

Jan. 14 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 14.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for Africa January 13, 1999

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am pleased to submit the fourth of five annual reports on the Administration's Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for Africa, as required by section 134 of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act. This year has seen progress in our trade policy and the deepening of trade relationships with Africa.

I was proud to be first President to undertake a comprehensive visit to Africa this past year. In March, I visited Ghana, Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa, Botswana, and Senegal. At each stop, I was struck by the remarkable opportunities for the United States to expand our growing relationship with Africa based on mutually beneficial trade and development. In the months since my return, my Administration has worked to expand and exploit those opportunities through practical measures, including undertaking trade missions, negotiating trade agreements, and implementing debt relief and technical assistance programs for Africa's strongest reformers.

These efforts continue to build on the strategy I announced in the June 1997 *Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa* (*Partnership*). Our goal continues to be sustained economic development for Africa, and we are guided by the conviction that economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa will benefit both Africans and Americans. We continue to believe, as outlined in the *Partnership*, that trade should not replace aid. Effective aid assists countries in building healthy, literate, and informed populations able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by increased trade and investment. Well-focused assistance, combined with strong reforms and increased trade and investment, will break Africa's old patterns of dependency.

The report I am sending to the Congress today reviews our achievements of the past year

in implementing the goals of the *Partnership*. First, we have improved market access for African and American products in our respective markets by negotiating trade agreements that are mutually beneficial and increasing interaction between the United States and African private sectors through trade missions and high-level visits.

Second, we have implemented technical assistance programs to increase African knowledge of, and ability to work within, the global trading system. Through invigorated reform and assistance efforts, we are helping Africa to build the trading infrastructure it will need to become a strong trade partner for the United States, integrated within the global economy.

We have also put in place a number of initiatives to increase private investment in Sub-Saharan Africa, including the Department of Transportation's Safe Skies Initiative, increased access to credit for projects in African countries through the Export-Import Bank, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation's equity funds to finance increased private investment. With FY99 funds appropriated for this purpose, we have begun to forgive remaining bilateral concessional debt owed by Africa's strongest reforming countries.

Finally, we have begun planning for a broad-based meeting at the ministerial level with African countries to discuss how we can work most effectively together to forward our shared goal of sustained and mutually beneficial economic development and trade. We hope to hold the first U.S.-African Economic Cooperation Forum with representatives from Africa's strongest reforming countries later this year.

I was disappointed that the 105th Congress did not complete consideration of the African Growth and Opportunity Act. This trade initiative is an important complement to our *Partnership* strategy. It would afford greater market