

PREPARED MESSAGE
U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
SOUTHEAST NATURAL RESOURCE LEADERS GROUP ANNUAL RETREAT
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE
AUGUST 8, 2000

On behalf of President Clinton, Vice President Gore and the United States Department of Transportation, I congratulate the *Southeast Natural Resource Leaders Group* for your commitment to natural resource conservation. And I thank you for making the President's Delta Initiative the focus of this year's retreat.

Sustainable development requires us to protect the environment for future generations. And supporting this fundamental principle of balance lies at the heart of this Administration's vision for Livable Communities in the 21st century. As the Vice President has said, *"I believe that refocusing communities across the country on ways to sustain prosperity while improving the quality of life is one of the greatest challenges we face as a nation."*

That is why I am so appreciative of the efforts of the Southeast Natural Resource Leaders Group on behalf of sustainable economic growth.

I am also proud of this Administration for our efforts to promote economic development through fiscal discipline, expanded trade and greater investment in our people. Under President Clinton and Vice President Gore's leadership, the U.S. economy has generated 22 million new jobs and the lowest inflation rates since the 1960s.

We have turned the largest budget deficits in history into the largest surpluses in history. These achievements have created a huge opening to address the large, long-term challenges facing our country:

- For the first time since 1835, we have a chance to pay off the National Debt;
- For the first time in memory we have the opportunity to secure the solvency of Social Security and Medicare;
- We also have the opportunity to make sure the Delta states you represent fully benefit from the fruits of America's economic success.

As Vice President Gore has said,

"Poverty in the Delta remains at unacceptable levels... We have to do better -- and we will do better -- because we are committed to ensuring that in this unprecedented period of prosperity we leave no one behind who works hard and plays by the rules."

President Clinton, of course, has taken a leadership role in promoting the economic development of the Delta throughout his professional life -- including chairing the original Delta Commission beginning in 1988.

And under Vice President Gore's leadership -- and that of former Mississippi Congressman and Agricultural Secretary Mike Espy -- this Administration initiated a series of new efforts that have benefitted the Delta -- Empowerment Zones, Enterprise communities, the Livability Agenda and more.

Approximately one-fourth of all the EZ and ECs announced in 1994 were located in the Delta. This program's success led to a second round of expansion in 1999, and a proposed third round in the Fiscal Year 2001 budget.

The record-setting federal investment in transportation has been a major component of all of our initiatives that impact the Delta. Among our programs that directly support Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities I would include:

- *Job Access* and other transit programs directed by our Federal Transit Administration;
- *Operation Lifesaver* within the Federal Railroad Administration, which is working to improve safety at rail crossings;
- *The Safe Communities* program at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration;
- Efforts by the Federal Aviation Administration to assist in airport development and reduce the impact of aircraft noise on local communities;
- *The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program* and *The Transportation Enhancement Program* -- as well as highway improvements in general at the Federal Highway Administration;
- And *The Port Facility Conveyance Program* operated by the Maritime Administration.

The Delta has also benefitted substantially from the dramatic increases in Highway Trust Fund Receipts brought about by the Intermodal Transportation Sufficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) signed by President Clinton just over two years ago.

As a result of TEA-21, the federal investment in surface transportation is now at its highest level ever -- some \$34.5 billion in FY 2000.

Let me also say a few words about the Administration's *Rural Transportation Initiative*, which addresses the needs of millions of Americans who live in rural areas or small communities and lack access to adequate transportation services.

The key components of this program within DOT include improving safety, involving rural communities in transportation planning, enhancing local public passenger transportation, connecting rural communities to transportation services and supporting tourism.

The Delta has been and will remain a major focus of all these efforts and initiatives. Under the Clinton-Gore Administration's budget proposals for transportation improvements, the U.S. Department of Transportation will provide \$69 million in funding targeting the Delta region for 2001.

This includes \$48 million for new bridge and highway infrastructure in the Delta. Of the latter amount, \$25 million would be dedicated specifically to I-69 and the Great River Bridge; \$20 million would be provided for transit funds, including \$15 million for public transit buses and bus facilities and \$5 million to promote van pools, new bus routes and transportation alternatives.

I am also pleased that DOT will be working with the Departments of Commerce and the Interior to build up the \$13 billion Delta tourism industry.

Yet we all know that the Federal government is only one actor in promoting the Delta's development. The future of transportation as well as the environment in the Delta, is about the choices all of the stakeholders in the development process make.

That is why, at the U.S. Department of Transportation, we believe that everyone should have a say in identifying what they want from the transportation system of the future. To support this commitment to inclusiveness and participation, we have been conducting "2025" Visioning Sessions over this past year with stakeholder groups across the country* to clarify a vision of transportation for the next 25 years.

We plan to publish the results of our visioning efforts this September; we will also use what we learn in our visioning sessions to help plan the *International Transportation Symposium* DOT will host this fall in Washington, D.C., from October 9-12.

I mention this because I believe that it is important that government agencies operating in the Delta region be well-represented at this symposium, which will provide a unique opportunity to explore and consider innovative possibilities for transportation on a regional as well as national and international level.

I am therefore personally inviting each one of you, as leaders who are concerned about the environmental impact of transportation, to join me for this important meeting. We need your insight and your commitment.

I recently had the privilege of hosting the historic "*Delta Vision, Delta Voices*" conference on the "Mississippi Delta Beyond 2000," which many of you attended. That meeting was a direct outgrowth of the "*Delta Beyond 2000*" conference held here in Memphis, back in 1998, which many of you also attended.

At that earlier meeting we set in motion a process of collaboration that resulted in the Mississippi Delta Regional Initiative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among nine federal agencies, who pledged to work together to establish a framework for promoting economic revitalization in this region.

That MOU points toward the issue I want to encourage you to address at this retreat: the future of the Delta -- as well as the future of the environment in the Delta -- depends on how well Federal agencies work together.

Now is the time for you -- the top field leaders of Federal agencies -- to sit down and compare ideas about how to best work together to prioritize, coordinate and implement the Delta Initiatives.

As you work together over the course of these three days, I encourage you to:

- Study the MOU we signed here in Memphis two years ago, particularly in light of the recommendations of the *Delta Visions, Delta Voices: The Mississippi Beyond 2000* report of the President's Delta Commission;
- Take a hard look at what you and your agency can do to foster cooperation and leverage resources by working more closely with your colleagues;
- As you meet with representatives from other agencies and states, use this opportunity to identify some specific work projects and field activities you could engage in together;
- Make some promises -- and establish structures of support to help you keep those promises.

This three-day seminar could be a turning-point in the economic and environmental future of the Delta region. We have an enormous opportunity to lay the foundation for new possibilities for our communities and our people. As the President has said, "*If we cannot fully develop the Delta now, when we have the strongest economy in our lifetime, when will we ever get around to it?*" By working together in partnership for economic development, community and

environmental sustainability, we can help America move from strength to strength to a better future.

And by working together, we can help insure that America's best days are yet to come.

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Speech

REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION 75TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
WASHINGTON, D.C.
AUGUST 11, 2000

On behalf of President Clinton, Vice President Gore and the U.S. Department of Transportation, I am honored to join you for the 75th Annual Convention of the National Bar Association.

It is with pleasure and with humility that I accept this award -- not for myself alone -- but also on behalf of the 100,000, visionary and vigilant employees of the U.S. Department of Transportation, in recognition of all that we have done, and continue to do together, that honors C. Francis Stradford's commitment to equality and to opportunity.

I am delighted to have with me tonight -- along with other members of the DOT family present at this convention -- two past NBA leaders and key members of my leadership team: Former NBA president and secretary, Walter Sutton, who now serves as Deputy Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, and former vice president and treasurer of the NBA, Frank Seales, who is presently serving as Chief Counsel of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Let me thank Immediate Past President Harold Pope for his visionary leadership. Under your watch, the National Bar Association has experienced tremendous growth and enjoyed record success. Let me also congratulate and welcome the NBA's new leadership team, President Evett Simmons and President-elect Michael Roiser, who -- along with Executive Director John Crump -- are well prepared to lead the NBA to higher heights and greater achievements in this new century and new millennium.

For three quarters of a century, the nation's oldest and largest association of African-American judges and lawyers -- the National Bar Association -- has provided high-quality legal counsel to the African American community.

Time and time again the work of the NBA has helped break down -- and overcome -- enormous barriers of discrimination.

To be the recipient of an award named for one of the founders of the nation's premier legal association for African American attorneys is a singular honor.

In his long and distinguished career, C. Francis Stradford worked steadfastly on behalf of African Americans to insure access to equality, to opportunity, to an improved quality of life.

C. Francis Stradford was not only a notable lawyer, he was a pillar of strength in the African American community. His legacy helped to make the National Bar Association a powerful force for good in our nation's history.

President Clinton and Vice President Gore share your founder's values and commitment to inclusivity. I believe that the process of broadening participation and enhancing opportunities for success in America's future for the 21st century will turn out to be the hallmark of what this Administration has achieved over the past eight years.

I also believe that a lasting legacy of this Administration is that we have changed the national conversation about transportation. Transportation is no longer only about public works -- but also about serving people by connecting them to opportunity. It is about Welfare to Work, Access to Jobs, and insuring that Disadvantaged Business Enterprises get considered for government procurement contracts.

Transportation is truly "more than concrete, asphalt and steel." It is the tie that binds communities and nations together. It links home, daycare, school, workplace, medical care, retail stores and entertainment. As Vice President Gore has said, "*If you can't get to work, you can't go to work.*"

As part of this broader understanding of what transportation means to all Americans -- especially working families, we at the U.S. DOT are working with our stakeholders across the country to clarify a vision for transportation over the next 25 years. And part of my mission here today is to invite you to join us in this effort.

America's 21st century transportation system must be safe and sustainable to be sure, but it also must be *international in reach*, connecting us to markets and destinations around the world; *Intermodal in form*, enabling us to achieve a balance among various modes of transportation; *Intelligent in character*, allowing

us to harness the awesome power of technology in ways that benefit people; And last -- but not least -- *Inclusive in service*, leaving no one behind.

This October the U.S. Department of Transportation will host an International Transportation Symposium in Washington, D.C. With inclusivity a key part of the agenda of our conference, I hope that the National Bar Association will be well represented -- and I urge you to consider joining us for this important conference.

Bill Clinton and Al Gore are grateful for the support of the National Bar Association, and for the role you have played in the progress we have made together over these past seven and one half years.

The President and Vice President's policies and programs have led us from record budget deficits, to seven consecutive years of fiscal improvement and the first back-to-back balanced budgets in 42 years.

The strength and historic duration of the current economic expansion has helped bring economic opportunity to millions of people once cut off from the economic mainstream; our economy has created more than 22 million new jobs since January 1993.

For African-Americans, this represents an era of unprecedented advances: The Clinton-Gore Administration has named more African-Americans to Cabinet seats, judgeships, and high posts than any administration in history. African-American paychecks are growing; our median income is up; welfare rolls are shrinking.

And African-American home ownership is at an all-time high. African-American unemployment is at the lowest level on record; there are more African-American business owners and CEO's today than ever before.

This is *very* good news. But, as President Clinton has so aptly said, "*Now is not the time to rest.*" And as Vice President Gore has also said, "*Sometimes good laws aren't good enough.*" Now that we have the written law on our side, the time has come to move beyond the "letter of the law" to the "heart of the matter."

In the 21st century we need, in the Vice President's words, to "Break down barriers not just in our law books -- but also in our workplaces, in our school houses, in our police stations -- and in the human heart."

In this short phrase, the Vice-President has expressed a clear vision of what America's agenda needs to be for this new century and new millennium. His vision was not developed in the heat of this campaign, with an eye on attracting headlines. It is a vision that the Vice President has been working on and refining over many, many years of thoughtful reflection and consultation with the leading thinkers of our civilization.

It also resonates well with what other African American leadership organizations are saying. Last week I was in New York, where I addressed the National Urban Leagues' Annual Conference. Their theme this year is Equality and Power for the New Millennium. Two weeks ago, I was at the Rainbow Push convention in Chicago. And last month, I spoke to the leaders of the NAACP, meeting in Baltimore. Everywhere I go African American leaders are grateful that economic times are good -- but they all remain concerned about those who are still left out.

As National Urban League President Hugh Price put it, "We are seeing GAPs and Home Depots and Sears moving to 125th Street in New York and the revitalization of Washington D.C.'s U Street Corridor. That would have been unthinkable just a few years ago." Yet, as he also pointed out, "We still have a long way to go to achieve parity."

Just a few short years ago, "parity" was not the question. The question for many African Americans was still one of survival. When Bill Clinton and Al Gore were running for President and Vice President eight years ago, our nation was in the grip of economic distress, social decline and political gridlock.

The old answers were obsolete and new conditions demanded a new approach. That new approach was rooted in the basic American values of opportunity, responsibility and community. Led by Bill Clinton and Al Gore, our Administration offered America a "Third Way."

I want to say a little bit about The Third Way, because I think it relates to the themes of your convention seminars. Back in the 1960's, America learned that government couldn't provide all the answers. That was the First Way. Back in the 1970's and 1980's, the nation found out that the private sector, by itself, also couldn't provide all the answers. That was the Second Way.

Then came the 1992 election -- and the American people took a chance on a Third Way -- a strategy that sought to combine responsible government with the creativity and innovation offered by the private sector.

I mention this because the "private sector" today includes a lot of folks here in this room. To you I would say that, as important as government programs can be, we need your help constructing a solid foundation for a public-private partnership that works at all levels.

We need to approach this challenge with the vision required to ensure that every American can reap the benefits of our nation's great economic times. And with your help, we are.

In his last Sunday sermon, at the National Cathedral here in Washington, Dr. Martin Luther King said "We must come to see that human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be co-workers with God."

And that is what we are called to be: 'Co-workers with God.' And as co-workers with God, it is up to each one of us to ensure that no American is left behind as we move our nation upward and onward in this new century and new millennium

We must carry Dr. King's message to all corners of America! We must continue to move from strength to strength, working together to provide all of our people with opportunities to reach higher heights.

Victory in the 21st century will be born of our hopes -- the hopes so eloquently expressed in the mighty anthem *Lift Every Voice and Sing* "'Till earth and heaven ring...Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies....Let us march on 'till victory is won."

To the members of the National Bar Association, congratulations on 75 years of extraordinary achievement. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to celebrate the legacy of C. Francis Stradford and the National Bar Association and for the recognition you have given me tonight.

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REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY OF
U.S. TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY RODNEY E. SLATER
NATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
WASHINGTON, D.C.
SATURDAY, AUGUST 12, 2000

For more than a century, the National Medical Association has expressed the collective voice of African-American physicians fighting for appropriate health care for all Americans and greater equality in the medical profession.

Stoney the road we trod;
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have our weary feet
Come to the place our fathers sighed?

We've come a long way. Yet, as President Clinton so aptly said, "Now is not the time to rest." The president knows, as does Vice President Gore, that we must go farther towards increasing access and equality in health care for all segments of society. My message to you today is about an important next step that NMA and the U.S. Department of Transportation can take together on this journey.

Our accomplishments in recent years give us reason to be optimistic. Under the leadership of President Clinton and Vice President Gore, we've enacted the most comprehensive Medicare reforms in history; Historic FDA reforms are expediting the review and approval of new drugs; Mental health parity provisions are now law. I am also especially proud that on this administration's watch we've raised child immunization rates to an all time high. There is much, much more that could be said about what we have done together but, my point is, this administration in partnership with the NMA and others, has come a long way toward improving the nation's health. Together we can do more.

Partnerships make a difference. When Bill Clinton and Al Gore took office, this nation was gripped with economic distress, social disparity, and political gridlock. The old way of doing things was obsolete. Conditions demanded an innovative approach rooted in opportunity, responsibility and community. This administration rose to the challenge, offering Americans a "new way."

In the 1960s, America learned that government alone was not the answer. That was the "First Way." During the 1970s and 80s, we discovered the private sector itself couldn't provide what was needed. That was the "Second Way." Then came the 1992 election and Americans embraced a "Third Way" -- a strategy to partner responsible government with the creativity and innovation offered by the private sector.

By "private sector," we mean not only businesses, but churches, charities, institutions and organizations such as NMA. As important as government programs can be, we need your help constructing a solid foundation for a public-private partnership that works at all levels.

The Third Way is working. Under the leadership of President Clinton and Vice President Gore we begin the 21st century with over 22 million new jobs; The fastest economic growth rates in over 30 years; The lowest poverty in two decades; The first back-to-back surpluses in almost half a century. We now have a chance to pay off the debt for the first time since 1835, and secure the solvency of Social Security and Medicare.

Unlike past economic recoveries, today's expansion spreads benefits more widely, bringing opportunities to millions once cut off from the mainstream. Today, more African Americans are homeowners, business owners, and CEOs than ever before. Poverty and unemployment among minorities are at the lowest levels since we began keeping records. And doors to college are opening wider for our young people.

The real key to our future is education. That was the motivation behind this administration's efforts to step up support for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. President Clinton and Vice President Gore have increased financial support to HBCUs by nearly 25 percent. The U.S. DOT also recognizes the importance of HBCUs and is advancing research, education and technology at our University Transportation Centers at these institutions.

We at the U.S. DOT are also reaching out to young people through the Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Futures Program. With one-in-seven jobs today transportation-related, the U.S. DOT seeks to challenge our youth to develop math, science and technology skills that will prepare them for

careers in transportation or other fields. I am proud to report that we've already reached some 1.5 million students.

No "sermon" is complete without an altar call. Inspired by the NMA and others, African-American physicians like Surgeon General David Satcher are helping to advance medical breakthroughs that are dramatically increasing our life expectancy. Yet, there remains one epidemic that continues to plague us with devastating consequences.

Seat-belt use among African Americans is dramatically lower than national averages for all groups. Motor-vehicle crashes account for approximately 800,000 yearly emergency-room visits by African Americans. Among Black males ages 15 through 24, automobile-related incidents are the second leading cause of death, and a leading killer of boys and girls from infancy through age 14. Comparing road miles traveled, the risk to African-American children is almost three times greater than other communities.

Again, we look to the "Third Way" for answers. I want to thank NMA for taking on our challenge to work in partnership to increase road safety for African Americans. Through patient counseling, public education, and motivational speakers, the association is focusing on four areas -- seat belts, child seats, impaired driving, and pedestrian awareness. In 1996, seat-belt use among African Americans was only 51 percent. Within two years it increased by 15 percent. We must go farther. With your help we surely can overcome this tragic loss of our best and brightest.

The U.S. DOT continues to expand our partnerships with the NMA and others as we work to develop our transportation system for the new century and the new millennium. We are working with our stakeholders across the country to clarify a vision for transportation over the next 25 years. Part of my mission here today is to invite you to join us in this effort.

America's 21st century transportation system must be safe and sustainable to be sure, but it also must be international in reach, connecting us to markets and destinations around the world; Intermodal in form, enabling us to achieve a balance among various modes of transportation; Intelligent in character, allowing us to harness the awesome power of technology in ways that benefit people; And last -- but not least -- inclusive in service, leaving no one behind.

This October, the U.S. DOT will host an International Transportation Symposium here in Washington. With the issue of inclusion and access to quality transportation for all a key part of the symposium agenda, I hope the National Medical Association will be well represented -- and I urge you to consider joining us.

NMA has been a great partner not only for the U.S. DOT, but also the nation. And, during this election year there is no greater service you can offer than encouraging people to participate in the electoral process. That's why I am so proud of NMA's "2000 Vote! It's Just What the Doctor Ordered Campaign" to register and educate new voters. Recent studies reveal that over eight million African Americans remain unregistered and 45 percent of the 12 million who are able to vote, do not. We applaud the NMA for its commitment to full participation by all African Americans in the most vital aspect of citizenship.

For, voting is not just a freedom -- it's a responsibility. A responsibility to the future of our children and our nation. In education, transportation, and medical care, we know there's farther we can go towards equality. In the words of Nelson Mandela:

"I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended.

Our long walk has not ended. At the dawn of this new century and new millennium, NMA and the U.S. DOT -- together -- have an enormous opportunity to make a difference. By working in partnership we can assure that America's best days are yet to come.

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TALKING POINTS FOR
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
RODNEY E. SLATER
AVIATION STAKEHOLDERS MEETING NEWS AVAILABILITY
MONDAY, AUGUST 21, 2000

BASIC POINT: Today's meeting is part of a *long-term* process initiated by the Clinton-Gore Administration to improve America's 21st Century transportation system.

The Timing of today's meeting is dictated by the *urgency* of public concern about current airline delays; but today's meeting is also part of a long-term process to improve U.S. transportation -- including aviation -- in the new century and the new millennium.

Action Steps

- (Early 1993) President Clinton's trip to Everett, Wash. (Recognized importance of aviation to U.S. economy. Started a turn around in the industry).
- (March 2000) President Clinton announces the Spring/Summer 2000 Initiative that calls for the FAA and airlines to reroute flights to minimize inconvenience to air travelers. Results so far:
 - Air traffic control (ATC) delays in July declined 11 percent from June's level; and
 - According to an Aug. 3 press release, one major carrier reported "... a steady decline in delays during peak travel months this summer, which it attributes in large part to the efforts of the FAA and the hard work of the nation's air traffic controllers."

- (Currently) ATC modernization will add capacity to airspace system (e.g. increased reliability and performance, new computer tools, satellite-based navigation systems [Free-Flight]).
 - (1998) New voice communications systems at en route centers;
 - (Sept. 1999) New mainframe computers for 20 en route centers;
 - (May 2000) New controller workstations at en route centers; and
 - (Currently) developing new computer and controller workstations for 175 terminal control facilities;

Past, Present and Future

- (December 1999) "Aviation in the 21st Century -- Beyond Open Skies" ministerial in Chicago (drew representatives from more than 90 countries, all segments of the U.S. aviation community to discuss future of aviation). Adopted the "first-ever" National R&D Plan on Aviation Safety, Security, Efficiency, and Environmental Compatibility.
- (July 25 2000) The U.S. Department of Transportation Inspector General report calls upon airlines to change scheduling practices where more flights are scheduled to arrive or depart than an airport can handle in that period.
- (Over the past year) Visited some 40 cities in more than 20 states for "2025 Visioning Sessions" with representative stakeholder groups. Purpose -- to clarify a vision of all modes of transportation over the next 25 years.
 - Several sessions focused exclusively on the future ("Economics & Safety," "Air Transport," and "International Aviation").

- (October 2000) The U.S. DOT will host the "International Transportation Symposium" in Washington - with a significant focus on aviation issues.

Conclusion

- Broader participation in planning by all transportation has been the hallmark of this administration for the past eight years.
- We believe in "inclusivity," that's why today's meeting included labor, consumer representatives, airline CEOs, and Airport officials.
- As air traffic continues to grow [one billion passengers by the end of the decade], there is a clear need for more runways at existing airports and new airports. That's why a committed effort is needed from government, industry, labor and all the stakeholders of our nation's airspace system. Today's meeting underscores that partnership.

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PREPARED STATEMENT
U.S. TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY RODNEY E. SLATER
FY 2001 TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS BILL SAFETY CONCERNS
MEDIA ROUNDTABLE
THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 2000

Thank you for coming.

With me, to assist in answering your questions this afternoon, are: *Clyde Hart*, the Acting Deputy Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the latest addition to our leadership team, *Dr. Sue Bailey*, the new Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Dr. Bailey was one of the nation's earliest and most passionate advocates of seat belts; this is her first full week on the job and we are all delighted to have her on board.

Transportation safety has been much in the news recently and there are many issues you may wish to ask all three of us about. We will make every effort to accommodate as many of your questions as possible. However, the specific purpose of today's media round table is to direct your attention to three important safety provisions under consideration as part of the fiscal year *(FY) 2001 transportation appropriations bill*.

The three issues I want to focus on are *.08 blood alcohol content (BAC); hours of service for commercial truck and bus drivers; and vehicle rollover ratings*. Congressional conferees will take action on these provisions -- one way or another -- over the next few weeks. Depending on what decisions are made, hundreds of lives could be saved every year. So my request this afternoon is that you hold your questions on other safety topics until we can talk about these three legislative issues.

I have strongly urged Congressional conferees to *retain* the Senate provision requiring the states to adopt a .08 BAC law as the national standard defining impaired driving -- or face highway funding restrictions, beginning in FY 2004. The scientific evidence is clear. At .08 BAC a person's ability to drive is seriously degraded. He or she should not be driving. Establishing a "bright line" defining impaired driving will send a message to drivers concerning acceptable behavior that is "loud and clear." It will also simplify public education and law enforcement training.

- more -

While sanctions should not be considered lightly, this proposal has strong bipartisan support. The possibility of sanctions, in fact, motivated many states to raise the minimum drinking age to 21 and to enact zero tolerance under-age drinking laws. Most industrialized countries already have a BAC standard of .08 *or less*. And several have recently cut the limit to .05 or even lower. And in every country that has evaluated the impact of setting a lower limit, alcohol-related traffic fatalities are *down*.

We can experience a similar reduction in fatalities here in the U.S. The eighteen American states and the District of Columbia that have taken the lead in adopting .08 BAC laws, already have. As President Clinton has said,

"The people of these states and the District of Columbia have sent a strong message that they will not tolerate impaired drivers on their roads. I challenge the Congress to enact stronger legislation requiring states to make .08 BAC their threshold for drunk driving or risk losing highway construction funds. State .08 BAC laws have proved to be effective in preventing crashes and improving safety -- our highest transportation priority."

I have also let the Congress know that I am concerned about the Senate provision that would prohibit DOT from continuing its efforts to take dangerous drivers off the road, by reforming the 67-year old hours-of-service (HOS) regulation for commercial truck and bus drivers. The driver fatigue problem is serious. It is a significant factor in 15 percent of all commercial vehicle accidents and causes some 755 deaths and more than 19,000 injuries to travelers every year.

Back in 1995, it *was the Congress itself* that directed DOT, by law, to examine the driver fatigue issue and the number of hours motor carriers can safely work. Last year the Congress *reemphasized* its concern about improving truck and bus safety by passing legislation creating a separate *Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration* within DOT to focus on this issue.

On April 25, 2000, we responded with a proposed rule that would reduce the driving time allowed within a 24-hour period from the current maximum of 16 hours to 12 hours. Our proposal also recommended changes that reflect current scientific knowledge about sleep and fatigue. We also called for more accurate documentation of hours of duty by replacing hand-written driver logbooks with on-board electronic recorders.

Significant elements of the trucking industry are strongly opposed to our proposed rule in its present form. We have held extensive hearings and received

more than *50 thousand* comments. However, given the intense response to this proposal we want to hold additional public roundtables with key stakeholders before closing the comment review process.

That's why we extended the comment period, first to October 30, 2000 and -- more recently -- to December 15. I have therefore urged the Appropriations bill conferees to drop the proposed moratorium on this process of inquiry and rule refinement. I strongly believe that we should complete this process. By following through on what we've already begun, DOT will be able to develop a practical rule that enhances safety.

Finally, I have expressed to the Congress my strong objection to the provision that would prohibit NHTSA from adding vehicle rollover ratings to the New Car Assessment Program until an additional study is done. We don't need additional studies to determine that vehicle rollover is a major highway safety issue. We already know that rollovers cause almost one third of all fatalities in motor vehicle crashes. This includes 6 out of 10 people killed in Sport Utility Vehicle crashes and 4 out of 10 fatalities in pickup truck crashes.

Consumers deserve to know the stability differences among different vehicle types and models. And that is what we propose to tell them. After extensive research, NHTSA has developed a scientific formula, called the "Static Stability Factor" (SSF) that measures how "top heavy" a vehicle is -- and whether that vehicle is likely to rollover in a crash.

Our proposal is simple. Beginning with the 2001 model year, provide this Static Stability Factor information to consumers, as part of our New Car Assessment Program. Research on the Static Stability Factor has been under review for more than 20 years. Researchers have analyzed more than 185,000 single-vehicle crashes in six states and verified that SSF correlates strongly with the likelihood of a rollover.

Any further delay in providing this information to the American consumer puts travelers on America's roadways and highways at unnecessary risk of death or injury from rollover.

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Speech

**U.S. TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY RODNEY E. SLATER
COMMERCIAL DIALOGUE EVENT PROGRAM
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER
ABUJA, NIGERIA
SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 2000**

Good Morning!

I am Rodney Slater, the United States Secretary of Transportation. And on behalf of President Clinton and the U.S. delegation, I am honored to join Professor Anya, the Chair of Nigeria's Economic Summit Group, in welcoming all of you to today's dialogue on the future of commerce between Nigeria and the United States.

I am delighted to see so many familiar faces in today's audience from my earlier trips to Africa, both with the President two years ago and on some of my other trips to the continent on behalf of the President.

And I am proud to be a part of the distinguished public and private sector team the President has brought with him for this discussion. Our exceptional delegation of experienced senior officials and business leaders knows just what it takes to encourage sustained flows of capital investment.

...And I am also pleased that our distinguished Nigerian colleagues for this dialogue bring such a wealth of experience about the business climate here -- including the practical knowledge it will take to realize the full potential of an expanded commercial relationship between our two countries.

Many people ask me "Why is the U.S. Transportation Secretary so involved with Africa?" My answer is simple -- jobs, opportunity, and growth. As Vice President Gore has said, America's *"future growth depends on growth in the rest of the world."*

As we begin this new century and new millennium, nowhere is this opportunity for market-driven economic expansion greater than in Africa -- a vast and rapidly changing region of 700 million energetic, talented and creative people.

And nowhere in Africa does that potential seem greater than in Nigeria. The time has clearly come for Nigeria -- as well as the other nations of Africa -- to take their rightful place as full participants in the emerging global community of nations.

As President Clinton has so aptly said, *"The age of the marginalization of Africa is over."*

However, the future prosperity of the mighty continent of Africa is will not take place automatically. Our words must be reflected in our deeds. We need to "walk the walk" as well as "talk the talk."

The purpose of President Clinton's Partnership Initiative with Africa is to accelerate Africa's full integration into the global economy. And the purpose of the President's trip -- and today's dialogue -- is to foster concrete steps to move this process forward at a faster pace.

Yesterday, President Clinton and President Obasanjo set the tone for swifter action by demonstrating that the leaders of our two nations are publicly committed to working together at the highest level to strengthen the economic ties between Nigeria and the United States.

And yesterday, I had the privilege of signing three transportation agreements that will most definitely speed up the growth of trade and travel between our two nations:

Transport Minister Maduoke Ojo and I signed a *Memorandum of Cooperation on Transportation*. This agreement will improve the safety and security of rail and maritime systems, as well as provide U.S. assistance for privatizing some parts of the Nigerian transportation system. This agreement also encourages joint efforts to insure that Nigeria's rail and maritime transport systems grow in a way that protects the environment and promotes energy efficiency.

Aviation Minister Dr. Keme Chikwe and I signed a *Memorandum of Cooperation on Aviation* that formalizes our joint commitment to upgrade Nigeria's airports.

Safe and efficient airports are clearly destined to play an increasingly important role in Nigeria's integration into the global marketplace.

I was especially delighted that Dr. Chikwe and I were able to sign an *Open Skies* agreement that provides a firm foundation for stimulating the growth of air service between the United States and Nigeria. Anticipating this development, several airlines have already asked for permission to offer direct service between Nigeria and the United States on a "code share" basis.

The signing of the Open Skies agreement and last December's recertification have now positioned *Murtala Mohammed Airport* to become a major West African hub. Another sign this could happen occurred two weeks ago, when a Boeing 747 took off from Lagos and landed in New York.

The resumption of direct service between Nigeria and the United States lifted the spirits of all those who seek to encourage the growing relationship between our two countries.

That was yesterday.

Today we are ready to move the partnership between our two countries to 'higher heights,' with a series of public and private sector agreements that leave no doubt that the participants in today's dialogue are here to create change as well as to talk about it.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
VESSEL TRANSFER ANNOUNCEMENT/LOA
USCGC *IRONWOOD* TO THE NIGERIAN NAVY
AUGUST 27, 2000
LAGOS, NIGERIA

On behalf of President Clinton and the people of the United States, I am delighted to present this Letter of Offer and Acceptance (LOA) officially authorizing the transfer of the *U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Ironwood* to the government of Nigeria this coming October. This gift to the Nigerian people symbolized the growing bond between our two nations and America's commitment to the full integration of Nigeria into the global economy. As President Clinton has promised, "The age of the marginalization of Africa are over.

By enhancing Nigeria's ability to protect its own territorial waters, The *Ironwood* will support Nigeria's development, both economically and environmentally by helping the Nigerian Navy to prevent illegal fishing activities within its Economic Enforcement Zone as well as to monitor the environment.

Nigeria's economic growth is in America's best interest. As Vice President Gore has emphasized, "*Our future growth depends on growth in the rest of the world.*" Nowhere is this opportunity greater than in Africa, a vast and growing market of 700 million potential customers.

The transfer of the *Ironwood* demonstrates the vision and leadership shared by President Olusegun Obasanjo and President Bill Clinton and their joint commitment to the future of our two nations. .

Indeed, many people have collaborated on this project and they deserve to be acknowledged. I would like to thank the Nigerian officials who helped make this transfer happen, particularly Transport Minister Ojo. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those American agencies that facilitated this transfer, including the International Programs Office of the United States Navy and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency.

The *USCGC Ironwood* is the first of eight 180 foot BALSAM Class tenders scheduled to be transferred to Nigeria under our Foreign Assistance Act. Final transfer of the cutter's title will occur in October, as the Coast Guard crew members continue training their Nigerian counterparts in the operation and maintenance of this vessel. In December, after a long journey from Alaska, the *Ironwood* will arrive at its new home in Nigeria. The other seven vessels will be transferred over the next four years.

In its new home, The *Ironwood*, will serve to remind the people of Nigeria that the United States is firmly committed to this country and to the mighty continent of Africa. As our relationship continues to grow, we on both sides of the Atlantic know there will be more of these kind of reminders that demonstrate our shared vision, appreciation and understanding of Nigeria.

Thank you.

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REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
DIALOGUE 3 - STEVE HAYS INTRODUCTION
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER
ABUJA, NIGERIA
AUGUST 27, 2000

Now I would like to introduce our next speaker, Steve Hayes, President of the Corporate Council on Africa, who will present an overview of the private-sector agreements, followed by the formal signing of these agreements.

The Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) is committed to working with the governments of Africa and the United States as well as the African private sector, to improve the trade and investment climate in Africa, and to raise the profile of Africa in the U.S. business community.

Steve is back in Nigeria with us this week, after leading a very successful U.S.-Nigeria Trade and Outreach Mission in July. For a number of years now, he has been actively involved in U.S.-Africa affairs. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the CCA through his in depth work on agricultural, economic and political issues affecting Africa. Under Steve's leadership, the CCA played a vital role in the successful passage of the landmark Trade and Development Act of 2000 in the U.S. Congress. Please join me in welcoming President Steve Hayes.

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U.S. TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY RODNEY E. SLATER
COMMERCIAL DIALOGUE EVENT PROGRAM
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER
ABUJA, NIGERIA
SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 2000

Just 15 months ago, I had the great privilege of representing the United States at President Obasanjo's inauguration. So I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge just how much Minister Bello and his colleagues in government -- and the Nigerian people -- have accomplished in such a short time.

I also want to acknowledge, once again, the pivotal role President Obasanjo is playing in Nigeria's return to democracy and the future of Africa. Little more than a year has passed since my last trip to Nigeria. I can already notice the change with my own eyes.

America's interest in the development of Africa has been building momentum for several years now. In June 1997, President Clinton committed the United States to what he called a long-term "Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa" -- a partnership that, like Nigeria's renewed commitment to democracy, is bringing new hope to Africa. While economic expansion, by itself, is no guarantee of permanent political stability, it doesn't hurt.

We know that expanded trade works for America. One quarter to one-third of America's record-level economic growth in recent years can be directly attributed to trade. And trade with Africa has already had a measurable impact on job growth for America's working families as well as for the commercial expansion of American business.

That's why the President could say, when he created this partnership that "Our goal continues to be the sustained economic development of Africa...guided by the conviction that economic development will benefit both Africans and Americans.

While our agenda does not focus explicitly on transportation, it does emphasize that building up Nigeria's infrastructure -- both physical and institutional -- is urgently required if this country is to make the most out of the opportunities ahead:

We will be discussing both telecommunications and energy this morning, which -- along with transportation -- are part of the basic physical infrastructure necessary for growth to happen anywhere. We will also talk about the expanded opportunities for Nigerian businesses created by recently signed *African Growth & Opportunity Act* as well as the issue of facilitating the privatization of the Nigerian economy.

The focus of our dialogue will be as much on Nigeria's business, regulatory, institutional climate -- and how that climate contributes to (or detracts from) -- Cexpanded capital investment.

And we have the right mix of seasoned experts to share their knowledge with us today.

However, I want to encourage all you listen to what is being said on these four topics with an awareness that Nigeria needs significant capital and human investment in all modes of transportation, as well as other forms of basic infrastructure, if this country is to realize its full economic potential.

Improved transportation within, to, and from this major new market will allow economies on both sides of the Atlantic to grow and prosper. Without transportation there can be no trade.

That is precisely why transportation is a major component of the President's partnership with Africa.

And that's why the U.S. Department of Transportation has launched a major initiative to support the President's partnership, under the theme *Transportation -- The Tie That Binds*.

Our initiative is both visionary and comprehensive:

First, we seek to help Africa compete more effectively in the global marketplace by showing how governments can adjust economic policies to allow market forces greater flexibility. We are also advising our partners on ways to train a 21st century labor force in the skills needed to compete in a new century and a new millennium.

Second, we seek to expand trade and investment opportunities for U.S. investors who want to bring transportation technology and transportation-related goods and services to African markets. The bottom line is that if you can't get there, you can't trade.

And third, we seek to foster economic development in Africa through training, technical assistance and improved transportation services for local communities.

As this morning's discussions proceed, I think it will be abundantly clear that there are transportation implications for all of subjects we are examining. At the end of the day, of course, no one factor -- whether it be transportation, communication, education, privatization, access to capital or "whatever" is the exclusive right answer to the challenge of development.

The "right" answer is *Partnership*: Partnership of people, partnership of institutions -- and partnerships among nations. To create a world that works for everyone we need everyone involved. Today we are taking on that challenge with an appropriate intensity and vigor.

For that, I thank each and every one of you.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
OPEN SKIES SIGNING - U.S. & NIGERIA
AUGUST 26, 2000
ABUJA, NIGERIA

On behalf of President Clinton and the people of the United States, I am honored to sign this Open Skies agreement between the United States and Nigeria with Minister of Aviation Dr. Kema Chikwe whose diligence and diplomatic skills helped make today's agreement possible.

Under the leadership of President Clinton and Vice President Gore, we have negotiated 47 new "Open Skies" agreements with aviation partners in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa -- 35 of those agreements were signed since I became Secretary. Nigeria is the United States' 47th Open Skies partner. This agreement, like the others, provides the foundation necessary to encourage the growth of air service between our two countries.

This *Open Skies* agreement that provides a firm foundation for stimulating the growth of air service between the United States and Nigeria. Anticipating this development, several airlines have already asked for permission to offer direct service between Nigeria and the United States on a "code share" basis.

President Clinton's vision of a global open skies system will pull the world closer together. As the Interstate highway system tied America together in the last half of the 20th century, I believe aviation will tie the world together in the next century. But this will happen only if pivotal states like Nigeria participate fully in open skies agreements.

Yesterday's ceremony was one more sign *that Murtala Mohammed Airport* is taking advantage of last December's recertification to explore the possibility of becoming a major West African hub. Another sign occurred two weeks ago, when a Boeing 747 took off from Lagos and landed in New York. The resumption of direct service between Nigeria and the United States lifted the spirits of all those who seek to encourage the growing relationship between our two countries. This lessening of the distance between us demonstrates that, more and more, we are each other's future.

Today's agreement offers a clear picture of the kind of partnership the United States wants to encourage in Africa. Today's agreement fulfills our pledge to encourage the development of an African aviation system that supports economic growth, regional integration, increased trade and tourism, even as it promotes greater integration of the global economy.

Thank you.

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
CLOSING REMARKS
AVIATION AND TRANSPORTATION EVENT
AUGUST 26, 2000
ABUJA, NIGERIA

We have certainly accomplished much here this afternoon, with the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation on Aviation, the signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation on Transportation, the signing of the Open Skies agreement and the announcement of the \$3.58 million grant from USAID. Improved airports, roads, railways and ports are the backbone of a stronger and more democratic Nigeria.

Our work here today will help Nigeria build a safe, efficient and effective air transportation system linking the people of Nigeria to the United States and to the global economy. These joint efforts will also help Nigeria construct a seamless network of roads, rail lines, ports and aviation corridors with the rest of Africa, with air and sea connections to America. As President Clinton has emphasized: *"America has a profound and pragmatic stake" in Africa's economic success "...because we, like you, need strong partners to build prosperity."* Today's efforts will improve Nigeria's trade and tourism, stimulating the economies on both sides of the Atlantic.

Nigeria's economic growth is in America's best interest. As Vice President Al Gore has emphasized, *"Our future growth depends on growth in the rest of the world."* Nowhere is this opportunity greater than in Africa, a vast and growing market of 700 million potential customers.

Today's ceremony exemplifies the kind of collaboration the United States wants to encourage with governments in Africa. It builds on our pledge to develop an African transportation system that supports economic growth, regional integration, increased trade and tourism, and greater integration into the global economy. Today marks another step towards increasing foreign trade with Africa, which has doubled during the past five years and 100,000 American jobs already depend on this export relationship.

Today is a day to celebrate optimism. Today, we see that optimism in the faces that we see gathered around here. I'm looking forward to returning to Nigeria to see that optimism in improved roads, railways and air service.

Thank you.

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**REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION ON TRANSPORTATION SIGNING
AUGUST 26, 2000
ABUJA, NIGERIA**

On behalf of President Clinton and the people of the United States, I am pleased also sign this Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) on Transportation. I would like to extend my appreciation to Transport Minister Maduoke Ojo for his hard work in making this MOC possible.

This MOC represents the United States' commitment to helping build a safe, efficient and effective transportation system for the people of Nigeria. Together we will improve Nigeria's trade and tourism, and stimulate economies on both continents as the United States helps Nigeria build a seamless network of roads, rail lines, ports and aviation corridors throughout Africa with connections to America.

This signing formalizes our promise to continue collaboration on technical assistance, with a focus on three specific areas. First is a commitment to improve the safety and security of rail and maritime operations. Second, the United States government will assist in the move towards privatizing some parts of the Nigerian transportation system. Third, together the United States and Nigeria will examine ways to promote the environmental and energy aspects of maritime and rail transport.

Thank you.

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Speech

REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION ON AVIATION SIGNING
AUGUST 26, 2000
ABUJA, NIGERIA

Today's signing of the Memorandum of Cooperation on Aviation is the logical next step in the United States and Nigeria growing transportation partnership. Again, I would like to acknowledge the absolutely essential role that my co-signator, Aviation Minister Dr. Kema Chikwe, played in negotiating this agreement.

This Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) symbolizes the growing bond between our two nations and America's commitment to the full integration of Nigeria into the global economy.

Today's MOC also formalizes the United States' promise to increase aviation safety and security. Our agreement concerns projects that will focus specifically on upgrading safety and security conditions at Murtala Mohammed International Airport. Safe and efficient airports will play an increasingly important role in Nigeria's integration into the global marketplace.

Airports will become hubs for new trade corridors and are also huge job generators and virtual economic engines for growth. Improved and more efficient airports will increase the flow of machinery, transportation equipment, electronics and services to Nigeria, which will, in turn, accelerate Nigeria's economic development and integration into the world economy.

Thank you.

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REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION RODNEY E. SLATER
OPENING REMARKS
AVIATION AND TRANSPORTATION EVENT
AUGUST 26, 2000
ABUJA, NIGERIA

On behalf of President Clinton and the people of the United States, I am pleased to participate at this Aviation and Transportation ceremony. As we deepen the ties between our governments, our presence here today symbolizes the coming together of our two sides of the Atlantic. During his historic trip to this continent in 1998, President Clinton challenged us by saying *"Let us work with each other, let us learn from each other, to turn the hope we now share into a history that all of us can be proud of."* Today's important declarations of cooperation and partnership prove that we are rising to that challenge.

I would like to extend my appreciation to those Nigerian Ministers here who have already risen to President Clinton's challenge and helped make today possible. They are Transport Minister Maduike Ojo and Aviation Minister Dr. Kema Chikwe. I also want to acknowledge the inspiring example of leadership shown by President Clinton and President Obasanjo for their willingness to work with us. No wonder that *TIME* magazine called Nigerian President Obasanjo one of the people who shaped 1999, citing his role in ending Nigeria's fuel shortage, which allowed for government spending on programs such as a free primary education.

These agreements demonstrate the United States' commitment to the development of a safe, efficient and effective transportation system for the people of Nigeria. They are the tools we will use together to improve Nigeria's trade and tourism. As the United States helps Nigeria build a seamless network of roads, rail lines, ports and aviation corridors throughout Africa with connections to America, these agreements will stimulate economies on both continents.

Our partnership with Nigeria began in 1997, when President Clinton committed the United States to a long-term Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa. At the time, the President said *"Our goal continues to be the sustained economic development of Africa...guided by the conviction that economic development...will benefit both Africans and Americans."* Our visit further builds on the foundation of President Clinton's historic 1998 trip to the African continent.

Today also is the culmination of much hard work, including the US-Africa Transportation Ministerial held last fall in Atlanta and last summer's visit to Nigeria by members of USAID and the Departments of Transportation, State, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Energy and Justice.

Today's events are as much about the Nigerian people as they are about airplanes. Investing in transportation will enable the Nigerian people to come together to sell goods and create markets, as well as connect them to markets around the world. Nigerian farmers will then have access to agricultural machinery from across the Atlantic. In the end, it is about the Nigerian people building a democratic future together.

Now I would like to introduce Dr. Kema Chikwe, the Minister of Aviation for Nigeria.

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REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
SECRETARY RODNEY E. SLATER
INTRODUCTION OF BRADY ANDERSON, ADMINISTRATOR
U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AUGUST 26, 2000
ABUJA, NIGERIA

One of the reasons the United States will be able to expand its work with the Nigerian government to improve transportation is through the resources provided by a new grant from the United States Agency for International Development. To tell us about this new grant, I am pleased to introduce Brady Anderson, Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

And before he even begins to speak, let me be the first to thank him and USAID for their efforts to improve the lives of the Nigerian people. Administrator Anderson's personal interest in Africa dates back to five years working in East African villages. So it is no wonder that under his leadership, USAID has forcefully committed itself towards improving the standard of living on this continent.

USAID has already laid much of the groundwork for assessing Nigeria's infrastructure, including conducting comprehensive studies of this region's educational, agricultural, energy and health needs. Underlying Nigeria's progress in these areas is an improved and comprehensive transportation system.

I want to particularly thank USAID, and especially Administrator Anderson, for making transportation a high priority in its strategy to support the strengthening of democracy in Nigeria. USAID, it can be said, provides the glue that binds American assistance efforts together.

And now, here is Administrator Anderson.

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