) Uyapo Ndadi will attend the Young African Leaders' Forum hosted by U.S. President Barack Obama in Washington DC from August 3-5, 2010. The U.S. Embassy in Gaborone selected the two based on their leadership qualities and their public advocacy efforts on important issues affecting Botswana and many other countries.

In 2010, seventeen countries across sub-Saharan Africa celebrate fifty years of independence. In honor of this important historic moment; in acknowledgement of the extraordinarily young demographic profile of the region; and as part of an effort to forge strong, forward-looking partnerships in the years ahead, President Obama will host a forum in Washington, D.C., from August 3 - 5 with approximately 120 young leaders from civil society and the private sector representing more than forty countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Together with American counterparts and U.S. government officials, the participants will share their insights on key themes of youth empowerment, good governance, and economic opportunity. President Obama will host a town hall meeting at the White House with these young leaders to discuss their vision for transforming their societies over the next fifty years.

The President's Forum with Young African Leaders presents the U.S. government and American friends of Africa with an opportunity to deepen and broaden our understanding of the trajectories of African societies, and to reflect on how the next generation are building their communities' and their nations' futures – just as their predecessors did in the era of independence from colonial rule. In addition to the town hall meeting with the President, the forum will include small-group discussions on topics such as transparency and accountability, job creation and entrepreneurship, rights advocacy, and the use of technology to empower individuals and communities. African participants will have an opportunity to meet with grassroots service organizations to share experiences and strategies.

As President Obama said during a visit to Accra, Ghana in July 2009, the future of Africa is up to the Africans, especially the youth of the continent. **President Obama said, "It will be the young people brimming with talent and energy and hope who can claim the future that so many in previous generations never realized."** The U.S. government's role in this gathering is as a convener, encouraging networks between young American and African leaders, and pursuing lasting partnerships on behalf of our common security and prosperity. This dialogue and follow-up events in Africa will help the U.S. government better assess how to support Africa's own aspirations going forward.

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