

SPEECH OF HIS EXCELLENCY ROBERT WHITEHEAD,
AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO TOGO
AT THE DEDICATION CEREMONY
OF THE ABWE HOSPITAL ESPERANCE
AT MANGO, OTI PRÉFECTURE
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2015 AT 10:00AM

- MR. PREFECT OF OTI
- HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TOGO
- HEALTH OFFICIALS,
- TRADITIONAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS,
- MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY OF MANGO
- HONORED GUESTS,

Good morning. I am honored to represent the people of the United States of America at today's dedication ceremony of ABWE (ab-WAY) International's Hospital of Hope. It is always an immense pleasure for me to visit Mango and the Savanes region and to be amongst so many kind people I meet here. My only regret is that I am not able to be here more often. I am particularly proud to participate in today's ceremony, because expanding access to quality health care in Togo is a cause close to my heart and one of our primary objectives as a diplomatic mission.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have said in the past that the American people care about the people of Togo and I repeat it today, because it is true. Over the last twenty years, the United States government has provided funding for close to four hundred

development projects in Togo. For example, last year alone, we gave Togo more than seven billion francs CFA in development aid. And, just last week, I was in Agbavé, a town close to Kpalimé, to attend the inauguration of a health clinic financed in its entirety by the American people at a cost of two hundred forty-two million francs CFA.

Since December, medical experts from our Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, known as the CDC, based in Atlanta, Georgia, have visited Togo and spent many weeks here. Through the World Health Organization, this team of experts has been collaborating with the Ministry of Health to strengthen Togo's Ebola preparedness in case of an outbreak of the Ebola virus.

In addition, our Peace Corps programs cover a broad range of community health initiatives and malaria prevention efforts. The United States' Department of Defense Humanitarian Assistance Program builds clinics and laboratories to strengthen the capacity of the local healthcare system, and its HIV/AIDS Prevention Program works in partnership with the Togolese Armed Forces. Our USAID programs assist with health issues from family planning to neglected tropical diseases, including the elimination of lymphatic filariasis in Togo last year.

And our continued dedication to promoting healthy and prosperous Togolese citizens is on display here today. Through a grant to ABWE International, made possible by the Ambassador's Special Self Help Program, the United States Embassy funded the installation of a water filtration system here at the Hospital of Hope. And though this contribution may seem modest, it further demonstrates the United States' commitment to addressing the global challenge of water supply and sanitation for communities in need. We believe safe drinking water and sanitation are essential to the rights of all people to an adequate standard of living. They are indeed essential to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Now, I understand building the Hospital of Hope was a real team effort. You brought together long-term workers, construction teams, and the local citizens of Mango. And how wonderful to know that many of the local workers have received training to transition into health care positions. I also learned that every cement block is used in the

building process was made by hand. The wall around the compound that surrounds the hospital alone is made up of over 13,000 hand-made cement blocks.

To the entire Mango community that made this hospital a reality, I offer my sincere congratulations. And thank you to Mr. Prefet, as well as traditional and religious leaders, for your support. A special thanks to my fellow Americans from the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism. ABWE serves communities in forty-five countries on five continents. In Togo's Plateaux region, ABWE built the Hôpital Baptiste de Kpélé Tsiko, which it has operated for the past thirty years. The ABWE hospitals exemplify the best of life-saving, health outreach by American medical professionals, such as when the SS Africa Mercy visited Lomé in 2012. During its five-month stay in port, the world's largest non-governmental hospital ship, staffed by an international volunteer medical crew, provided free surgeries, including dental procedures, to hundreds of Togolese citizens and trained local healthcare representatives. I say to these fine people who have come here to work with the Togolese people, without your efforts, these wonderful projects would not be possible. Through your faith, dedication, generosity, and good will, you demonstrate the very best of what the United States of America stands for.

In closing, I wish to thank you for inviting me to share your joy at the dedication ceremony of the Esperance Hospital here in Mango. It will surely serve to benefit the health and welfare of your community for many years to come.

Thank you.