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CARDIN WELCOMES PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY AFRICA TRADE OFFICE AS IT OFFICIALLY OPENS FOR BUSINESS

Largo, MD – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)**, a member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, participated today in the official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Prince George's County Africa Trade Office (ATO). The ATO was established this year to strengthen business ties and expand trade and investment opportunities between Prince George's County and Africa through outreach, training and education.

“It is vital, during these tough economic times, that we do everything possible to expand markets for American goods and services. Small businesses and emerging markets, like Africa, will help grow domestic jobs and put our nation back on solid financial ground,” said Senator Cardin. “I was proud support the initial \$400,000 federal investment to launch the Africa Trade Office.

“Prince George's County has one of the most diverse business economies and workforces in the State of Maryland, with over 150 languages and numerous dialects spoken. In addition, its proximity to the federal government makes it well positioned as a hub for international commerce. Prince George's County's businesses are uniquely qualified to assist in future African development in such countries as Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania and South Africa.”

The Prince George's County Africa Trade Office is equipped to increase the number of small businesses, particularly minority firms, in Prince George's County and provide business information to the public interested in entering African markets. The ATO is funded by a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

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