

Remarks by Ambassador Douglas M. Griffiths
On the occasion of the official reception to celebrate
U.S. National Independence Day
July 2015

Her Excellency the Minister of Health

Dear guests

My Fellow Americans

Thank you very much for joining us today to celebrate the 239th anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America. I appreciate your presence here, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the sponsors who made this event possible:

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That ever-growing list of companies exemplifies the growing ties between our great nations.

I am particularly honored to welcome the Minister of Health because the health of Mozambicans is by far our largest area of cooperation. We enjoy a vibrant, broad and dynamic partnership with your ministry. Madame Minister, thank you and welcome.

National day celebrations are moment of reflection as we pause to ponder our societies. I have just returned from a vacation with my family at Gorongosa National Park, where I had time for this sort of reflection about how we organize our society, and so today I would like to talk about... ants.

Ants are part of the eusocial animals, the group of animals demonstrating the highest level of organization. The collective action of the termites produces positive results not only for their communities, but also for the ecosystem.

I mention ants, because our national day celebrates a collective decision from a colonized population. Two hundred and thirty nine years ago, humble people, farmers, blacksmiths, teachers and fishermen came together to demand freedom, and a more representative government. On this day, we ponder our gratitude for our freedom, for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

The creation of the United States was like that of no other country. People came together not because of common geography or a common religion or a common tribe. We came together inspired by ideals and values, that all people are created equal and that we should form a government of the people, by the people and for the people. And we continue to be united around those ideals today.

For centuries, millions of people across the globe have come to our shores in search of freedom and prosperity. Yet some of these waves of immigrants have encountered barriers in the Promised Land. Irish, Jews, Italians, Chinese, Africans and Latinos have faced prejudice and exclusion. Through education, advocacy and recourse to the judicial system, these groups have integrated into the fabric of our nation and have made us greater through our diversity. The full inclusion of all our citizens is part of the commitment contained in the Preamble of our Constitution, a phrase that exhorts us to continuously strive towards a More Perfect Union.

When Barack Obama was elected President, many Americans thought that we had transitioned to a post-racial society. But this year has been replete with painful events in the United States, where we have been forced to confront lingering issues of social justice and the real inclusion of our African-American citizens. From these difficult incidences, we have learned that we must invest more in social, economic and political inclusion to form our more perfect union.

We must do more to fully include African Americans in all facets of society. Just as we need to support women in their struggle for equality, equal pay, and

freedom from violence. And in the recent Supreme Court decision, we have resoundingly affirmed that homosexuals merit equal treatment under the law. This struggle of equality for all is the latest example of a long tradition of the United States where civil society, religious leaders and regular citizens come together to demand accountability from their government and to create a More Perfect Union.

In this year as Mozambique celebrates the 40th anniversary of its struggle for independence and equality for all, we are proud of our forty years of formal diplomatic relations. America had deep and broad ties with many of the revolutionary heroes, including Eduardo Mondlane who spent many years in the United States. Those ties are broader and deeper today.

Over the past forty years, the American people have invested over 5.8 billion dollars in Mozambique. In the beginning, our cooperation was marked by food aid and reconstruction. Today our partnership is very different. Working to support Mozambique's ambitious development strategies, we are investing over \$350 million per year in the health of Mozambicans alone. We are very proud of our partnership with you, Madam Minister. Thanks to our joint efforts, there are currently 650,000 people in antiretroviral treatment in the country.

We have a myriad of other cooperation projects that are helping Mozambicans achieve their dreams, for example through educational exchanges and contact with our Peace Corps Volunteers. Our programs work to improve the business environment, generate income for farmers, prepare for climate change,

secure the country's border, strengthen the press, provide greater access to the Internet, and support women entrepreneurs. More and more, we are building commercial ties to drive growth and job creation.

And I am very proud of our innovative partnerships to protect Mozambique's natural heritage. Gorongosa National Park is the second largest employer in the Province of Sofala, and a world renowned center for scientific research. Later this month I will travel to the Niassa Reserve to launch a new partnership that we hope will help staunch the tragic loss of elephants there. As Gorongosa has shown, conservation is not merely an aspirational goal of the elite. It is also a potential source of jobs and wealth.

Together with Mozambican and international partners, all these initiatives are flourishing and contributing both to the Mozambican and the American societies thanks to the team work of these activity hubs. We are strengthening our ecosystems, building nests and creating more perfect unions. Like the termites have shown us, success requires collective action.

I would now like to toast to the Mozambican people, to President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi and President Barack Hussein Obama, and to the friendship between the Republic of Mozambique and the United States of America and to all of you with us today.