

FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA TO VISIT SOUTH AFRICA AND BOTSWANA

Official visit continues the First Lady's work engaging youth at home and abroad

First Lady Michelle Obama announced that she will travel to Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa and Gaborone, Botswana during an official visit to Africa from June 21 – 26 focused on youth leadership, education, health and wellness. The trip is a continuation of Mrs. Obama's work to engage young people at home and abroad, from mentoring students in the United States and encouraging them to gain international experience, to encouraging young people to excel academically, serve, and lead during her visits to Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, India, Mexico and the United Kingdom. Accompanying Mrs. Obama on this trip will be her mother, Mrs. Robinson and her daughters, Malia and Sasha Obama.

This visit to two critical countries will underscore that the United States has an important stake in the success of Africa's many nations and underscore the historic connections between the American people and those who live on the African continent. South Africa is a vital global partner for the United States, as political leader and economic engine on the continent, and a historic example of democratic transition in Africa and around the world. Botswana's enduring democracy, bolstered by its commitment to using its vast natural resources to invest in its people and grow its economy, models the potential for good governance, and strong institutions to advance prosperous and stable societies.

In addition to advancing her international youth engagement agenda, the First Lady's events will amplify the President's support for democracy, development and economic opportunity across Africa. During her trip, Mrs. Obama will deliver the keynote address to a U.S.-sponsored Young African Women Leaders Forum in South Africa. Forum participants include young women from across sub-Saharan Africa who are leading or involved in social and economic initiatives in their own countries. The Forum will build on the Obama Administration's ongoing engagement with the next generation of African leaders and the momentum of the August 2010 President's Forum with Young African Leaders held at the White House.

Mrs. Obama's engagement with the people of South Africa and Botswana, as well as women and youth leaders from across sub-Saharan Africa, will further strengthen the already deep connections between the United States and African nations. The Obama Administration has focused on expanding ties across the region's people, based upon mutual respect, mutual responsibility and shared interests. In 2009 in Accra, Ghana, the President highlighted our nation's commitment to Africa's future, underscoring that in this globalized world, Africa's democratic development, health and security is connected to our own.

Africa's future will be shaped by its growing and dynamic youth population. Building stronger and more enduring relationships with Africa's emerging young leaders, tapping the strength and potential of African women, and investing in the health and well-being of its children upholds core American values and advances American interests.

From long standing family and ancestral ties to significant engagement by our houses of worship, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and businesses, the American people have deep ties and enduring relationships with Africa's many nations and a strong interest in the

wellbeing and prosperity of its people. In addition, each year more than 30,000 African students study in American schools, colleges and universities, while more than 10,000 American students study in schools across Africa. The United States government also sponsors a range of exchange programs supporting African leadership, economic growth and cultural ties between our two people.

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