

Remarks Following a Meeting With President John Evans Atta Mills of Ghana in Accra, Ghana

July 11, 2009

President Obama. Hello, everybody.

President Mills. We, indeed, consider as well as an honor and a privilege to have with us President Barack Obama. We're happy that this is the first country that he's visiting as U.S. President, and we like the positive signals that this visit is sending and will continue to send.

We want to congratulate you on the choice of Ghana and want to tell you that this encourages us also to sustain the gains that we have made in our democratic processes. And many Ghanaians, indeed, I can say without any fear of contradiction that all Ghanaians want to see you. I wish it was possible for me to send you to every home in Ghana. *[Laughter]*

But, once again, welcome to your own home, and we hope that this relationship is going to go from strength to strength, and that this monumental visit of yours is going to be all to the benefit of our respective people and to Accra, Ghana.

President Obama. Well, it is a great pleasure to be here in Ghana, and we are grateful for the extraordinary hospitality that's been shown to myself and my family and my entire staff during our visit here. I'll have the opportunity to address Parliament and have more extensive remarks, as well as upon departure, I will have the opportunity to address the Ghanaian people more widely.

Let me just say that we wanted to make sure to come to an African country after the G-8 and after my visit to Moscow to emphasize that Africa is not separate from world affairs. There's a tendency, I think, for U.S. Presidents to take a week sometime during their term and there's a separate visit to Africa, and we wanted to send a message that we have a continuing interest in Africa's security, in Afri-

ca's economy, in Africa's social and political development, because we live in an interrelated world and what happens here has an impact everywhere.

And coming to Ghana specifically, partly, was prompted by the fact that I'm very familiar with East Africa and I've been to South Africa, but I have never been to a West African country, and partly, it was to recognize the extraordinary progress that has been made in Ghana around democratic issues.

We had—President Mills is an example of a democratic leader who did it the right way and continues to do it the right way, but it goes beyond one individual. There are a set of institutions here that are sustaining democracy and openness and participation. You have an economy that has been well managed.

Obviously, this is a difficult time throughout the world economically, and Ghana is no exception; it's been impacted by the world recession. But there's been a greater level of transparency and openness. The growth strategy here in Ghana have been ones that are actually delivering improved standards of living for the people.

So we think that Ghana can be an extraordinary model for success throughout the continent, and we are very much looking forward to strengthening what is already a strong friendship between the United States and Ghana for many years to come.

So thank you, again, for your hospitality. We are very grateful.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. in the Presidential Palace. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at La General Hospital in Accra

July 11, 2009

Part of the reason this is so important is throughout Africa, the rates of both infant

mortality, but also maternal mortality is still far too high, I mean, by a factor of—a multiple of

tens compared to many other parts of the world. And so these kinds of programs that provide sound prenatal care and maternal care are extraordinarily important, and this is a model of

the kind of clinics where people are able to get these important services.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:17 a.m. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Weekly Address *July 11, 2009*

This week we've made important progress towards the goal of bringing about change abroad and change at home. During my visit to Russia, we began the process of resetting relations so that we can address key national priorities like the threat of nuclear weapons and extremism. At the G-8 summit, leaders from nearly 30 nations met to discuss how we'll collectively confront the urgent challenges of our time, from managing the global recession to fighting global warming to addressing global hunger and poverty. And in Ghana, I laid out my agenda for supporting democracy and development in Africa and around the world. But even as we make progress on these challenges abroad, my thoughts are on the state of our economy at home. And that's what I want to talk to you about today.

We came into office facing the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression. At the time, we were losing, on average, 700,000 jobs a month, and many feared that our financial system was on the verge of collapse.

As a result of the swift and aggressive action we took in the first few months of this year, we've been able to pull our financial system and our economy back from the brink. We took steps to restart lending to families and businesses, stabilize our major financial institutions, and help homeowners stay in their homes and pay their mortgages. We also passed the largest and most sweeping economic recovery plan in our Nation's history.

The Recovery Act wasn't designed to restore the economy to full health on its own, but to provide the boost necessary to stop the free fall. It was designed to spur demand and get people spending again and cushion those who had borne the brunt of the crisis. And it was designed to save jobs and create new ones.

In a little over 100 days, this Recovery Act has worked as intended. It's already extended unemployment insurance and health insurance to those who have lost their jobs in this recession. It's delivered \$43 billion in tax relief to American working families and businesses. Without the help the Recovery Act has provided to struggling States, its estimated that State deficits would be nearly twice as large as they are now, resulting in tens of thousands of additional layoffs, layoffs that would affect police officers, teachers, and firefighters.

The Recovery Act has allowed small businesses and clean energy companies to hire new workers or scrap their plans for eliminating current jobs. And it's led to new jobs building roads, bridges, and other infrastructure projects, thousands of which are only beginning now. In the months to come, thousands more projects will begin, leading to additional jobs.

Now, I realize that when we passed this Recovery Act, there were those who felt that doing nothing was somehow an answer. Today, some of those same critics are already judging the effort a failure, although they have yet to offer a plausible alternative. Others believed that the recovery plan should have been even larger, and they're already calling for a second recovery plan.

But as I made clear at the time it was passed, the Recovery Act was not designed to work in 4 months, it was designed to work over 2 years. We also knew that it would take some time for the money to get out the door, because we're committed to spending it in a way that's effective and transparent. Crucially, this is a plan that will also accelerate greatly through the summer and the fall. We must let it work the way it's supposed to, with the understanding that in any recession, unemployment tends to