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America is proud to support these efforts through our Millennium Challenge compact. Together, we work with Ghana to improve agriculture and infrastructure, and support development in Ghana's rural areas, and bring prosperity to Ghana's people. We have worked to promote free trade as a powerful engine of prosperity for both our countries. Last year, trade between Ghana and the United States was valued at more than $600 million, an increase of more than 55 percent since President Kufuor and I took office.

Ghana and America stand as one in our work to free people from illiteracy and ignorance. Through the Africa Education Initiative, Ghana and the United States have partnered to provide thousands of scholarships to girls. We've trained teachers. And across that important country, schools are being renovated, textbooks are being distributed, and Ghana's children are looking toward a brighter future.

Ghana and America stand as one in our work to free people from disease. Together, we've protected hundreds of thousands of people from malaria. Starting this month, Ghana and the United States will begin distributing medicines to about 8 million people, as part of a new initiative to combat neglected tropical diseases.

Ghana and America stand as one in our work to promote free elections. Ghana is now in the middle of a lively election season, marked by spirited debate and close-fought contests, which sounds kind of familiar, Mr. President. [*Laughter*] Whatever the outcome, Ghana is showing Africa that democracy is not a challenge to be feared, but a sure path to prosperity and peace.

Ghana and America stand as one in our work to promote peace. Ghana is a vital partner in our efforts to resolve the crisis in Darfur. Ghana has more than 3,000 peacekeepers serving around the world, from Liberia and the Congo to Kosovo and Georgia.

President Kufuor, your country is a model of entrepreneurship and democracy and peace on the continent of Africa. We are grateful for the warm friendship your nation has shown ours. When Laura and I visited Ghana this February, we were touched by the gracious hospitality shown by you and Mrs. Kufuor. Thousands of people lined the street to show their gratitude to America. One shop even painted the colors of the American flag; I hope their business went up. [*Laughter*] I was moved by your decision to name a new road the "George Bush Motorway." Maybe next time I visit Ghana, I can see that motorway without stopping a lot of traffic. [*Laughter*]

What inspired us most on our visit was the incredible energy and optimism of Ghana's people. I will always remember the Little League game in Accra, played between children from local churches and a local orphanage. As each young batter stepped up to the plate, we heard about their plans for the future, to become businessmen or doctors or astronauts or even a fashion designer. One after another, we saw children confident of their place in a free and prosperous Ghana.

Mr. President, I congratulate you on the progress Ghana has made under your strong leadership. And on behalf of the American people, Laura and I are honored to welcome you and Mrs. Kufuor to the United States. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our great nations. Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:11 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where President Kufuor was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, he referred to Theresa Kufuor, wife of President Kufuor. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Kufuor.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana

September 15, 2008

President Bush. Good morning. I'm pleased to be here with my friend the President of Ghana, John Kufuor of Ghana. We just had a very good discussion, and before I summarize it, I do want to say a word about the U.S. economy.

I know Americans are concerned about the adjustments that are taking place in our financial markets. At the White House and throughout my administration, we're focused on them, and we're working to reduce disruptions and minimize the impact of these

financial market developments on the broader economy.

I've been in close touch with Secretary Paulson throughout this weekend and this morning. I appreciate the work the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve and the Securities and Exchange Commission and major financial institutions here and around the world are doing to promote stability in the financial systems.

As policymakers, we're focused on the health of the financial system as a whole. In the short run, adjustments in the financial markets can be painful, both for the people concerned about their investments and for the employees of the affected firms. In the long run, I'm confident that our capital markets are flexible and resilient, and can deal with these adjustments.

I admire President Kufuor, and the reason I do is because he has shown the world that democracy can flourish on the continent of Africa. He's been a steady and principled leader. We're soon to leave office, but I'm going to finish strong, and I know you are as well.

We had a good discussion about important issues, such as fighting disease. One of the initiatives that we're working on together is the fight against neglected tropical diseases. And the President brought me up to date on the strategy to deal with that important issue and how we can help.

We're talking about, obviously, fighting malaria. And the good news is, is that this is a Government that's very capable of taking American help and converting it into the kind of results that we all expect.

We talked about education and economic opportunity. The United States supports vital educational partnerships in Ghana. We're training teachers. We've issued 6,000 scholarships to girls. Under the President's leadership, the education system is improving, and we're glad just to be a small part of that, Mr. President.

And one of the most important initiatives of this administration has been the Millennium Challenge Account. It's an opportunity for the United States Government to help countries that govern justly and invest in the health and education of their people and believe in market economies. Ghana is such a country. And as the President mentioned in the welcoming ceremony, we're soon to begin spending $547 million to renovate schools, increase agricultural productivity, expand infrastructure, and support rural development.

The conclusion of the Millennium Challenge compact, Mr. President, is a testament to your leadership, and I'm very comfortable in telling the American people that this will be money well spent.

The President has been very strong voice for peace. We talked about Darfur. I appreciate very much Ghana's 11 U.N. peacekeeping operations that are ongoing. He has been a good, steady voice for strong leadership and for conflict resolution, witnessed by the fact that they were great on the U.N. Security Council. And thank you for your leadership there.

All in all, it's been a good partnership, it's been good partners amongst me and you, John, but it's been a good partner between our countries. And I firmly believe that beyond our time in office, whoever the next Presidents will be, they will find relations between our countries are in good shape, which I believe is vital.

And so I welcome you here. Laura and I are looking forward to having you to dinner tonight. I promise not to unleash the dance moves—[*laughter*]—that I first displayed in Ghana, in what was one of the most memorable trips of my Presidency.

And so we're sure glad you're here. Welcome.

President Kufuor. Thank you very much. Mr. President, I want to use this opportunity to express the deep appreciation of my nation and myself to you, as President of the United States, and to your great nation, for the supports we've benefited and our relationship with you.

The two countries have been friendly since Ghana attained independence in 1957. But I believe, under our watch this relationship has been taken even higher——

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Kufuor. ——and has translated into many supports affecting the—all aspects of our national life in Ghana. A typical example is the Millennium Challenge Accounts by which Ghana received, or is receiving, $547

million to modernize and commercialize agriculture. You would appreciate the importance of this gesture from the United States when you know that about 60 percent of the Ghana population is rural and depends on agriculture.

So far much of our agriculture is subsistence, meaning farmers just scratch—[*inaudible*]—to feed themselves. But with the advent of the Millennium Challenge Accounts, we want to move the farmers on to more scientific and technological agriculture, and thereby empower them more and make agriculture worth pursuing for the youth.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Kufuor. We are suffering as an economy adrift—very serious drift of the youth from the rural parts to the urban areas, which have not been planned to accommodate——

President Bush. Right.

President Kufuor. ——the drifts. And so now, in our streets in the big towns you have street children. We believe the success of the Millennium Challenge Account will help stem all these anti-social developments.

President Bush. Right.

President Kufuor. If you look at the malaria support from the United States, our country in the old times was dubbed "the white man's grave." It was malaria-infested and the Europeans who first came along our coasts just didn't last. This disease continues to plague much of Africa and perhaps is the biggest killer—even bigger than HIV/AIDS—of our people on the continent. The hefty support we are getting from the United States, under your watch, is very welcome, and we hope to take it even further, again employing technologies and more scientific research.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Kufuor. Similarly, under your watch you have increased the support for the fight against HIV/AIDS, which is devastating many countries on our continent. I believe you've increased the supports your country has been giving by over $20 billion. I believe that's humanitarian——

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kufuor. ——and you have to be accorded the credit——

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kufuor. ——for this gesture.

In terms of trade, your country, I would say, holds the hub. We in Ghana trade in your currency, for instance. So with the current difficulties, naturally we also are affected. So we can only wish that your country rallies quickly to find solutions so that much of the world would be saved the trauma that we are going through.

If you take the current situation of rapidly increasing food prices and crude oil prices, which are subverting all the efforts we are trying to make to put our economies together, we believe the developed as well as the developing countries should feel that we are in the boat together and that we must learn to sail together or perhaps we sink together.

Again, with the climatic change—and here I have to express condolences and sympathy to the United States for what you are suffering down south in your country, especially in your State of Texas now.

President Bush. My State, Texas, yes.

President Kufuor. But you must know you are not alone here.

President Bush. Thank you.

President Kufuor. On the continent of Africa, as elsewhere in Asia, we are victims of the changes of climate. But this, again, should show humanity that perhaps we all belong together more than we want to admit. If we are going to make a dent on the problems caused by the climatic change, we need to be able to marshal scientific and technological knowledge and resources in which your country, the United States, must play leadership.

So look to you to readily put abroad your resources, ethically and selflessly, so all of us will see how to contain——

President Bush. Right.

President Kufuor. ——the challenges of global—climatic change, which again, should make us aware that perhaps we are already into the global village, and which we should share common values and sense of humanity. Forget about the race; forget about the ideology; forget about the religion—it's humanity that is at risk. And the United States definitely is in the forefront, or must be in the vanguard, of trying to find solutions to save mankind.

But at bottom, Ghana is very grateful for the friendship we are—she is enjoying from the United States. And I, personally, am very happy and appreciate your friendship so far.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

President Kufuor. And I look forward to a good and productive retirement, just as I wish for you, as you go into retirement. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Thank you, sir. [*Laughter*]

President Kufuor. You have been good, and I hope history will judge you well.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

President Kufuor. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Hurricane Ike Recovery Efforts

September 15, 2008

Thank you very much, Secretary Chertoff, for your briefing—you just came back from Houston; Administrator Paulison. The briefing, of course, was on the damage done to Texas and Louisiana, a result of Ike.

We, obviously, watch this recovery very carefully, because the Federal Government is playing a crucial role in helping the people of the devastated areas recover. We're working closely with the State and local authorities on a variety of subjects.

Recently, I was informed that there are going to be a—numerous points of distribution for food, water, and ice throughout Harris County to help the people there adjust. Obviously, until electricity is fully restored, people are going to need help with water, food, and ice.

There's some good news on electricity. Electricity is beginning to be restored. Obviously, there's a lot more houses and folks that are waiting for electricity, but people are working hard. There's crews coming in from around the country to help.

The energy situation is one that's of concern. Our drivers, our folks at the pump, are going to have to expect some upward pressure on price, because the storm disrupted the supply of gasoline as a result of shutting down refineries and pipelines. Now, two—the two major pipelines are up and running, which is positive news, and it happened quicker than we thought it would happen. Yet until those refineries get up and running full blast, those pipelines are going to be looking for product.

And so there's going to be a pinch. I wish it wasn't the case, but it is. On the other hand, if the pinch is too hard, if people think they're being treated unfairly, they need to get on the Department of Energy web site, because there's—or the FTC web site—and make their complaints known.

The storm was—damaged a lot of infrastructure, but truthfully it was not as bad as some predicted that it would be on the energy sector.

I'm going down tomorrow; I'm looking forward to going down. Members of my administration will be going down. We're looking forward to hearing from, you know, the local folks. I'm confident there will be people that are very frustrated because their lives have been severely affected by this storm. And my message will be that we hear you, and we'll work as hard and fast as we can to help you get your lives back up to normal.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana

September 15, 2008

Mr. President and Mrs. Kufuor and family members; members of the Cabinet; Mr. Vice President; Members of Congress; distinguished guests: Thank you all for coming. Laura and I are really happy to host you tonight. And we're particularly happy to host President Kufuor and Mrs. Kufuor. After all, we were in their country last February, and it was a unbelievable visit in spite of my lousy dancing. [*Laughter*] Mrs. Kufuor was my partner, and she can testify to my lousy dancing. [*Laughter*]