When FDR created Social Security, critics called it socialism. When JFK and LBJ worked to create Medicare, the cynics said it would take away our freedom. But ultimately, we came to see these programs for what they truly are: a promise that if we work hard and play by the rules, we'll be rewarded with a basic measure of dignity, security, and the freedom to live our lives as we want. It's a promise that previous generations made to us and a promise that our generation has to keep.

Thanks, and have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:41 p.m. on July 31 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast on August 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on August 1.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders Presidential Summit Town Hall
August 3, 2015

The President. Thank you. Well, hello, everybody!

[*At this point, audience members sang "Happy Birthday" as follows.*]

Audience members. Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you!

The President. Thank you. Everybody, sit down. Thank you so much. Well, this is a good crowd here! First of all, can everybody please give Grace another big round of applause. Not only does she do incredibly inspiring work in Nigeria, but I have to say, following Grace is a little bit like following Michelle. [*Laughter*] She's so good that you kind of feel bad when you're walking out, because you're thinking, I'm not going to be that good. [*Laughter*] But she's just one example of the incredible talent that's in this room.

And to all of you, I know that you've been here in the United States for just a few weeks, but let me say on behalf of the American people, welcome to the United States. We are thrilled to have you here.

And your visit comes at a perfect time, because, yes, it's soon my birthday, and that's a very important thing. [*Laughter*] But that's not the main reason it's a perfect time. The main reason is because, as many of you know, I just returned from Africa. And it was my fourth trip to sub-Saharan Africa, more than any other U.S. President. And I was proud to be the first U.S. President to visit Kenya, the first to—[*applause*]—hey!—visit Ethiopia, the first to address the African Union, which was a great honor.

And the reason I've devoted so much energy to our work with the continent is, as I said last week, even as Africa continues to confront many challenges, Africa is on the move. It's one of the fastest growing regions in the world. Africa's middle class is projected to grow to more than 1 billion consumers. With hundreds of millions of mobile phones and surging access to the Internet, Africans are beginning to leapfrog old technologies into new prosperity. The continent has achieved historic gains in health, from fighting HIV/AIDS to making childbirth safer for women and babies. Millions have been lifted from extreme poverty. So this is extraordinary progress.

And young people like you are driving so much of this progress, because Africa is the youngest continent. I saw the power of youth on my trip. In Kenya, Richard Ruto Todosia helped build Yes Youth Can, one of the county's most prominent civil society groups, with over 1 million members. At the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, Shadi Sabeh broke—spoke about how he started Brilliant Footsteps Academy in Nigeria, which uses education to fight religious extremism and provide more opportunities for young Muslim youth. I met Judith Owigar, an entrepreneur who cofounded a nonprofit that trains young

women living in the slums of Nairobi in computer programming and graphic design and then helps place them in tech jobs.

So I saw the talent of young people all across the continent. And as President, I want to make sure that even as we're working with governments, we're also helping to empower young Africans like all of you. And that's why I launched YALI—Young African Leaders Initiative—to help you access the resources and the training and the networks that you need to become the next generation of leaders in all areas: in civil society, in business, in government.

And the response has been overwhelming. So far, more than 140,000 young people across Africa have joined our YALI network, so young Africans with new ideas can connect with each other and collaborate and work together to put their plans into action. And I want to welcome all of the YALI network members across Africa who are watching this town hall today. I'm proud of all of you. I'm proud that we've made so much progress together, after just a few years.

And last year, I said we'd launch a new set of tools for our YALI network. So today, we've got more than 30 online lessons available on everything from public speaking to how to write a business plan, mentoring, new ways to network across Africa, around the world, new training sessions, meetings with experts on how to launch a startup. And we're launching three new online Mandela Fellow—Washington Fellowship Institute courses so that all members of the YALI network can access some of the great ideas that you've been sharing.

Last year, I said that we would create YALI Regional Leadership Centers across Africa to provide skills, networks, and opportunities to even more young African leaders. And in Kenya, I had a chance to visit the Regional Leadership Center in Nairobi. Just this morning we opened a new center in Accra. And two more will be opened by the end of the year in Pretoria and in Dakar.

Last year, I said we would do even more to support young entrepreneurs with grants to help youth start a business or nonprofit and with new training for thousands of aspiring entrepreneurs in small towns and rural areas. So, at the recent Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi, I announced that we've secured more than $1 billion in new commitments from banks and philanthropists to support emerging entrepreneurs around the world, including in Africa, with half the money going to support women and young people.

And last year, I welcomed our first class of Mandela Fellows. This year, the response was overwhelming again. Nearly 30,000 applied. And today I'm honored to welcome you, the second Mandela Washington Fellows class. We're on track to double the Mandela Washington Fellowship program to 1,000 fellows by next year.

And I know you've been busy. [*Laughter*] Over the past few weeks, at schools and businesses all across America, you've been taking courses, developing the skills you'll need to make your ideas a reality so that you're able to continue the great work that you're already doing, but take it to the next level.

That's what Brian Bwembya of Zambia plans to do. Where's Brian? Where is he? There he is right there. So Brian uses music to advocate against things like gender-based violence and to educate youth on HIV/AIDS. So, while in the U.S., he's learned about our health care system, met the founder of an American HIV/AIDS organization, and now he plans to start a record label for music about social change. So, Brian, we're proud to be your partner.

Or we've got Kadijah Diallo of Guinea. Where is Kadijah? There she is. So Kadijah helped lead UNICEF's media campaign to stop the spread of Ebola. And with the management skills that she gained at Wagner College, she wants to work on improving the lives of women and girls back home in Guinea. So we are proud to be your partner.

Or we've got Jamila Mayanja of Uganda. Are you posing? [*Laughter*] She is posing. Jamila is not a fashion model. That's not—[*laughter*]—she started a door-to-door laundry company to employ more youth and teach them entrepreneurial skills. And she hopes to take what she learned during her time at Dartmouth Univer-

sity to meet her goal of getting 1,000 youth to work in or run their own business. So we're proud to be your partner, Jamila.

So that's just a sampling of the incredible projects that are being done by fellows all across Africa. So this program is going to help all of you make a real difference back home.

But Fatou Ba Ndiour from Senegal—where's Fatou? So Fatou wrote me a letter, and she said, if the real value of new YALI is for young people to learn from others, then maybe we should start sending some young Americans to Africa also. The—and she made the point, not just to help poor communities as they usually do, "but to learn from other societies with humility," which I thought is absolutely true.

So I have good news, Fatou. From now on, YALI will give Americans an opportunity. Next summer, up to 80 young American leaders will join YALI and go to Africa to learn from you and your countries. And I mean, you guys are going to have to look after them when they're there. [*Laughter*] Like, show them good places, but not to have too much fun. [*Laughter*] They need to be doing some work while they're there.

So these connections and partnerships and friendships, they forge an understanding that brings our peoples closer together. After 6 weeks here, some of you are now officially Texas Longhorns or Notre Dame Fighting Irish. [*Laughter*] You've shared African cooking with your American friends, but you've also had a burger and a hotdog at Fourth of July celebrations. [*Laughter*] I'm told many of you went bowling for the first time.

Audience members. Yes!

The President. I hear it didn't go that well. [*Laughter*] There were a few strikes. By the way, there was at least one marriage that came out of last year's class. [*Laughter*] So who knows might what might happen here. [*Laughter*]

So, as your time in America comes to a close, I want you to remember this is really just the beginning. We just started this. And the truth is that our greatest challenges—whether it's inclusive development or confronting terrorism, dealing with conflict, climate change, increasing women's rights, children's rights—these are bigger than any one nation or even one continent.

Our hope is, is that 10, 15, 20 years from now, when you've all gone on to be ministers in government or leaders in business or pioneers of social change, that you'll still be connecting with each other, that you'll still be learning from each other, and that together, you'll be reaching back and helping the next generation; that you'll not only be making a difference in your own countries, but you'll be the foundation of a new generation of global leadership, a generation that's going to be working together across borders to make the world safer and more prosperous and more peaceful and more just. That's my hope for you.

We've brought you here because we benefit from your leadership, but we're counting on you to work together to make sure that you're also reaching back to those who are going to be coming behind you. Couldn't be prouder of you.

So, with that, let me take some questions. All right? Thank you very much. Let me—[*applause*].

All right. So here are the—I think you've been told how this works, but I'm going to just repeat it. I'm just going to call on as many people as possible. When I call on you, introduce yourself, tell me what country you're from. Make your question relatively short—[*laughter*]—so that we can get as many questions in as possible. And I'm going to go boy, girl, boy, girl to make sure that it's fair. All right? Okay. So let me see who I'm going to start off with. This is all such a good-looking group. I'm going to start with this young lady right here. Right here. Right in the middle. Yes, there you go, with the African earrings. [*Laughter*] Very appropriate.

Q. My name is Faith Chege. I'm from Kenya and——

The President. Habari?

First Lady Michelle Obama/Gender Equality

Q. Mzuri sana.

The President. Okay.

Q. Yes. And my question is, I'm curious how you keep the balance in terms of your background

as an African American and the kind of struggles you've had to get over to get here. And being to married Michelle Obama; she's powerful and amazing. And as a father, as a husband. But you seem to not let that interfere with your work, and you've been effective. So how do you keep the balance?

The President. Well, first of all, I wouldn't be who I was without Michelle. So she's my partner. And the—that's true professionally, but that's true in terms of my character and who I am. One of the things I'm very proud of is the fact that I married someone who is strong and talented and opinionated and my equal. And part of the reason why that's so important to me is because she's the role model now for my daughters. And so Malia and Sasha, they have expectations of being strong and talented and being treated as an equal by their partners as they get older, much older. [*Laughter*]

The balance—I've written about this. The balance isn't always perfect. I think one of the things that my generation, but now even more your generation, has to manage is, if you have two people working in the house, outside the home, how do you manage that in a way that we're both good parents, we're both able to succeed in our work. And what Michelle and I found was that we had to recognize that at any given point in our careers, one person might sacrifice a little bit. Maybe this was a time that she really had to focus on something, and so I had to cover for her more. There were times where I was able to do something, and she had to handle things more.

Now, I'm not suggesting that it's been completely equal, because I'm the first one to acknowledge that she's probably made more sacrifices, given the nature of a political career, than I have. But what I've learned from her is that if she doesn't feel respected and fulfilled, then I'm going to end up being less successful, ultimately. And that's something that I think that men in Africa, in particular—but men everywhere—[*laughter*]. But men in Africa—I've spoken about this a lot. The best measure of how a country does, economically, in terms of development is, how does it treat its women?

And as I said in a speech—a couple of the speeches that I gave while I was in Kenya and Ethiopia, if you're mistreating your women, then you're just holding yourself back, you're holding yourself down. You may have some false sense of importance, but ultimately, you don't benefit if women are being discriminated against, because that means when they're working, you—your family is going to have less income. If they're not educated, that means your children are less likely to be well educated, because typically, the mother is the first educator of a child. So if they see you disrespecting your wife, then what lesson is your—not just your girls, but what lesson are your sons learning from you?

And so this is something that I really think everybody, especially the young generation of African men, have to learn and internalize. And I want to see more men creating peer pressure among themselves. If you see a friend of yours, a classmate, one of your buddies abusing a woman, you have to say something. You have to ostracize them and say that's not acceptable. Because ultimately, this is not just an issue of laws—although, here in the United States, we're still fighting for equal pay for equal work, we're still fighting to make sure that women have the same opportunities as men—but it's also a matter of culture and what our expectations are. And your generation is going to have to change expectations.

You do not lift yourself up by holding somebody else down. And that's especially true within your own family and the people that you're closest to.

All right? So, all right, that young men right there, in the striped shirt and the—yes, you. Yes.

Climate Change

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Ange Imanishimwe, from Rwanda. [*Applause*]

You have a little cheering section here. [*Laughter*] Got the flags.

Q. Mr. President, there is a big problem of climate change, and the research has showed that Africa will be the most vulnerable continent to climate change in the next decades. Af-

rica is the continent which is responsible to climate change mitigation, and it is reducing the greenhouse gases and the global warming. And I saw that Africa was the last continent to get the funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation. So my question is to ask you, what is the plan of the United States of America to empower Africa so that our community can adapt themselves to the climate change in the next future? Thank you.

The President. Well, first of all, this generation has to understand that climate change is going to be one of the critical issues that you face. Now, oftentimes you'll hear people say, well, environmental issues, climate change, we don't have time to worry about that right now because we have much more urgent issues; we have to educate our children, we have to feed people, we have to develop—maybe later, we can worry about environmental issues—which I understand why a lot of African countries and poorer countries in Asia or Latin America or other places would say that, because historically, that's basically what the United States and developed countries did.

The United States used to be terribly polluted. If you went to Los Angeles, you couldn't—it was like Beijing is now. It was very hard to breathe if you ran outside. You had lakes and rivers that were so polluted that one of them caught fire. [*Laughter*] Now, that's serious; that's some pollution there. [*Laughter*] The same is true in London when London was first developing during the Industrial Revolution, because of all the coal that was being burned and the soot.

Here's the problem. Whether it's fair or not, the issue of climate change is not like traditional environmental issues in the sense that's it's just isolated in one area. Global climate change will affect everybody. And because the changes could be so severe, frankly, the countries that are most likely to be adversely affected are the poorer countries because they have less margin for error.

So, if you have changing weather patterns in, let's say, the Indian subcontinent, and the monsoon rains shift, suddenly, you could have millions of people whose crops completely fail. Well, the same is true in Africa. If rain patterns and drought starts changing, subsistence farmers are completely vulnerable. If you are in coastal communities and the oceans begin to rise, millions of people could be displaced.

So this is something that everybody is going to have to take seriously. Now, what we're going to be doing is, here in the United States, we are initiating some of the most aggressive action to start reducing the emission of carbon that produces climate change. There's going to be a Paris conference later this year in which we're organizing China and other countries that are big carbon emitters to participate and set targets for reduction of carbon pollution.

Now, Africa, per capita, doesn't produce that much carbon. So some African countries have said, well, why do—should we have to do anything? Well, the answer is, is that you have to project where you're going to be 20 years from now or 30 years from now. If you get locked in now in, for example, the way you produce energy that's producing a lot of carbon, given the youth of Africa and its rising population, you could end up being the major carbon emitter if you don't take plans now. So what we're saying is, learn from our mistakes and find new, sustainable ways of generating energy that don't produce carbon.

When I was in Nairobi, I highlighted the work we're doing with something called Power Africa, which has generated billions of dollars with the goal of electrification throughout the sub-Saharan Africa. But part of what we're trying to encourage countries to do is, don't automatically take the old models; think about new models of energy production, and try to leapfrog over the old models.

So, for example, with solar energy, we were looking at solar panels that you could send into rural areas, put on the roof of a hut, and for the same price per day that people are using—are purchasing kerosene, they could have a small—solar panels and pack that generates light and provides what they need. And in fact, it will pay for itself in a year, and then they'll save money after that.

And so, in the same way that you've seen banking and financial transactions off smartphones,

cell phones, leapfrogging some of the old ways of doing business in advanced countries, the same has to be true for energy. And we want to encourage new models. We are going to be providing—the United States and other wealthier countries are going to be providing—billions of dollars in money for adaptation and mitigation. But what's more urgent is how do we create the energy that's needed for Africa's growth and development in a way that does not make the problem worse, but instead makes the problem better.

All right? Okay, this young lady right here. Yes. You've got the mike coming.

Young African Leaders Initiative/The President's Post-Presidency Plans

Q. Hello. So my name is——

The President. Speak up a little bit.

Q. Hello. So my name is Amel Lebatt. I'm from Mauritania, and I'm 23 years old. So my question is simple: You, as a President, and you, as a citizen—a U.S. citizen, will you, after leaving the White House, keep up this program? Because we still need it.

The President. Yes. The—it is a simple question, and I've got a simple answer: Yes. Now, here's what we're going to try to do. We want to institutionalize the program so that the next President and future Presidents and the U.S. Government continue to sustain the program. But—so that's going to be important.

And since I still have this job for the next 18 months—[*laughter*]—I haven't been completely focused on what I'm going to do afterwards. [*Laughter*] The first thing I'm probably going to do is, I'm going to catch up on my sleep. [*Laughter*] So I'm going to do that for a couple months. [*Laughter*] And—but I can guarantee you that one of the things I'm interested in doing when I leave office is to continue to create these platforms for young leadership across the globe, to network and get relationships, to work together, to learn with each other.

And by the way, it's not just in Africa. So we've set up a young leaders program in Asia. We're doing the same thing in Latin America. Because the goal is, eventually, I want not only for there to be a network of thousands of young African leaders who know each other across borders, are sharing best practices, sharing ideas, but I also want you to know young leaders in Indonesia or young leaders in Chile or young leaders around the globe.

Because as I said before, ultimately, you're going to be global leaders, not just leaders in your own country. It begins in your own countries where you can make your mark, but one of the powerful things about technology and the Internet now is, you can learn and forge relationships and learn best practices from everyplace. So, if you're an advocate for women's rights and you're doing great work in Nigeria, it may be that somebody in Burma can, on the Internet, see how you organized your campaign and how you were able to finance it and what you were able to accomplish, and suddenly, what you've done in one country becomes a model for action all across the world.

So this is going to be a top priority of mine. I will definitely continue to be involved in that. All right?

Let's see, I've got a man—I've got to call on a man now. Let's see. Let's see. I'm going to call on this guy right there. Yes, you right there. No, no, nope. Yes, you right there. Just because—it's just because I like that hat. [*Laughter*] That's a sharp-looking hat right there.

Young African Leaders Initiative/Entrepreneurship

Q. My name is Sabir. I come from Madagascar.

The President. There you go.

Q. We, the Malagasy fellows, are involved in the environmental entrepreneurship. So what is the commitment of the United States towards young entrepreneurship and climate change?

The President. Well, as I said before, we are pledging—we've got a billion dollars for entrepreneurship; half of it we are going to direct towards women entrepreneurs and young people who are entrepreneurs, because they've been underrepresented in terms of access to capital. And as I mentioned to the young man earlier, the opportunities for entrepreneurship related to clean energy, related to conservation—which

oftentimes, in a place like Madagascar, involves tourism and ecotourism—there's huge potential there if it's done properly.

So the key is, in some cases, just the access to financing. But part of what you've learned, hopefully, with YALI is, part of it is also having a well-thought-out plan. Now, not everybody can afford to go to a fancy business school and graduate and have all the credentials, but that doesn't mean you don't have a good idea. And one of the things that we're trying to do, particularly through online learning, is to create some of the basic concepts for how a business or a nonprofit can get started, how it can be properly managed, how you can account—do the accounting in a way that's efficient. We want to make sure that we are a continuing partner for you as you start your business and you learn.

And this is where these regional networks that we're setting up is also useful, because not only will we have online learning, but these regional hubs, initially in four regions of Africa, allow you to continue to network and access through the U.S. Embassy or the chambers of commerce or private sector participants who are partnering with us, so that you can have hands-on mentoring and learning as you are developing your business plans and as you're trying to move forward.

The one thing for those of you who are entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs to remember is all around the world, even in the United States, not every idea succeeds. So, if you want to be an entrepreneur and start a business, you have to believe with all your heart that you're going to succeed, but then when the—and if—one of the businesses fails, you've got to be able to get up, dust yourself off, start—figure out what you've learned, and then start another business. And eventually, it's from continually refining your ideas and exploring what works and understanding what your market is and what consumers are looking for, that eventually, you have a chance to succeed. All right?

Okay. It's a young woman's turn now. Well, she's just dancing over here, so we'll have to call on her. [*Laughter*] That doesn't mean, by the way, everybody should dance. [*Laughter*] I just wanted to point that out. Go ahead.

U.N. Security Council Membership/International Leadership

Q. Okay, Mr. President, thank you. My name is Marilyn Nguemo, from Cameroon. And I would like to find out if you will support Africa as candidate for a permanent seat at the U.N. Security Council. Thank you.

The President. The—so the Security Council was formed after World War II, and obviously, the world and the balance of power around the world looked very different in 1945, 1946, '47 than it does in 2015, '16, and '17. So the United States is supportive in concept of modifications to the structure of the United Nations Security Council. I will be honest with you, how that happens, and how you balance all the equities is complicated. As a matter of principle, I would think that there should at least be one representative from the African Continent on the Security Council, along with representatives from the other regions of the world and some of the other powers that have emerged.

I will tell you that—because, for example, Latin America does not have a country that's represented—it does get complicated. Because you have to figure out how—let me put it this way. Everybody probably thinks they should be on it. [*Laughter*] And so, even in Africa, if you started saying, "Okay, let's say we should have an African," is it South Africa? Is it Nigeria? Is it—see? [*Laughter*] So—Uganda? See? Suddenly, everybody was thinking, well, why not me? The same is true in—Japan considers itself, as one of the largest economies in the world, suitable. Brazil thinks it should be on. India, the world's largest democracy.

So we're going to have to design a process whereby all these various legitimate arguments are sorted through. But what I very much believe is that for the United Nations Security Council to be effective, it has to be more representative of all the various trend lines that have occurred over the last several decades.

One thing I will say, though, about the United Nations: Everybody wants a seat at the

table, but sometimes, people don't want the responsibilities of having a seat at the table. [*Laughter*] And that's happening even now. And the one thing I've learned, both in my personal life and in my political life, is that if you want more authority, then you also have to be more responsible. You can't wear the crown if you can't bear the cross.

And oftentimes, in the United Nations—which I am very committed to, and the agencies there do a lot of really critical important work—but when it comes to, okay, who's going to actually step up and contribute to peacekeeping, who's going to actually write a check when it comes to making sure that we're dealing with the Ebola crisis, who's going to show leadership in tackling climate change, are you willing to speak out on issues even when it contradicts your own interests or when it's politically hard or when it's uncomfortable—well, if you're not willing to do those things, this is not just something where, okay, I've got a membership key and—to the club, and now I'm just going to show off how important I am. And that—you see that sometimes. This happens, and sometimes, it happens at our own agencies.

On human rights, when I was in Kenya, I said that it's not enough for the United States always to be the heavy who has to point out that it's unsuitable for leaders to ignore their constitution and try to cling on to power. Their neighbors have to speak up as well, even if it's uncomfortable. Right?

But—so my attitude is, if you want to participate, then you have to recognize that you have broader responsibilities. And that's something that you—the United States, by the way, for all our occasional mistakes or flaws or our policies not perfect all the time, the one thing we do try to be is responsible. If there's an earthquake or a tornado or a hurricane somewhere, we're there. We're stepping up. When Ebola happened, we stepped up, even when other people were kind of looking around and trying to figure out, well, I don't know, what should we do?

And that is part of leadership. That's true, by the way, for you individually as well. You have to be willing to take some risks and do some hard things in order to be a leader. A leader is not just a name, a title, and privileges and perks. So, all right?

Let's see, it's a—I think it's a gentleman's turn, isn't it?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. All right. This guy looks sharp, right here in the corner. I mean, that's a serious-looking coat. Huh? Look at that. That's a good-looking coat. Don't worry, I'll call on somebody who's just wearing a suit at some point. But—[*laughter*].

Counterterrorism Efforts

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm Franklin Ngochi from Cameroon. So we are very grateful for the American leadership in our fights against violent extremism and the military response. So my question is on—what kind of engagement—what kind of support we can expect from you in building resilient communities, especially along the Sahel, where have a—we are grappling with those issues?

The President. Well, this is something that's very important. Look, the sources of violence around the world are multiple. And it's important for us to recognize that, sadly, the human race has found excuses to kill each other for all sorts of reasons. In the continent of Africa, oftentimes, it's been along ethnic and tribal lines. It has nothing to do with religion; it has to do with, you speak a slightly different language than me or you look just a little bit different. In Northern Ireland, it was religious. In other places, it just has to do with trying to gain power or a majority group trying to impose its will on a minority group. So there are all kinds of reasons for violence.

But one of the phenomena that we are now seeing is a very specific promotion of violent extremism that oftentimes is twisting and distorting and, I think, ultimately defying the edicts of one of the world's greatest religions, Islam. And it's being exported and turbocharged through social media and groups like al-Shabaab and ISIL and Boko Haram. And the question is, how do we fight back against those ideologies in a way that allows us still to

be true to the values of peace and tolerance and due process and rule of law?

So the United States is obviously committed to this fight against terrorism. And we are working with countries and partnering with countries all around the world to go after whether it's Al Qaida, Boko Haram. But what we've also said is, in order to defeat these extremist ideologies, it can't just be military, police, and security. It has to be reaching into communities that feel marginalized and making sure that they feel that they're heard, making sure that the young people in those communities have opportunity.

And that's why it's so important to partner with civil society organizations in countries throughout Africa and around the world who can reach young people before ISIL reaches them, before al-Shabaab reaches them, and inoculate them from the notion that somehow the solution to their alienation or the source of future opportunity for them is to go kill people.

And that's why, when I was in Kenya, for example, and I did a town hall meeting there, I emphasized what I had said to President Kenyatta: Be a partner with the civil society groups. Because too often, there's a tendency—[*applause*]—because what the extremist groups want to do is, they want to divide. That's what terrorism is all about. The notion is that you scare societies, further polarizes them. The government reacts by further discriminating against a particular group. That group then feels it has no political outlet peacefully to deal with their grievances. And that then—that suppression can oftentimes accelerate even more extremism.

And that's why reaching out to civil society groups, clergy, and listening and asking, okay, what is it that we need to do in order to make sure that young people feel that they can succeed? What is it that we need to do to make sure that they feel that they're fully a part of this country and are full citizens and have full rights? How do we do that? Bringing them in to plan and design messages and campaigns that embrace the diversity of these countries, those are the things that are so important to do.

We still have to gain intelligence and engage in effective military and police campaigns to eradicate those who are so brainwashed that all you can do is incapacitate them. But the question is constantly, how do we make sure that the recruitment of young people into these terrorist organizations, how do we cut off that flow? And that requires more than just military efforts. Okay?

All right. This young lady right here. Yes, right here in the green and red. Yes, you. No, no, no, right here. Go ahead. No, no, no, right here. Right here in front. Yes, you. Yes, go ahead.

Discrimination Based on Skin Color, Gender, Disability, or Sexual Orientation/2008 Presidential Election

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Jane. I'm from Kenya. And I'm speaking on behalf of my brothers and sisters with albinism from Africa. As you may know, Mr. President, persons with albinism in Africa are being killed and their body parts harvested for ritual purposes. My request to you is to raise this issue with the heads of states from African countries to bring these atrocities to an end, for the benefit of—as four of us in this room and our brothers and sisters back in Africa. Thank you.

The President. Okay, good. Thank you. Well, can I just say? The notion that any African would discriminate against somebody because of the color of their skin, after what Black people around the world have gone through, is crazy. [*Laughter*] It is infuriating, and I have no patience for it.

I—[*laughter*]—when I was in Africa, I said there are important traditions and folkways that need to be respected; that's part of who each culture is, each country is. But there's also just foolish traditions and old ways of doing business that are based in ignorance. And they need to stop. And the idea that you'd have—that a society would visit violence on people because of pigmentation, that's not a tradition that is worth preserving. That's tomfoolery. [*Laughter*] That's craziness. It's cruel.

The same is true with practices like genital mutilation. That just has to stop. It's—you

don't do violence to young girls just because your great-grandfather or—because there's no reason for it other than to suppress women. That's the rationale of it. That's what it's based on. Bride abduction, bad tradition. End it. Beating women, not a good tradition. I don't care that that used to be how things were done.

Societies evolve based on new understandings and new science and new appreciation of who we are. And so we can preserve great traditions—music, food, dance, language, art—but if there's a tradition anywhere in Africa or here in the United States or anywhere in the world that involves treating people differently because you're scared of them or because you're ignorant about them or because you want to feel superior to them, it's a bad tradition. And you have to challenge it. And you can't accept excuses for it.

Grace was up here; you heard the power of Grace's talking. Now, traditionally, people with disabilities are treated differently because people are ignorant. And when—here in the United States, we passed the Americans Against [with]* Disabilities Act. And that opened up more opportunities, and suddenly, there are ramps so people can access it, and there are computers and new technologies so that people who maybe couldn't communicate before can communicate. And it turns out, there's all this talent and brilliance and people can do these things. Well, then people's attitudes have to change, and the societies have to change. And that's why young people are so important in changing attitudes.

The same, by the way, is true for sexual orientation. The—I spoke about this in Africa, and everybody is like, oh, oh, we don't want to hear that. [*Laughter*] But I—the truth of the matter is, is that if you're treating people differently just because of who they love and who they are, then there's a connection between that mindset and the mindset that led to racism and the mindset that leads to ethnic conflict. It means that you're not able to see somebody else as a human being.

And so you can't, on the one hand, complain when somebody else does that to you, and then you're doing it to somebody else. You can't do it. There's got to be a—some consistency to how you think about these issues. And that's going to be up to young people, because old people get stuck in their ways. [*Laughter*] They do. They do. And that's true here in the United States.

I mean, the truth of the matter is, is that when I started running for President, everybody said—[*laughter*]—a Black guy named Barack Obama, he's not going to win the Presidency of the United States. [*Laughter*] But what I was banking on was the fact that with all the problems that still exist in the United States around racial attitudes, et cetera, things had changed, and young people and new generations had suddenly understood that, in Dr. King's words, you have to be judged not by the color of your skin, but by the content of your character.

And that doesn't mean that everything suddenly is perfect. It just means that, young people, you can lead the way and set a good example. But it requires some courage, because the old thinking, people will push back at you. And if you don't have the convictions and the courage to be able to stand up for what you think is right, then the cruelty will perpetuate itself.

So you guys are on the spot here. If there's one thing I want YALI leaders to come out with is that notion of you are strong by taking care of the people who are vulnerable, by looking after the minority, looking after the disabled, looking after the vulnerable. You're not strong by putting people down; you're strong by lifting them up. All right? That's the measure of a leader.

All right. How much time do we got? I've only got time for one more question. Now, first of all, the women, you've got to put your hands down because I just asked a woman question. [*Laughter*] All right. So it's got to be a guy. And I promised I'd ask a guy in a suit. [*Laughter*] The—I'm just going to ask this guy right

* White House correction.

here. All right. Look, I mean, he's all buttoning up. He looks very sharp.

Audience member. That's my boy! [*Laughter*]

Promoting Opportunity in Africa

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. My name is Olusola Owonikoko from Nigeria. Thank you. I want to say we appreciate all the great work that the United States is doing with Nigeria and many other African countries, especially as it concerns infrastructural development policies and all of those. But I'm of the opinion that if we do not make investment in education more than any other sector of the economy, then we are not building a sustainable partnership.

The President. Okay.

Q. And I'm saying that in respect to the fact that we are all aware of the intellectual drain that Africa is experiencing. Due to the fact the grass seem green on this side, and then we attract—the United States attracts so many intellectuals, we should have stayed to develop and run these programs.

For example, recently, when you were in Kenya, you launched a project around power and energy. I'm of the opinion that if that program is going to be successful and sustainable, then all of those programs should include the partnership of universities. Because through that, we can build the capacity of universities, and then those countries can go around in other African countries replicating that.

The President. Right. Right.

Q. So, in that case, we can control the drain that is moving from Africa to the West or to any other part of the country.

The President. Good.

Q. So I want to ask, that what is the United States doing to control this intellectual drain——

The President. Right.

Q. ——to the Western world? And what are you doing to increase, more than others, the investment in education so that our partnership and development can be truly sustainable? Thank you.

The President. Okay, good. That was good. That was an excellent question. It is an excellent question, but I'm going to reverse the question a little bit. [*Laughter*] The question is not, what is the United States doing to reverse the brain drain? The question is, what are your countries doing to reverse the brain drain?

Now, many of you have friends who study overseas, they study in the West, and then they decide to stay instead of going back home. Now, the United States, we are partnering with every country here. I guarantee you, there are programs to invest in education in your country. There are programs to work with the universities in your countries. I think you make an excellent point that on big projects like Power Africa, we should make sure that there is a capacity-building component. And in fact, one of the things that's been done with our development assistance that we're providing is to emphasize capacity-building.

So, for example, our Feed the Future program, the goal is not to just keep on sending food forever. The goal is teaching farmers to double or triple or quadruple their yields, which then gives them more income, which then allows them to buy maybe a tractor or to start a cooperative food processing plant, that then accesses the market and the money gets reinvested, and now you are building jobs and commerce inside the country as opposed to just being an aid recipient. So I'm all about capacity-building.

But ultimately, why is it that you have so many talented, well-educated young Africans leaving instead of staying? Why is it that you have so many talented, well-educated people from the Middle East or parts of Asia or Latin America who would rather live here than there?

The issue is not just that these are wealthy—we're a wealthier country. I think it's fair to say—and you know better than I do—but part of it has to do with a young person's assessment of, can I succeed in applying my talents if, for example, the economy is still built on corruption so that I have to pay a bribe or be well connected in order to start my business? Or is there still—are there still ethnic rivalries in the country, which means that if I'm from the wrong tribe, I'm less likely to advance? Or is there still so much sexism in the country that if

I'm a woman, then I'm expected just to be at home and be quiet, when I'm a trained doctor? Or is there a lack of rule of law or basic human rights and freedoms that make me feel as if I am restricted in what I can do?

I make this point to say that some of the brain drain is economic. But some of it has to do with people's assessments of, if I stay in my country, am I going to have the ability to succeed? And that's why, when I talk to leaders in Africa, or anywhere around the world, I say, look, if you put together the basics of rule of law and due process and democracy, and you're able to keep peace so that there's not conflict and constant danger, and the government is not corrupt, then even a poor country, you're going to attract a lot of people who are going to want to live there because they'll feel like they're part of building something and are contributing something.

Because the one thing I've discovered is—right now, I live in a big house, but it's a lease; I have to give it up in 18 months. [*Laughter*] A big house is nice for the first month. It's like, well, this is a really big house. [*Laughter*] Then, after about 2 months, you realize, I can't live in all these rooms. [*Laughter*] My life is not appreciably better once I've got the basics. And I think a lot of young Africans would be much more interested in staying even if they don't have as big of a house or the shopping malls aren't as big or—if they felt as if the basics are taken care of, I can keep my family safe, I can practice my profession, I'm not going to be discriminated against, the government is well meaning and well intentioned and is not corrupt, and public investments are being made, then people, I think, would have a sense of meaning in their lives.

That doesn't mean that there aren't going to be some people who would still rather live in London or New York because they think they can make more money. But I think that, as much as anything we do, is going to reverse the brain drain. And that's why what you do is going to be so important, because if you set a good example of going back home and rebuilding your country, and if you, as young leaders, are creating an environment in which young people can succeed and you're setting a new set of expectations about how exciting it is to be part of something new, that can help turn the tide.

So good luck. All right? Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mandela Washington Fellow Grace Alache Jerry, who introduced the President; and Michael Weinstein, founder, AIDS Health Care Foundation. He also referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization.

Remarks Announcing the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan

August 3, 2015

The President. Thank you so much. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you. Well, good afternoon, everybody.

Audience members. Good afternoon.

The President. Gina, I want to thank you not just for the introduction, but for the incredible work that you and your team have been doing, not just on this issue, but on generally making sure that we've got clean air, clean water—a great future for our kids.

I want to thank all the Members of Congress who are here as well, who have been fighting this issue and, sometimes, at great odds with others, but are willing to take on what is going to be one of the key challenges of our lifetimes and future generations. I want to thank our Surgeon General, who's just been doing outstanding work and is helping to make the connection between this critical issue and the health of our families.