

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Press Center



Remarks of Deputy Secretary Raskin at the Global Women In Finance Symposium at Treasury

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As prepared for delivery

WASHINGTON - Thank you to everyone for coming today. We have had the opportunity to hear from a group of women who hold a variety of positions across the public and private sectors of finance. This is quite a group. I would also like to thank Treasurer Rosie Rios for making today's event a success. I know I speak for the Secretary when I say that Rosie is the person who made this happen, with her organizational prowess and magnificent visionary skills.

Throughout this morning, there have been good discussions about where our global economy has been, where we are now, and where we are going.

In terms of where we have been and where we are: In the past few years since the financial crisis and the great recession, we have experienced increasing growth. The private sector is stronger and is helping to grow the economy, as businesses have added 8.9 million jobs over the last 49 months.[1] There is more work to do – too many Americans are still without jobs – but the United States continues to gain strength, and the global economy is on the path to recovery.

Now, where we are going? The world today looks very different than the one I grew up in – economically, politically, and technologically. And the world we will face in 40 years will be dramatically different than the world we know today. While no one has a crystal ball, we can see the effect of shifting demographics on the changing composition of growth. All of these changes will have consequences in board rooms and capitals around the world, as companies and countries chart courses to adapt to the changing global landscape.

Nowhere is the confluence of global trends likely to have a more profound impact than in Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa's population is currently projected to increase the most in the world, growing from nearly 925 million today to over 2 billion by 2050, at which time it will make up over one-fifth of the global population.[2] In fact, while the U.S. population will grow faster than that of Europe or East Asia, our population growth will be much slower than in Nigeria, which is on pace to replace the United States as the third most populous nation in the world by 2050 with a population of over 440 million.[3]

In general, future population growth will be most heavily clustered in many of the world's least developed countries, where populations are set to double by 2050.[4]

Today, sub-Saharan Africa is the second fastest growing region in the world after Asia,[5] and is home to 11 economies posting growth rates in excess of 7 percent.[6] Most people do not think of strongly growing economies when they think of Africa, where the story for far too many years has focused on poverty and conflict. But the Africa we see today – while still facing many of these challenges – also has dynamic private growth, a growing financial sector, greater attention to food production and marketing, education for girls, and investment in the infrastructure needed for the 21st century. And with all of this change coming in the years ahead, Africa's greatest resource will truly be its human capital.

This changing outlook presents many new opportunities, as well as a number of challenges. Policymakers will have to work hard to ensure they get the right policies in place to encourage private investment to support growth, invest in their people, protect the most vulnerable, and continue working to eliminate poverty.

In three weeks, on my first international visit as Deputy Secretary, I will lead the U.S. delegation to Kigali, Rwanda for the 2014 Annual Meeting of the African Development Bank. I look forward to visiting Africa to discuss new opportunities for our changing world. And I look forward to hearing from Africans – government officials, business leaders, and private citizens – about how we can partner together to tackle the challenges we collectively will face.

Sustaining and boosting growth requires investment – in infrastructure, in institutions, and in people. In Africa, a lack of reliable power has held back investments in business, prevented health clinics from properly refrigerating vaccines, and made it more difficult for children to study at home. The needs are huge, as sub-Saharan Africa will require more than \$300 billion in investment to achieve universal electricity by 2030.[7] The level of investment is well beyond the reach of local governments, the United States, or the official development community to finance alone. However, by working with partners across the multilateral development banks, other governments, and the private sector, it is possible to spur governance, power sector, and investment climate reforms so as to attract critical resources. This is the goal of President Obama's Power Africa initiative, which seeks to bring online 10,000 megawatts of additional power and to connect 20 million new households and businesses to reliable power over the next five years.

When you consider these opportunities and challenges, it is vital to keep in mind the critical role of women in promoting sustainable and successful development, and global growth. And women in Africa are also turning to technology – mobile phones, internet sites, and smartphone apps – to solve local problems, address development needs, expand financial access, and boost incomes.

In Africa, and all over the world today, we have women – including President Ellen Sirleaf-Johnson in Liberia, President Joyce Banda in Malawi, and Coordinating Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in Nigeria – who have taken on this mantle and serve not only as leaders to pursue policies that advance inclusive economic growth, but importantly as role models for the next generation of African women.

These women are a force for positive change. They remind us that while it is our responsibility to chart a strong, enduring economic future, it is also our opportunity to help it be one where everyone can share in its benefits.

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- [1] U.S. Department of Labor (2014), *Employment Situation Archived News Releases*. http://www.bls.gov/schedule/archives/empsit_nr.htm
- [2] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013). *World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision*, DVD Edition. <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Documentation/publications.htm>
- [3] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013). <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Documentation/publications.htm>
- [4] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2013). <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Documentation/publications.htm>
- [5] International Monetary Fund (2014). *Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa – Fostering Durable and Inclusive Growth*. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2014/afr/eng/sreo0414.pdf>
- [6] African Development Bank, OECD Development Centre, and UNDP (2014). *African Economic Outlook 2014*.
- [7] The White House, Office of the Press Secretary (2013). *Fact Sheet: Power Africa*. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/30/fact-sheet-power-africa>