

makes it a lot easier for private companies to donate food and for people like you to prepare and distribute it. Our Agriculture Secretary, Dan Glickman, has gotten the whole Government working on food rescue programs like this one. And now the Agriculture Department is working around the country to form new grassroots partnerships to fight hunger, to increase local food production, and to help low income families move into independence. But we've got to have the support of volunteers, and we have to have the willingness of the community.

We come here at holiday season because everybody's thinking about this. But what we should do at holiday season is to make commitments that last all year long, not just at the holiday season. The AmeriCorps members here—I want to say again how proud I am of you and what a testament you have been to the proposition that working with others is not a burden, it is a joy; it is not just a duty; it is a privilege. And whether you are preparing

meals or teaching a child to read or painting an old school, you always get more than you give. And most of us get out of this life ahead of where we would be if all we got is just what we deserve. [Laughter] And I think this is really an important thing to remember at this season.

So again, I want to thank all of you. Thank you, Robert Egger; thank you, graduates; thank you trainees; thank you, staff and volunteers and supporters of the D.C. Central Kitchen. You have captured the spirit of the season, and I hope others will catch it from you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:12 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Harris Wofford, chief executive officer, Corporation for Public Service; and Robert Egger, director, Donna Simon, graduate, and Steve Pritchett, Melody Swint, and Michele Rhyne, trainees, D.C. Central Kitchen.

Statement on Lifting the Ban on Direct Flights Between the United States and Nigeria

December 22, 1999

Earlier today, Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater announced that the United States is lifting our ban on direct flights to Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos, Nigeria.

I congratulate President Obasanjo and his government for taking the steps necessary to remove this ban, including the overhauling of Nigeria's airport security system. These important reforms provided one more indication of the Nigerian administration's commitment to good governance. They offer new evidence that

Nigeria is reversing the damage that years of corruption and mismanagement inflicted upon its international reputation.

I am deeply gratified to see a government chosen by the Nigerian people earning the trust and respect of the world. I look forward to strengthening our partnership with Nigeria even further over the coming year.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria.

Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa, 1999

December 22, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Kwanzaa.

With roots in the ancient history and cultural traditions of Africa and celebrating such fundamental American values as unity and self-deter-

mination, this joyous annual festival reflects the diversity that gives our nation much of its strength and resilience. Each year during Kwanzaa, millions of African Americans gather with family and friends to celebrate their rich