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**Nine Namibians Selected for the 2015 Mandela Washington Fellowship
of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)**

On the occasion of the visit of the U.S. Presidential Delegation to Namibia for the Silver Jubilee and Inaugural Celebration, the Ambassador of the United States of America Thomas F. Daughton hosted a reception at three o'clock on Friday, March 20, 2015 at his residence. The Honorable Heather Higginbottom, Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources, delivered remarks as the lead of the U.S. delegation.

Deputy Secretary Higginbottom, in her remarks, revealed the names of Namibian youth leaders selected to attend the 2015 Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) in Washington, DC. They are:

1. Emilia Ndateelela Nghikembua, 29, from Ogongo
2. Sebulon Nghilifavali David, 30, from Okaku
3. Elzaan Le-Anne de Wee, 24, from Windhoek
4. Pujatura Kerii Kaveterua, 24, from Windhoek
5. Onesmus Hipandwa Shoombe, 31, from Ombalantu
6. Heinrich Hafeni Nghidipaya, 32, from Walvis Bay
7. Charnelle Andrenne Fortuin, 28, from Swakopmond
8. Cosmos Dylan Shaduka, 34, from Otjiwarongo
9. Razikua Rodjesta Kaviua, 29, from Gobabis

Deputy Secretary Higginbottom said, "President Obama has said again and again that the Mandela Washington Fellowship is one of his proudest

accomplishments. When he launched this program in 2010 – then called the Young Africa Leaders Initiative – the President saw it as an historic opportunity to support the next generation of African entrepreneurs, educators, activists, and innovators.” She added, “In the years to follow, the Mandela Fellowship has surpassed our greatest hopes and expectations, and is now our flagship program for partnering with Africa’s best and brightest young minds.”

Guests present at the reception included some of the selected candidates, candidates for other U.S. exchange opportunities, returned alumni of previous YALI programs (including Fellows who met with President Obama in 2010 and 2014) and YALI alumni mentors who are seasoned Namibian leaders who have encouraged young leaders to pursue their goals of participating in U.S. educational and professional exchanges.

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**Background on the Mandela Washington Fellowship,
the flagship program of the President's Young African Leaders Initiative
(YALI)**

The Mandela Washington Fellowship is the flagship program of the President's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and embodies President Obama's commitment to invest in the future of Africa. The first class of 500 Mandela Washington Fellows traveled to the United States in June 2014 for six weeks of intensive executive leadership training, networking, and skills building, followed by a Presidential Summit in Washington, DC. Through this initiative, nine young Namibian leaders honed the skills and made the connections they need to accelerate their career trajectories and contribute robustly to strengthening democratic institutions, spurring economic growth, and enhancing peace and security in Africa.

The Class of 2014

Selected from nearly 50,000 applications from across Africa in 2014, the 500 Mandela Washington Fellows represented the extraordinary promise of an emerging generation of entrepreneurs, activists, and public officials. Mandela Washington Fellows demonstrated proven track records of leadership in a public, private, or civic organization; and demonstrated a strong commitment to contributing their skills and talents to building and serving their communities. The first class of Fellows represented all 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and included equal numbers of men and women. Despite their youth, more than 75 percent of the Fellows already held a mid-level or executive position, and 48 percent had graduate degrees. Twenty-five percent of Fellows worked in a non-governmental institution and 39 percent of them operated their own business. Nearly all of the 2014 Fellows were the first in their families to visit the United States.

The Class of 2015

Youth leaders selected to represent Namibia in the 2015 Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), hail from many regions in Namibia. At the reception, they shared their stories with the visiting American delegation and members of the delegation shared the Washington perspective of Namibia as a role model for the region.