

It was music to my ears to hear the Honorable Congressman from Chicago explain to me that Africa was on his brain 24/7. Every day he does something for the continent and I truly believe in his commitment. So much, that the National Black Chamber of Commerce is partnering with his office to make an official American policy for the nations and the people of our Mother Land. It is long overdue for America to treat this rich continent with respect and on the same level as the rest of the world.

One of the things Congressman Rush is doing is to reintroduce H.R. 656. This bill is entitled “The African Investment and Diaspora Act of 2011”. Here is a summary of the bill:

To deepen United States-African economic, technical, and social and cultural ties, in particular with respect to those between the peoples of Africa and the African Diaspora, United States and African civil society groups, and small and medium-sized business enterprises.

- The bill creates a **US Special Representative for U.S.-Africa Trade, Development, and Diaspora Affairs** within the Department of State.
- It creates an **interagency working group** headed by the Special representative.
- Mission:

\*increasing collaboration among United States Government departments and agencies in order to more closely integrate and coordinate United States programs and policies aimed at promoting trade and investment with Africa with those intended to advance socioeconomic development and opportunity in Africa;

\*designing and implementing public outreach, education, and liaison programs and activities intended to foster United States-African economic, technical, social, and cultural ties;

\*supporting the efforts of United States persons and groups with interests and ties to Africa to foster and advance such ties and, in particular members of the African Diaspora in the United States,

\*facilitating and increasing the number of international learning exchanges, professional training, and educational programs between Africa and the United States;

\*to foster U.S.- Africa relations by promoting cooperation between the African Diaspora and Africa, to promote and strengthen greater participation of African Diaspora into the development and governance process as well as to contribute to the process of achieving sustainable development through information and knowledge sharing and management.

\*To create awareness and enhance dialogue and cooperation among public and private sector entities in order to promote a greater participation of the African Diaspora and their organizations in the social, economic lives of their communities for achieving responsible democratic governance, increase accountability and sustainable development.

- Creates a **data base** through which American and African business, technical, and academic experts, associations, and other institutions and organizations, in particular, provide means for members of the African Diaspora in the United States to transfer information, skills, and expertise to their counterparts in Africa or to help build the technical and professional capacities of African economic and development institutions.

- Have **5 regional centers** with headquarters in city with high concentration of African Diaspora.

- The term “**African Diaspora**” means the peoples of African descent living outside Africa, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality, who are willing to contribute to the development of Africa.

- The term “**Africa**” refers to the entire continent of Africa, including the countries of Comoros, Madagascar, and Seychelles

That is the bill which is very important to our Agenda for 2011. We want bi-partisan support for it and hopefully will see it to legislation. A big challenge may be getting President Obama to sign the legislation as this is concentrating on people of African descent and he runs from that usually. It is time for all of us to check him – be a MAN and stand up for your people, we are hurting!

Congressman Rush has a vision to create a Free Trade Agreement with South Africa. Why not? We are working on one for Panama, Columbia and South Korea. We already have for The Dominican Republic, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. South Africa is a bona fide first world nation unlike the aforementioned except South Korea. It should be and the next time Congress comes up with a proposal for a free trade agreement for whatever nation we

should demand inclusion of South Africa also. It is well overdue. Once that is done we can move on to Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria and others.

He will also address the China rip off of Africa. This nation does not play by the rules. They are stealing precious metals under the guise of highway construction. This is costing Africa billions of dollars in lost revenue. Also, they are using imported prison laborers to do the work as opposed to African citizens. These prisoners are causing mayhem such as robbery and rape and it must stop immediately.

This is so exciting and we are proud to work under the leadership of Congressman Rush. God bless Africa!

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