



Embassy of the United States of America Bujumbura, Burundi

Remarks by Deputy Assistant Secretary Cynthia Akuetteh NEC Dedication Ceremony May 21, 2013 Bujumbura, Burundi

I am honored to represent the State Department at the opening of our new embassy. This new building is a symbol of our long partnership with the Burundian people, which began when we established diplomatic relations in 1962 when Burundi declared its independence.

President Obama has asked me to reaffirm our strong ties to Burundi. Our partnership with Burundi embodies President Obama's four pillars for U.S. engagement in Africa: first, to strengthen democratic institutions; second, to spur economic growth, trade, and investment; third, to advance peace and security; and fourth to promote opportunity and development.

To support these pillars, the United States has committed about \$82 million annually for programs to improve the health of Burundians, support democracy and good governance, stimulate economic growth, and enhance defense cooperation.

Through our USAID programs, we support efforts to reduce HIV/AIDS, malaria, malnutrition and maternal deaths. Other programs promote food security. Through our exchange programs, we have trained hundreds of Burundians here and in the United States on topics including entrepreneurship, agribusiness, health care, education administration, journalism, English language teaching, anti-terrorism. We have even had exchange programs on freight handling and hip-hop! For the first time in 30 years, we are sending two outstanding Burundians to the United States to participate in the prestigious Humphrey Fellows Leadership Program. Our new embassy building has a high-tech information resource center that we invite students, faculty, and researchers to visit and use.

Through the State Department Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program (ACOTA), since 2007, the United States has provided over \$102 million in training to the Burundi battalions that have so courageously participated in the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia with ongoing support to AMISOM of \$30 million a year. Their efforts have helped bring stability to the people of that long-suffering country and have demonstrated Burundi's particular understanding of the human costs of conflict.

We thank Burundi for its active partnership in all these key areas of cooperation. Ours is a partnership based on our mutual interest in promoting peace, security and prosperity and on shared democratic values. In that context, we look forward to supporting Burundi's efforts in the coming years to prepare for peaceful and fair elections in 2015.

As President Obama has said, going into the future, America will be with you. As a partner. As a friend. This new U.S. embassy is a symbol of our enduring friendship.