

## AMERICA IN AFRICA



Ambassador Dr Sanders, above left, at a reception in New York for the wife of the President of Nigeria, Mrs Jonathan. Green Nigeria map dress materials were designed and made in Nigeria to celebrate Nigeria's 50 years of independence. Above, Ambassador with MJoTA Editor. Above right, Chairperson of Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on African and Immigrant Affairs, Mr Stanley L Straughter with MJoTA Publisher.

### United States of America Ambassador to Nigeria, 2007-2010

AMBASSADOR DR ROBIN RENÉE SANDERS

### Bio from United States Embassy in Nigeria

Dr Robin Renée Sanders, a career member of the senior Foreign Service, took up her appointment as United States Ambassador to Nigeria in December,



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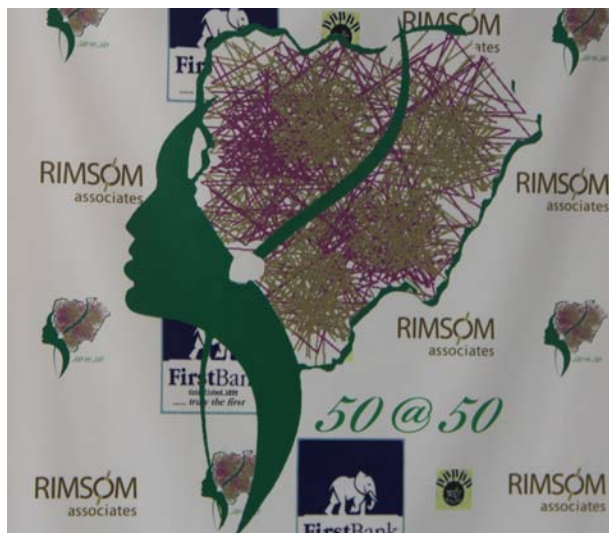
2007 and ended her service in mid-2010.

Previously, she was International Advisor and Deputy Commandant at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in Washington, DC after serving served as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Congo (2002 to 2005) and as Director for Public Diplomacy for Africa for the State Department (2000 to 2002).

She served twice as the Director for Africa at the National Security Council at the White House; and was the Special Assistant for Latin America, Africa, and International Crime for the Undersecretary for Political Affairs at the State Department (1996 to 1997).

Ambassador Sanders is a doctor (DSc) in information science and communication from Robert Morris University, and from Ohio University, is a master of art in international relations and Africa studies, and a master of science in communications and journalism. She is a baccalaureate (BA) in communications from Hampton University.

D. Sanders received the Joint Chiefs of Staff Civilian Honor Award; 3 State Department Superior Honor Awards; 4 State Department Meritorious Honor Awards; the "President Merit of Honor Award" from the Republic of Congo, and several citations in Who's Who of America. She is a national board member of Operation Hope - a non-profit organization focused on empowerment of at-risk communities.



### **NIGERIA@51 - BIRTHDAYS MARK THE TIME BETWEEN THE PAST & THE FUTURE**

*By Ambassador Dr Sanders in Huffington Post*

October 2, 2011. Last year, 2010, I had a wish list for Nigeria@50, a milestone in the life of any nation, which was published in Leadership, the Guardian and a number of other Nigerian newspapers. Leadership has asked me to review that summer 2010 list to see which wishes, in my personal opinion, have come true and which ones are still things to be realized or are in progress. Although I am no longer living in Nigeria, I personally continue to wish the people of this great nation the very best @51 years as it weathers and seeks to manage some difficult security issues. That being said, one huge part of that July 2010 list, which I never wavered on, and that has come to fruition was a free and democratic election, that Nigerians could be proud of - which by accounts of many international observers happened in April 2011.

Other things on that list - rebuilding agriculture, enhancing transparency, fighting corruption - still represent challenges but are being worked. In a July 2010 speech, I wrote that Nigeria was "@the point where the road to change should be paved with more action on food security, improved education (particularly for the country's nearly 70 million youth & 74 million women), the environment, energy needs, and development," what I have referred to as the FEEEDS® issues over the last year. I will say now, as I did then, that every generation should be a force for change, and every year a marker of progress. So in this 51st year, many Nigerians are working to change the paradigm on the FEEEDS® issues and on past perceptions of the nation by the public abroad. I will continue to do my part to help in these areas. This does not diminish the present serious security issues because they are a reality of the world today, and we all must work together to

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**Ambassador Dr Sanders addresses African and Caribbean immigrants at Philadelphia City Hall, as guest of Mr Stanley Straughter, who is standing next to her in the middle picture. Below, Dr Vera Tolbert, in gray suit, listens to the Ambassador. Dr Tolbert is a Liberian biochemist, trained in Germany, who works as a researcher in Philadelphia and is the president of the Coalition of African and Caribbean Immigrant Coalition of Philadelphia.**



make the world, and Nigeria safer. I know there are a number of partners working with Nigeria to address these challenges. In the same July 2010 speech, I noted that I wanted to fast forward to summer 2011 when I had just finished reading my Nigerian newspapers which were full of articles about how proud many (did not say all) Nigerians were of their election. This was the case.

In the last 2 quarters of 2011, Nigeria's economic growth is being heralded by many financial experts, with some pundits citing BRICA countries, of which Nigeria is one, serving as examples to struggling Western economies. Nigeria's agriculture has an uptick of 7 to 8%, but most recognize there is so much more potential in this area; energy still is one of the key challenging linchpins for Nigeria's development; and most investors are beginning to appreciate the incredible market that Nigeria offers (although American investments lag behind that of China and India in the region). According to recent press reports, the President of the African Development Bank (ADB), Donald Kaberuka, said last week in Washington DC, during the annual fall meetings of the World Bank Group, that many African nations have



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"been there and done that" to address some of the economic challenges they faced 2 to 3 years ago. Nigeria is a good example of this, particularly as regards to banking reform. Your present security challenges I know are at the top of the list of issues to address. I also send my condolences to the families of those who have lost loved ones in the recent security environment.

Today in your 51st year, I remain a supporter of your democratic destiny, your progress on the FEEEDS® issues, your push for investment, and development, and the positive paths you will decide to take as a nation in the future. Happy birthday!

### **CANCUN: WHY AFRICA'S VOICE ON GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IS IMPORTANT**

*By Ambassador Dr Sanders in the Huffington Post*

December 17, 2010. As Cancún ends with environmental issues and policy still on the table that will affect not only how future generations live, but how the planet copes with the enormous carbon footprint (greenhouse gases produced by humans measured in units of carbon dioxide, CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent or CO<sub>2</sub>-eq), the voice of sub-Saharan Africa needs to be front and center in the global debate. The world's current per person CO<sub>2</sub>-eq is about 4 tons per person and the average North American generates about 20 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-eq each year.

Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the developing world have a key role to play in leading, designing, deciding, and shaping environmental policy for the coming decades. Why? Because of several key factors that should not be underestimated or overlooked. Global environmental policy is the macro picture and sets the stage for how we will live together in the future. It will be important for Africa to keep the macro elements of population, economic growth, water and land use, food availability, pollution and last, but certainly not least, managing energy resources in a more efficient and effective manner. Africa needs to be one of the leading regions in the world shaping these policy issues -- developing practical, innovative solution that will help the conti-



*Nigerian child in New York with her grandfather.*

nent better provide for future generations. Here are some key factors as to why Africa should be one of the primary voices on how global environmental policy unfolds:

#### **Sub-Saharan Africa's Population**

Sub-Saharan Africa's population is young, with more than half of it under the age of 25. With current continent-wide population growth rates averaging 2.45%, and the trajectory estimated to remain the same over the next 40 years, Africa is on track to be home to 1.9 billion people by 2050. In addition, although Africa is the third largest continent, it is reportedly the fastest growing with the billionth person born there this year.

With half its population being under 25 now and if the trajectory remains the same, Africa would be host to 29% of the people in the world of that age group. This means they will need to not only be adequately and nutritionally feed, but have access to education (particularly vocational), training, housing and resources to have a good quality of life. Thus, the affects of climate change and resources management will be vital for the continent. Now is the time for sub-Saharan Africa to be out front on global environmental issues. With this large population, the affects of climate change will likely hit Africa harder than any other region. To sustain this population several things must change from how energy resources, and water and land use are managed. The affects of climate change such as drought, famine-related diseases, and poverty cannot be underestimated.

In addition, oil-producing countries should not see alternative energy usages such as solar and wind as a threat to economic development. There will be enough need for all environmentally-friendly forms

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*Zoomradiofm.com broadcasts from St John's in the Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda. MJoTA Publisher in the Zoomradiofm studio after broadcast of Blogtalkradio podcasts on health from the Caribbean and African communities in Africa and outside Africa. Listen to music and talk about African communities 24h a day online at <http://www.Zoomradiofm.com>.*

of energy well into the future. With proper planning, the right democratic leadership, and transparent resource management, economic growth for many African countries can be realized. The future does not have to be bleak for the continent, but the time is now for Africa to be seen as one of the leaders in the global debate on how large populations cope and plan the use of their resources.

### Water Management and Land Use

These are the next 2 issues that must move to the top of the agenda for sub-Saharan Africa. Not only is the management of these resources key to supporting the population, but water and land use also affects economic growth and development. Although these 2 resources are often discussed in Africa, they need to be addressed in terms of continent-wide environmental policy, and regional cooperation. Leading activists, academics, and experts such as Hernando de Soto, Dr Zuberi of the University of Pennsylvania, and the World Bank's Deininger during a 2010 Tanzanian water and land use conference, noted that most of the world's water resources and arable and agricultural land are in the developing world. For example, according to de Soto, about 1.7 billion hectares today produce most of the world's food, and with a bump from technology this could rise to 2.4 billion hectares. These hectares are mostly in Latin America and Africa.

Furthermore according to GRID-Arendal, a collabo-

rating center of the United Nations Development Program (UNEP), Africa has the potential now to raise its current 160 million hectares of arable and agricultural land up to 300 million hectares.

The importance of improving the management of both these resources is evident. For water, better management will provide more access to potable water and avert water scarcity and water stress (water scarcity and stress generally refers to environmental problems caused by unmet water needs). For land, better management will improve usage of arable and agricultural areas to improve food production.

This means that current and future use of these two precious resources must be done with realistic planning. If not, the likelihood increases for food insecurity, and of course, conflict over these 2 vital resources. About 70% of people living in sub-Saharan Africa depend on agriculture, and according to Water System Analysis Group, 64% rely on limited water.

When talking about land, it is important also to keep in mind FAO's definition of both arable and cultivate land. Arable land includes land defined by FAO as areas under temporary cultivation; cultivated land is that which is under permanent crops for long periods of time such as cocoa, coffee, and rubber. For sub-Saharan Africa this means about 8.3% of the land.

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There are numerous examples in the world where ethnic and religious differences or tensions arise because of pressures on either land use or water rights - or lack of access to either. If you add these challenges to the ever-expanding desertification in the Sahel, the importance of managing these resources in an environmentally sound manner is even more evident. Sub-Saharan African leaders will need to continue to actively and effectively participate in the climate change debate and help develop global policies to address its unique position as the fastest growing continent. At the 2010 Tanzanian Conference, we heard that Sudan, Zambia and Mozambique reportedly have the largest amounts of land available for food production. Desertification is affecting countries like Nigeria, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad to name a few and Blogit-rrs has already reported on current food security issues in the West Africa region. Again, water and land use affects economic growth and development, jobs and the future.

All of these issues are pillars in the environment and climate change discussion. We all want a way forward that makes sense, and that will ensure that we have: a resource-rich future that pushes all of us to be environmentalists, energy conservationists, and users of alternative energy resources in the execution of our daily lives. It is important to remember that future economic growth and development will be impacted by how we handle climate change today.

Indeed, for sub-Saharan Africa the important things on the radar screen to keep in mind are:

- That a good percentage of the world's water resources are on the African continent, thus having enough potable water for the both current and future generations is vital;

- That most of the arable and agricultural land today is in the developing world, (both arable and cultivated land). These must be used wisely for food security (both adequate and nutrition-rich foods), and

- with environmental considerations in mind. This includes using innovative technology to improved food storage and crop rotation, hybrid seeds, water harvesting, and more drip irrigation to name a few solutions;

- That land tenure and land uses are part of the climate change debate for Africa because laws and regulations in many countries will need to be address at the same time with a view to incorporating environmental sound policies. Land tenure issues are a big piece of the environmental picture given that whoever owns land determines how, particularly for agriculture. This includes bringing more women into the discussion, particularly on title and land transfer issues. Noting that 90% of land in Sub-Saharan Africa is not titled, de Soto refers to land titles as "passports" as it allows one to have a voice in how land is used, and,

- That energy usage (fossil fuel and combustion) is one of the largest markers of the world's carbon footprint. Alternative energy usage (wind, solar, hydro) must come into play alongside improved environmental-sound use of hydrocarbons (ie advance efforts to capture gas from flaring so it can be used as an additional energy resource). A sufficient and efficient energy platform sustains manufacturing, industry and entrepreneurial activity leading to economic growth, development, and jobs.

All of these issues underscore the importance of the continent's leadership role in the global climate change/environmental debate in order for sub-Saharan Africa to provide a good quality of life for its 1.9 billion population at mid-century and beyond.

\*N.B. Primary carbon footprint is emissions of greenhouse gases from the burning of fossil fuels combustion for energy consumption and transportation. Secondary footprint is the indirect emissions during the lifecycle of products (ie greenhouse gases emitted making plastic bottles). All stats and Africa references refer to sub-Saharan Africa.

***Ambassador Dr Sanders celebrated the 51st anniversary of Nigerian independence from Britain at the Nigerian Embassy in Washington on October 1, 2011.***



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### GOODBYE, AMBASSADOR ROBIN RENEE SANDERS

by *Emma Okocha, www.vanguardngr.com*

15 September 2010. The US with a lot of care have since independence appointed their best ambassadors to Nigeria. We have in the course of our journey to paradise and hell ran into some of these gentlemen.

Donald Easum was the tennis buff who in many ways created the Nigerian Tennis circuit. A tennis circuit line that played from Lagos Lord Rumens to Ogbe Hard Courts in Benin to the Kaduna Clay courts. We picked his balls and were picking for him even at his residential home across Gerald Road, Ikoyi, Lagos.

He was the one who argued that the US had the capacity to replicate the desert and posited that, in view of the African American ample and influential rising population in the US, the US would have no choice but design a veritable US African policy for the mother continent.

The cerebral former envoy, John Campbell, was Ambassador in Lagos from 1990 to 1998. He follows and understands the Nigerian internal politics to his finger tips. Even though he is retired, he continues to take interest in our politics and in a recent article published in the *Sun* on August 22, 2010, he predicted doom for the country. "Nigeria's previous elections ratified elite decisions already made. Yet at present, there is no credible voters roll ... and the constitution requires that the constituency boundaries be redrawn to reflect the census of 2006. These are formidable tasks in a huge, developing country with poor infrastructure and generally poor institutions that do not command popular confidence. Given these challenges, the likelihood of a free, fair and credible elections is not high."

We shall never forget the turbulent tenure of the first black US Ambassador to Nigeria. Walter Carrington threw to the winds the genteel disposition of the diplomatic act, when he rolled his sleeves and invited the military dictator to a boleka street fight.

At a very frightening episode somewhere at a very remote address in a Lagos urban ghetto, he beckoned on some trigger happy officers of the Abacha statocracy to shoot him! Ready to take the same bullets was his friend Gani, who incidentally had pulled off his own agbada and was like the combative Walter ready to die for democracy!

There were others until she arrived. Renee Sanders was the first black woman to take over the affairs of the US diplomatic schedules in these parts. We are there when she was given the send off reception in the Armed Forces

Mess near the Mayflower, 17th street in Washington DC. In one of the speeches contributed by another of those experts in Nigeria America relations, the new Ambassador to Nigeria was advised to take it very easy, "be careful for that country Nigeria, could be very rough."

When she landed the Niger Delta was in flames. Her Excellency was in charge when Obama made good the dreams of her slave forebearers. She was the US ambassador when on a Christmas day, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab the son of a Nigerian mandarin elite packed a bomb inside his underpants and was almost blasting into hell the Detroit airport and the poor passengers. Under her charge, the killing of the innocent happened in Jose.

In all those crisis, and in the good times, the Lady showed her grit, her craft and never lost her head.

As the Ambassador prepares her hand over notes, we on this page cannot fail but say our salute and goodbye to an astute diplomat, an intellectual and a friend who in her representation did not breath down our necks nor did she shake in fear of our rough environment.

After all, before she came to Abuja, the Deputy Commander of the US Industrial College of the Armed Forces of War in Washington DC. The greatest and most dominant Armed Forces in the planet.

*Bed Stuy Vollies, bsvac.org, the world's first volunteer African ambulance corps, first on the ground after Haiti earthquake (below, Haitians outside church during the 3 days of national mourning, picture MJOta Publisher), always has speakers, always needs donations. Bed Stuy Vollies is ready to help, always.*



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