

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço of Angola and an Exchange With Reporters

November 30, 2023

President Biden. Well, welcome. And I want to welcome the President. It's an honor to have you here at the White House in the Oval Office.

Inflation

Before I begin, I want to say a few words about the recent inflation report we got yesterday. We learned that inflation last month was a big, round number: zero. *[Laughter]*

We still have more work to do. Prices are still too high. Corporations are taking advantage. Too many families are still struggling a little bit. But with the record GDP and job growth, this flat inflation number is helping deliver a little bit of breathing room for folks in this—right now, especially around the holidays.

Angola-U.S. Relations

Mr. President, I apologize for starting off talking about American domestic issues. But these are important numbers.

But, as you understand, Mr. President—more than almost any leader in Africa—we meet at a historic moment. Simply put, the partnership between Angola and America is more important and more impactful than ever.

I'm particularly proud of our work through the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. And——

[At this point, the President briefly addressed the interpreter as follows.]

Excuse me. Go ahead.

I'm excited to build the Lobito economic corridor as well.

Together, we'll be mobilizing more than a million dollars—\$1 billion for railway lines that extend from Angola to Zambia to the D.R.C., and ultimately to the Indian Ocean, connecting the continent for the first time from east to west.

This is a first-of-its kind project, is the biggest U.S. rail investment in Africa ever, one that's going to create jobs and connect markets for generations to come.

On top of that, Mr. President, we're also investing nearly \$1 billion more in Africa for a number of items: a solar energy project that will help Angola generate 75 percent of its clean energy by 2025—75 percent; and the agricultural infrastructure projects are going to help Angola be a net food exporter, exporting food by 2027. And the projects are going to connect every Angolan to the digital economy.

And Mr. President, I want to thank you, especially, for your leadership, including working toward peace in the eastern D.R.C.

When I started as a young Senator on the Foreign Relations Committee, I was the chairman of the African Affairs Subcommittee. And as you've heard me say before, America is all in on Africa. And we're all in with you and Angola.

So thank you very much for being here, and I look forward to our conversation.

President Lourenço. Thank you very much, President Joe Biden, for the invitation extended to me to conduct this official working visit to the United States of America in order for us to strengthen our bonds of friendship and economic cooperation between our two countries, Angola and the United States of America.

We are open to having cooperation in the fields of economy, but not only economy. We should include sectors such as defense and security, transportation, energy, telecommunication, agriculture, and the use of space for peaceful purposes.

I would like to seize this opportunity to thank you, President Joe Biden, for having been the first U.S. President to change the cooperation paradigm between the U.S. and the African Continent.

I was here for—in Washington, DC, for the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. And at that time, President Biden promised to have a different look at Africa in order to provide the infrastructure which is necessary for the development of our continent.

Of course, the U.S. engagement in Lobito Corridor in telecommunication and energy—mainly green energy—is an evidence of that support, because infrastructures like those will help the country, develop not in Angola only, but also the whole African Continent.

So this is a new page that has been turned in the U.S.-Africa relations. And that's thanks to you, Mr. President.

So, once again, thank you very much, President Biden. And we are ready, and we look forward to discussing the bilateral issues that concern our two countries.

President Biden. Africa, 1 billion people, and critically important how it functions for the whole world. And no country more important than Angola. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

[*Several reporters began asking questions at once.*]

Q. Henry Kissinger. Mr. President, Henry Kissinger?

Q. Mr. President, will you visit Angola?

Q. Your thoughts about——

Q. Mr. President, will you visit Angola? Mr. President, will you visit Angola?

Q. Mr. President, no word on Kissinger today?

Q. Mr. President, will you visit Angola soon?

The President's Travel Schedule

Q. Mr. President, one more for the Angolan people. They are looking for you. Will you visit Angola, Mr. President?

President Biden. I've been there, and I'll be back.

Q. I didn't get it, Mr.——

President Biden. I've been there, and I will be back.

Q. Will you visit Angola?

Q. Why no word on Kissinger, Mr. President? Mr. President——

[*Several reporters asked questions at once. President Lourenço then spoke briefly as follows.*]

President Lourenço. I'll invite President Biden to visit Angola. Later on, we'll negotiate the dates when the visit will take place.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:17 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A reporter referred to former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, who died on November 30. President Lourenço spoke in Portuguese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Angola, President Lourenço.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Lourenço, João Manuel Gonçalves.

Subjects: Africa, regional infrastructure development; Angola, agricultural production, strengthening efforts; Angola, energy cooperation with U.S.; Angola, President; Angola, relations with U.S.; Congo, Democratic Republic of the, international diplomatic efforts; Economic improvement; Inflation; Solar and wind energy, promotion efforts.

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