

To: Selected Legislators of the House and Senate

From: Proponents of a new legislative initiative -
Alan Gates, Mohamoud Ahmed, Dale Gustafson

Re: Creation of a "Connecticut/Africa Exchange Commission"

Enclosed are some background materials focused on developing a "Connecticut/Africa Trade Commission" during this legislative session. This initiative is intended to be a fresh start in implementing Act 97:135, passed by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Rowland in 1997.

Such a Commission could take the lead in promoting **job development** within our state during these days of great fiscal crisis. It could, in conjunction with the DECD, assist small / medium size businesses develop trading partners in various Sub-Saharan African countries which would benefit business expansion on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Commission could also promote **educational exchanges** involving Connecticut's institutions of higher education. It could promote conferences and seminars bringing together business leaders and governmental officials leading to enhanced trade between our state and this largest of continents.

The **Commerce Committee** is framing an appropriate **Bill**. Possible shape of such a **Bill** is enclosed. Also included is a little of the historical data from 1997.

This proposed **Bill** has the backing of the African-American Affairs Commission. Other residents of our state are being informed of this initiative as the days pass. **It is not a Bill requiring special funding.**

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration and support.

✓ Mohamoud A. Ahmed
860-241-1533

2. Dale Gustafson

(860) 647-7128

3. Professor Alan W. Gates

860-246-1900-

Testimony on S.B. No. 880 (Raised) An Act Concerning Trade with Africa

- (1) I **commend** the General Assembly, through its Commerce Committee, for initiating a Bill that will demand serious and forthright study of the DECD response to ACT 97:135 which was signed into law 12 years ago. Though the proposed bill speaks only of a "study of programs initiated, conducted and coordinated by the DECD" (with respect to Africa), **this is a vital first step**. The initial ACT, twelve years ago, stated that the DECD "may" issue reports. This bill changes the "may" verbiage to "shall," **a giant leap forward**. We need this kind of information in order to appropriately undergird current or future "import/export" initiatives with Sub-Saharan African countries who are in diplomatic relation with the U.S.
- (2) As a highly interested citizen within our state, I was one who suggested that a Connecticut-Africa Exchange Commission, be approved during this legislative session, (similar in scope to the Connecticut-Israel Exchange Commission). I still believe that such a commission would be a vital entity in the promotion and enactment of import/export activity between Connecticut and Sub-Saharan African countries. Such a commission would work in concert with the DECD, but also could be the recipient of support dollars (from outside sources) that would make it a commission **NOT DEPENDENT** on state funding, a clear advantage in extremely tough fiscal times when the use of every state dollar is so critical. Its focus would be jobs and job development for Connecticut businesses utilizing resources and service needs found within targeted African countries.
- (3) The United States, generally, and Connecticut, specifically, should be more directly involved with African countries in this ever widening global economy. We are being beaten to the punch by China which has numerous projects underway in many African countries. ACT 97:135, if implemented correctly, could have been at the forefront of activity 12 years ago.
- (4) There are other states in the U.S. who have seen the value of solid import/export activity with African countries. Most recently, in 2008, Maryland received a federal grant of \$400,000 to create an African Trade Office in Prince George's County.
- (5) More than 25 years ago, Kentucky began an active campaign to promote trade with South Africa (just after the issues of apartheid).
- (6) With the new federal administration under President Obama, new African initiatives will undoubtedly be developed. It would be ideal to have an "exchange commission" which could respond to such initiatives.
- (7) Commissions have a built-in multiplier effect because many individuals, who volunteer not only time, but effort, ideas and (at times), dollars, become very closely involved with these entities. We know small business owners, university professors, legislators, retirees who are waiting for an opportunity to promote trade relationships with various African countries. All of this is literally done "at no cost" to the state.

Dale Gustafson, now of Hartford, formerly of Manchester



EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

A campus of the Connecticut State University

March 11, 1996

Office of the President

The Honorable Anthony Guglielmo
State Senator
Legislative Office Building
Room 3800
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591

Dear Senator Guglielmo:

I regret that firm commitments did not permit me to testify on behalf of Bill #5603 - to promote trade between Connecticut and African businesses. In Bill #5603, Section 2, subsection (a), there is language concerning the development of loans and aid including working capital for small and medium size companies in order to carry out the purposes of Bill #5603. Two weeks ago, Florida Memorial College in Miami received \$200,000 from the State Department of Commerce to promote minority businesses export opportunities. I bring this to your attention because the caucus could probably be very instrumental in developing concepts within the Connecticut Development Authority for specific opportunities to address minority business needs.

I am particularly enthusiastic about the possibilities which this bill portends because I recently accepted invitations to visit countries in Eastern and Southern Africa. The enthusiastic response for educational exchanges leads me to believe that the leadership in these countries is prepared to create positive partnerships for our business institutions in Connecticut. I believe that one observation indicates the possibilities of such commerce. In Africa elevators carried the trademark of Chinese companies, however, when I visited China, I saw the trademark of Otis elevator, which prompts me to believe that many of our Connecticut companies are well positioned to make the intent of this bill possible.

Africa is a vast geopolitical continent and as such we clearly understand that African-American countries have distinctiveness which of course will require careful selection of countries for the enterprises envisioned. I agree with the African Trade and Information Center premise that we will create diverse economic opportunities and many jobs for our businesses

C

cc: Mr. Mohamoud D. Ahmed

DGC/dsk

David G. Carter
President



Sincerely,

Eastern's head seeks to create ties to Africa

By LAURA UNGAR
Courant Staff Writer

WINDHAM — When he travels to Africa Wednesday, Eastern Connecticut State University President David Carter plans to meet with an incoming freshman in Kenya and contact another student's mother in Botswana.

His trip is part of an effort to develop ties, personal and educational, between the Willimantic-based university and Africa.

During his 17-day trip, Carter will try to recruit students, develop faculty exchanges and identify joint projects for which he can seek grants. Carter has also scheduled several speaking engagements. For example, he plans to speak at the commencement ceremony at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, and give a talk at a hotel in Kampala about the life and influence of Martin Luther King Jr.

"The goal is to further enhance linkages between Africa and Eastern," Carter said in a telephone interview from Texas on Friday. "America has a culture.

Please see Eastern's, Page B4

■ AREAWIDE

Eastern's president seeks ties to Africa

Continued from Page B1

"The other countries have a culture as well. Nothing takes the place of face-to-face contact."

This isn't Carter's first visit abroad. Since becoming president of Eastern in 1988, he has made several similar trips. He has been to Africa before and has also visited Brazil, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. During his upcoming trip, he plans to visit Kenya, Uganda, Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

Carter said he hopes to help create a campus where students from many different countries mingle. Eastern, which has an enrollment of



■ Carter

"America has a culture. The other countries have a culture as well. Nothing takes the place of face-to-face contact."

David Carter

Eastern Connecticut State University

about 4,700, has already attracted 159 students from almost 40 countries.

Carter said he is not sure how many Eastern students come from Africa. But nationwide, 20,723 African students attended American colleges in 1994-95, said Gail Ferrari, spokeswoman for the Washington-based NAFSA: Association of International Education.

Michael Aitken, director of government relations at the College and University Personnel Associa-

tion in Washington, said university presidents often travel abroad seeking to recruit students and strengthen ties with colleges abroad. Carter's journey is somewhat unusual, however.

"There are cultural exchange programs where institutions set relationships with universities from different countries," Aitken said. "But South Africa may be a little different because of economic and cultural embargos because of apartheid."

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Dale Gustafson, now of Hartford, formerly of Manchester

March 5, 1996

Senator Anthony Guglielmo and
All Members of the State of Connecticut
Commerce Committee
Room 110
State Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Dear Senator Guglielmo:

This letter expresses my support for the concept of Bill# 5603, An Act Concerning Connecticut Trade With Africa and the Middle East.

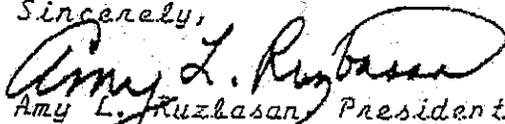
The initiative put forth by this Act to create a public-private partnership between the parties Mohamoud D. Ahmed has put together and the public sector, the Commerce Committee of the State of Connecticut can build a new bridge for Connecticut businesses who see opportunity with trading with Africa.

I support the initiatives to promote trade with Africa. The fiber optic network around the continent of Africa is almost complete. The telecommunications base will allow greater access to this new foreign market opportunity created by Bill# 5603.

Connecticut's resources are numerous. Our human resources are our greatest asset. Mr. Ahmed's understanding of the African and Middle Eastern cultures, languages and ways of doing business are valuable to those in Connecticut who wish to capitalize on having that access to resources, but are limited in financial means to do so. True empowerment can come from the financial assistance the State of Connecticut can provide as the seed for this future global expansion.

I would welcome the opportunity to share with you any further information or resources that can assist you in learning more about Connecticut trade with Africa and the Middle East.

Sincerely,


Amy L. Ruzhasan, President

Connecticut World Commerce Center Initiatives

INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to transmit to you the 1977 INVESTMENT CLIMATE REPORTS FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.

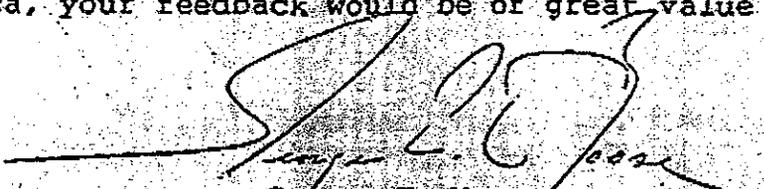
As we approach the threshold of a new century, more and more African countries are continuing their journey on a road being paved with political and economic transformations. We are gaining new insights and setting new priorities as we focus more on the Continent's outstanding human and natural resources. We know that U.S. trade and investment can play a more significant role in helping the nations of Africa take their rightful place among the nations of the world.

This Administration remains committed to serving the economic and commercial interests of the United States while providing support to the nations of Africa in their efforts to become part of the global economy. As a way of reenforcing this commitment, the Africa Bureau continues to strengthen its programs to support and facilitate U.S. business. At the Department of State, our Commercial Coordinator together with our Economic Policy Staff and our Desk Officers are available to assist you. At our posts in Africa, our embassy staff is there to help you.

There are increasing opportunities for U.S. trade and investment in Africa with its roughly 600 million consumers. The continuing growth and expansion of democratic governments and institutions, together with an increase in significant economic reform and liberalization, are promoting an enabling environment for the private sector in many African countries.

We hope that you will find the INVESTMENT CLIMATE REPORTS a useful source of information. We have tried to provide a brief overview of developments and trends in individual countries which may have a bearing on your business interests during the months ahead. We are pleased to share this information with you. For further information on individual countries, please refer to the Country Commercial Guides.

As you consider the opportunities for expanded trade and investment in Africa, your feedback would be of great value to us.



George E. Moose
Assistant Secretary

JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
 CONNECTICUT
 COMMITTEES:
 ARMED SERVICES
 ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
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July 18, 1995

The Honorable John G. Rowland
 Room 200
 State Capitol
 Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Rowland:

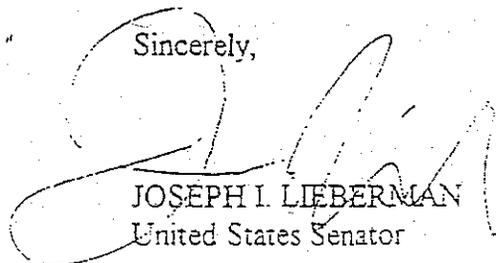
I am writing on behalf of Mr. Mohamoud Ahmed of Hartford, Connecticut. Mr. Ahmed is affiliated with the International Marketing Agencies and, along with Professor Alan Gates, has recently submitted a proposal to your office concerning the expansion of export prospects between Hartford and various developing African, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Rim nations.

As an expert in this arena, Mr. Ahmed presents a realistic account of the citywide and statewide benefits of a concerted effort to improve our export potential. According to Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, Africa is an "untapped market" for United States businesses, and Mr. Ahmed's proposal will allow Connecticut the opportunity to take full advantage of favorable conditions abroad. With the support and backing of the City of Hartford and the State of Connecticut, our local businesses can maximize their profits in international markets ranging from computer supplies to mining equipment.

The benefits of such international success to state residents are numerous. Hartford, hit hard by economic conditions and capital flight, will see an influx of high-paying jobs for residents and an improved tax base. As so many social problems evident in Hartford are linked to joblessness, creating a positive climate for export-minded businesses can have an overwhelming effect on the future of the city and the state.

I highly recommend that you or a representative from your office discuss with Mr. Ahmed ways in which the state government can help bring this plan to fruition. All of Connecticut's residents can benefit from this very worthwhile endeavor.

Sincerely,



JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN
 United States Senator