



## Remarks at The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact Signing Ceremony With Burkina Faso

**Secretary Condoleezza Rice**

Ben Franklin Room  
Washington, DC  
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**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, thank you very much, John. And we've all worked very hard for the MCC and no one harder than you and the hardworking staff of the MCC family.

Let me welcome the many citizens and distinguished leaders – first and foremost, of Burkina Faso, who are here today. I especially want to welcome Ambassador Yonli, Finance Minister Compaore, Foreign Minister Bassole, and most of all you, Mr. President – President Compaore. Thank you for coming and thank you for the leadership that you have brought to make this day possible.

I'd also like to welcome Senator Enzi and our U.S. Ambassador Jeanine Jackson and the many distinguished excellencies who are joining us, including our friend, the former World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, who told me that Burkina Faso was the second country that he visited, and so he's here to support this great compact. Paul, thank you for being here.

One of the hallmarks of the U.S. Government and the American people is a steadfast commitment to global development, to ending the scourge of poverty that robs communities of hope and opportunity.

The United States also continues to be a staunch and loyal friend of Africa, where in the face of incredibly acute development challenges, we see a continent of enormous promise, increasingly willing to tackle its own challenges to create a better life for Africans everywhere.

Over the past several years, and with the full support of our Congress, President Bush and this Administration have resolved to support leaders and citizens in developing countries who are working to create new possibilities for themselves. This idea of partnership is at the center of our many signature development programs, especially the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. But it is absolutely at the center of the Millennium Challenge Account initiative.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation, or MCC, as it is known, represents a transformational shift in how we provide our foreign assistance. It is an approach that supports countries that rule justly, invest in their people's health and education, and promote economic freedom.

MCC investments are reducing poverty through economic growth in Africa, in Central America, in Eurasia, and in the Pacific by helping those countries most committed to their own development – to make hard reforms, to help their people out of poverty, and to break through barriers to economic growth. MCC grants support those country-led efforts that lead to real and sustainable results. And with today's signing, we have now awarded nearly \$6 billion to 17 MCC partner countries across the world.

The \$481 million MCC compact that we sign today with Burkina Faso is results-oriented. It is a strategic plan to improve agricultural productivity, land use rights and land management, farm-to-market roads, and girls' primary education. This compact builds on Burkina Faso's already successful threshold program, administered in partnership with USAID.

This compact reflects the priorities set by the people of Burkina Faso – born out of exhaustive consultations throughout their society, and demonstrating the responsibility that the leaders and the people of Burkina Faso are willing to shoulder for their own development. And this compact will help Burkina Faso to foster strong and sustainable agricultural productivity, an antidote to the rising global commodity prices crisis that is affecting the poorest nations.

The United States wants Burkina Faso's compact to succeed in every way – for the benefit of the people of Burkina Faso and as a model of stability and growth in West Africa, and as an example to the world that poverty can be overcome and replaced with prosperity.

Mr. President, your visionary leadership in the development and, now, the implementation of the Burkina Faso-MCC compact has been and will continue to be instrumental to its success. I wish to personally thank you for the commitment to progress that you are demonstrating. You are among the most responsible of Africa's leaders and you are ushering in reforms that are necessary to empower your fellow citizens to lead lives of hope and to help them turn a new page in the story of Africa.

Mr. President, I congratulate your country and your people for reaching this momentous milestone in your development. And before I yield the podium to you, I would just like to say one further word about the MCC program. I do see many successful MCC compact recipients. I see many aspirants. There's a wonderful spirit that the MCC has developed in the developing world, which is to think about what countries can do for themselves and to have the United States as a partner. And while this is, indeed, the last compact that this Administration will sign in Washington, I know that the future of this program will be bright.

I want to acknowledge – I've just seen him, that Paul Applegarth is also here, the first President of the MCC who got it off to its foundations. And I'd like us to acknowledge, Paul, your leadership. (Applause.)

So again, while this is perhaps the last MCC compact in which I will participate as Secretary of State, I know that President Bush and the MCC team have left an important legacy here for how to think about development and how to support the most responsible, and the most forward-looking leaders throughout the world. And so with that, Mr. President, since you are very much one of them, let me yield the podium to you. (Applause.)

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