

**SPEECH OF HIS EXCELLENCY ROBERT WHITEHEAD,  
AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO TOGO  
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF A WORKSHOP  
CONCERNING THE INVESTIGATION AND  
PROSECUTION OF NARCOTICS CASES IN TOGO  
AT THE U.S. EMBASSY, LOMÉ,  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2015  
MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM 09:00AM**

- EXCELLENCE MR MINISTER OF JUSTICE
- HONORABLE MAGISTRATES
- MEMBERS OF THE POLICE AND GENDARMERIE
- HONORED GUESTS,

Welcome to the United States embassy. Today's workshop on the investigation and prosecution of narcotics cases in Togo is the first in a partnership between the United States Department of Justice and its Togolese counterpart, the Ministry of Justice and Relations with the Institutions of the Republic. The program's objective is to establish a unit of magistrates specialized in the investigation and prosecution of narcotics cases.

In English, we sometimes speak of "catching the big fish." This expression inspired the title for today's workshop. The expression is a reminder that, although arresting and prosecuting "little fish," the transporters and low-level dealers, is necessary, we also need to target "big fish,"

the big time dealers and their bosses at the top of the criminal pyramid who profit most from the illicit trafficking of narcotics.

Cooperation at the international level is essential to win this fight. But we also need cooperation at home, between the law enforcement officers investigating narcotics cases and the judicial officers charged with prosecuting and deciding those cases.

To that end, we are honored to have with us today a representative of the United States Department of Justice's Narcotics and Dangerous Drug Section, Mr. Charles Miracle. We also have with us today colleagues from Benin five magistrates and the head of Benin's equivalent of OCRTIDB (OCK- TRIB), which is called OCERTID OH-SIR-TEED). They will share their experiences with you and establish the cross-border contacts so that Togo and Benin can become more effective in fighting transnational organized crime.

I am certain today's workshop will serve as a first step in the creation of a regional network of prosecutors specialized in the investigation and prosecution of narcotics cases. I wish you a highly successful workshop and more success when you return to your offices.

Thank you very much.