



African Development Foundation

NEWS RELEASE

African Development Foundation Delegation Focuses on Strengthening US-Uganda Trade Links, Enhancing Successful Efforts to Help Small Entrepreneurs Market Fish, Silk, Vanilla Globally

KAMPALA – January 23, 2004 – A leadership delegation from the African Development Foundation (ADF), a United States government agency that supports community-based development programs in 15 African countries, will visit Uganda next week to confer with President Yoweri K. Museveni and senior government officials on new Foundation projects. The group will also explore new opportunities to help Ugandan entrepreneurs scale up their operations, expand profits and develop high-quality products for sale in international markets.

The delegation is led by the agency's President, Nathaniel Fields, who is accompanied by newly appointed board members Dr. Ephraim Batambuze and Mr. Jack Leslie.

Dr. Batambuze was born near Jinja in 1942 and received his education at King's College, Budo, and Makerere University. He left Uganda in the early 1970s to pursue a medical internship in Chicago and received political asylum in the United States when rising political violence under the military regime of Idi Amin prevented him from returning home. Dr. Batambuze now returns to Uganda as an official U.S. representative and as the Foundation's first Africa-born board member.

The mission will arrive in Kampala on January 24 and remain until January 28. During its stay, it will meet with President Museveni, the Honorable Sam Kutesa, Minister of State for Investment and other senior officials of government. It will also meet with the Kyabazinga (King) of Busoga, Mr. Henry Wako Muloki, and the Mayor of Jinja, Mr. David Wakudumira.

Beyond official meetings, the group will conduct extensive on-site evaluations of several Foundation-supported projects, including the Mukono, Kiboga and Iganga Green Ladders Vanilla Projects; the Jinja Leather Works Project; the Nobwe Silk Project; the Jakana Foods Project; and the Uganda Marines Project.

Mr. Fields and his colleagues will also hold a press conference at the Sheraton Hotel, Kampala, on January 27, where they will discuss the Foundation's programs in Uganda and present an award-winning video that documents the agency's recent success in helping small-scale Ugandan entrepreneurs expand the quality, profitability and marketability of Uganda's fishing, vanilla and silk industries.

In 2000, ADF launched a pilot trade and investment program in Uganda that has become a model for similar initiatives in Namibia, Ghana and Zambia. Over the past four years, ADF has funded 11 trade and investment programs in Uganda at a total value of more than Sh 5.28 billion (US\$ 2.74 million).

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The program has focused on expanding the production, profitability and export potential of Ugandan businesses by providing resources and technical assistance that have allowed entrepreneurs to improve the quality of their products and meet international export standards. One goal is to assist small and medium-sized enterprises in marketing their goods in the United States under provisions of the African Growth and Opportunity Act of 2000 (AGOA). The United States Congress enacted AGOA with the goal of strengthening trade ties between the United States and African nations and helping African businesses compete in an increasingly global economy.

The Foundation's grant support has been used to purchase state-of-the-art processing equipment and to provide workers with training in quality assurance methods that now meet international import requirements. These investments have allowed Uganda Marines, a fishing business that exports fresh Nile perch to purchasers in Europe and Australia, to expand its export sales from Sh 1.44 billion (US\$ 746,000) to Sh 9.43 billion (US\$ 4.9 million) since 2000.

"We are extremely satisfied with the success of the Foundation's trade and investment initiative in Uganda," said Fields. "In 2000, we came to Uganda with a pilot program designed to help small and medium-sized African businesses scale up their operations and develop high-quality products for export. Thanks to the strong performance of our Uganda projects, we are now exporting the model we developed here – in close partnership with innovative Ugandan businesses – to other African nations."

The American agency began supporting development projects in Uganda in 1992. Since that time, it has funded 76 projects altogether at a total value of more than Sh 23 billion (US\$ 12 million). The projects have covered a number of development sectors critical to Uganda's economic expansion, including micro-credit, micro and small enterprises, agricultural production and food security, natural resource management, and a variety of research programs.

Uganda Development Trust (UDET) in Kampala works with the Foundation as its local technical assistance provider, helping projects develop viable funding proposals and assisting grantees over the term of their grant.

The African Development Foundation (ADF), a U.S. government agency established by the United States Congress in 1980, is the only federal agency working solely at the grassroots level in Africa to alleviate poverty and promote broad-based sustainable development. Over the last 20 years, ADF has funded more than 1,500 community-based projects, with 250 projects currently receiving support. ADF supports programs around trade and investment, small and medium enterprise development, HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation, and community grassroots empowerment. In 2004, the Foundation will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the inauguration of its community-based grant program. To learn more about ADF and its initiatives, go to www.adf.gov.

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