

I have released a report today called “Embracing Africa’s Economic Potential,” which offers concrete recommendations to the U.S. Government—actions we can take right now, often in partnership with our private sector and with African governments, to strengthen our trade relationship between the United States and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. Anyone interested can download a copy at coons.senate.gov/africa. Our report makes six recommendations, none of which involves spending a single dime of additional taxpayer money. In fact, it recommends ways to use what money we already spend on exploring and expanding into the market of Africa more efficiently and more effectively. So let’s look at the recommendations in the report.

First, it suggests we work with our African partners to remove barriers to trade. Trade is impeded in Africa by everything from poor governance, unreliable infrastructure, complex tariffs, to corruption. There are solutions the United States has already offered and there are efforts already underway by American businesses in partnership with our African partners. In particular, USAID has set up regional trade hubs that have done great work in breaking through barriers to growing regional trade. But we can and should do more.

Second, reauthorize and strengthen the African Growth and Opportunity Act, better known as AGOA, in advance of its expiration in 2015. This legislation has been hugely successful in promoting African exports into the American market and in building mutually reinforcing relationships between the United States and the continent. I think we can do even more to create jobs both in the United States and Africa by diversifying products covered by AGOA, by improving its utilization by African countries, by ensuring its benefits are mutually beneficial between our country and Africa, and by not waiting until the 11th hour to act on reauthorization.

Senator ISAKSON, and many in this Chamber, worked very hard to secure reauthorization of the third country fabric provision of AGOA last year, but it took longer than it should have and it was more difficult than it needed to be. It is my hope, working together with colleagues here and in the House, we can get a jump on this in advance of 2015.

The third recommendation is to improve coordination between the many U.S. Government agencies working on trade policy to develop a comprehensive strategy for investment in sub-Saharan Africa. As many as 10 different Federal agencies are responsible for parts of trade policy and international development. So making sure they are working together efficiently is a good way for us to ensure success.

Fourth, we need to increase the presence of the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service in critical areas in the region.

This chart shows those countries that have the fastest growing economies, and these are the few places where we have representatives from USAID or from the Department of Commerce.

In short, my point is there are many countries that have strongly growing economies where we have no representation. We have, in fact, zero U.S. Foreign Commercial Service officers in five of the six countries listed here as having the fastest growing economies. In fact, we only have six officers in all of sub-Saharan Africa, compared with significantly higher numbers in Asia and elsewhere.

I am concerned the reason for this is that Commerce isn’t forward looking in its resource allocation and doesn’t see the scale of the opportunities in Africa. Although I was grateful that Acting Secretary Blank made a trade mission trip to Africa late last year, that was the first time in a decade a U.S. Secretary of Commerce had made a visit to the continent, and there is much more we need to do.

Our fifth recommendation is to bolster support for the agencies that finance and support U.S. commercial engagement overseas, particularly in Africa. These agencies, the Export-Import Bank—known as Ex-Im—and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, known as OPIC—issue political risk insurance and help with financing, particularly financing to markets where they don’t yet have a robust banking sector and where the rule of law is less certain. These agencies are smart investments that actually generate real returns for American taxpayers and contribute to the bottom line for the American Federal Government.

Our sixth and last recommendation is to engage the community of African-born individuals who now live in the United States—the so-called diaspora communities—to strengthen economic ties. Who better to serve as an American representative of the system, and who better to take on the spirit of entrepreneurship and penetrate African markets than those born, raised, or connected to African countries and who have been educated in the United States and have been successful here and now have the resources and opportunity to reconnect with their countries of origin or the countries of their families. We can and must do more to strengthen these resources, and I was pleased to get a chance to speak at the second annual diaspora conference hosted by the Department of State last year. It is my hope we will invest further in this untapped resource—something that distinguishes the United States from our competitors in other parts of the world who do not have the blessing of a strong diaspora community as we do.

So in short, each of these six recommendations will get us closer to our goal of a more vibrant, a faster growing and more sustainable U.S.-Africa trade relationship. But the key to im-

plementing these recommendations in an integrated way is to listen to each other, to embrace them, and move forward across the several committees of jurisdiction, across the 10 different Federal agencies and entities, and to develop a coordinated plan for taking advantage of this remarkable part of the world that can also grow American jobs.

We have an opportunity to seize this moment and to promote economic engagement, to strengthen the American economy and to advance the values of freedom and democracy around the world. Make no mistake, though, today we are falling short. We are failing to grasp this opportunity as strongly and clearly as our competitors are. We can act on a number of smart legislative proposals, including the Increasing American Jobs Through Greater Exports to Africa Act, which I cosponsored in the last Congress along with Senators DURBIN and BOZEMAN, and which I hope we will reintroduce shortly to establish a comprehensive U.S. strategy for public-private investment, trade, and development in sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, the administration can, and I hope will, do more to coordinate strategy and use our resources effectively.

The report we have issued today I hope will be seen as a wake-up call. If we fail, we will wake up 10 years from now and we will see jobs and opportunities we might have grasped taken by our competitors. It is my hope we will not watch these opportunities pass us by but will, instead, take advantage of this remarkable moment and this great opportunity.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I would like to add to the remarks I made a moment ago about climate change to respond to some statements that have been made recently on the Senate floor on this subject.

As those of us who are advocates in the cause of doing something about climate change know, the polluters and their advocates have an advantage: They only have to create doubt, they only have to create debate in order to create delay and allow the polluters to continue making money at the expense of the rest of us. That means the arguments, frankly, don’t have to be true; they just have to be made. Then they can say there is still debate, then they can say there is still controversy, both of which are self-fulfilling prophecies.

But they are not real, and some of what has been said is pretty flagrant.

One of the lead Senate deniers came to the floor the other day to challenge President Obama. President Obama said this in his State of the Union Address:

But the fact is, the 12 hottest years on record have all come in the last 15. Heat waves, droughts, wildfires, and floods—all are now more frequent and intense.

My denier colleague quoted him. And to quote my colleague, he said—referring to the President:

The President said, yes, it's true that no single event makes a trend. But the fact is that the 12 hottest years on record have all come in the last 15. That is just flat wrong.

So why don't we just take a look and see where the President got his information so we can put this into some perspective. The President got his information from NASA. Maybe people in this body are more capable than NASA at dealing with scientific things, but when you consider that NASA has put an explorer on the surface of Mars, I think they are entitled to some credence about basic science. And they agree—in fact, Reto Ruedy, a program manager at the Goddard Institute, has laid out the actual years. Some of these are statistical ties because they are equally hot.

The No. 1 and 2 hottest years, according to them, are 2010 and 2005. The No. 3 through 8 hottest years are 2007, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006, and 2009. The 9th through 12th hottest years recorded are 2012, 2011, 2001, and 2004. If you go to the 13th year, it is 2008. The 14th and the 15th are 1997 and 1995. All of the 15 hottest years on record are 1995 and thereafter. The top 12, all have happened 1998 and thereafter.

It is not just NASA's data set that confirms this. NOAA also looks at the same information. They come at it a little bit differently—and they do have a difference. I will concede that. NOAA considers 2012 to be the 10th warmest year on record instead of the 9th. That is the difference between NASA and NOAA. And we are talking about records going back to 1880, so it is a broad data set.

If you look at NOAA's data, it actually shows that 14 of the past 15 years were the hottest on record. Ditto the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

Of course, as many of us know, in political life there is a group out there called Politifact that takes a look at claims that are made in the public debate and politics, and they assign them “true” to “pants on fire.” They looked at the President's claim that the 12 hottest years on record have come in the last 15 years. They gave the President a “true.” Indeed, they said:

Obama was actually overcautious in his statement, so we rate his statement true.

So we have one denier—a Senator—against NASA, against Politifact, against NOAA, and against the National Center for Atmospheric Research. I think it is pretty clear who has the facts on their side.

This is the other statement that was made:

I don't think anyone disagrees with the fact that we actually are in a cold period that started about 9 years ago.

Let's look at the facts. This is the temperature data. The green represents the actual data. The red line is a statistically derived mean of all that information. It is something that is done mathematically. It is not amenable to argument; it is not amenable to debate. You can do it using different methods, but it is clear from that data set that we are in fact in a warming period, not a cooling period.

So how do you get to say that in 9 years we are in a cooling period? Well, if you go back a few years here, you see there are some high points, and if you pick just those high points and then you go forward 9 years, you can draw a graph that goes down. But you have to be very careful how you pick your points to create that illusion. You can actually do it, if you want, repeatedly in the data. You could pick this point and have it go down. You could pick this point and have it go down, and this, and this.

For each one of those points, you could say: Well, during this period, it was actually a cold period. It was actually a cooling period.

But when you look at the actual information and when you look at the statistically driven mean that cuts through all the data, it is pretty clear that to try to look at it this way is playing tricks with the data. It is playing games and trying to fool people. It is twisting and distorting the data.

I think that is a less-than-honest application of these facts. So if that is the sort of misleading statistical trick the polluters and their advocates have to resort to, that is just another reminder that it really is time for us to wake up and get to work on this. There is no credible scientific debate over what carbon pollution is doing to our atmosphere and our oceans, and it is pretty darned clear that it is warming—and warming pretty fast.

I appreciate the opportunity for this clarification.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Politifact article that I referred to in my remarks be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

BARACK OBAMA SAYS THE 12 HOTTEST YEARS ON RECORD HAVE COME IN THE LAST 15 YEARS

During his State of the Union address, President Barack Obama touted the country's progress in reducing carbon pollution

emissions but added that recent advances in fuel efficiency and renewable energy have not done enough to curb climate change.

“For the sake of our children and our future, we must do more to combat climate change,” Obama said. “Now, it's true that no single event makes a trend. But the fact is, the 12 hottest years on record have all come in the last 15. Heat waves, droughts, wildfires, floods—all are now more frequent and more intense.”

In 2012, the country experienced severe weather threats including drought, a devastating Hurricane Sandy and severe thunderstorms. We decided to fact-check whether the 12 hottest years on record have all come since 1998.

The White House directed us to NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, which tracks global surface temperatures. The institute concluded that 2012 was the ninth-warmest year on record, with 2010 and 2005 being the all-time highs.

For the contiguous United States, 2012 was the country's warmest year yet. It beat the previous record by one degree Fahrenheit.

Reto Ruedy, a program manager at the Goddard Institute, told Politifact that the institute's data produces the following ranking of hottest years. Items on the same line are statistically tied.

1-2: 2010, 2005

3-8: 2007, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2009

9-12: 2012, 2011, 2001, 2004

13: 2008

14: 1997

15: 1995

This analysis shows that 13 of the warmest years have occurred in the past 15 years. Alternately, one could say that 12 of the warmest years came in the last 13.

We see a few other issues to note.

The NASA data set isn't the only one available. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also analyzes global surface temperatures using its own methodology. The two measurements diverge somewhat—NOAA considers 2012 the 10th-warmest year on record since records began in 1880, rather than the ninth.

However, NOAA's data for land and ocean temperature anomalies shows that 14 of the past 15 years were the hottest on record.

There are other ways one could measure “hottest years.” Kevin Trenberth, a scientist with the National Center for Atmospheric Research, agreed with the 13-of-15 calculation. But he added that the NASA and NOAA values refer to global mean surface temperature. “One could define ‘hottest’ in other ways, such as by how much Arctic sea ice there is,” he said.

OUR RULING

Obama said, “The 12 hottest years on record have all come in the last 15.” Data from NASA shows 13 of the hottest years on record have come in the last 15, and by a different data set produced by NOAA, 14 of the hottest years on record have come in the last 15. Obama was actually over-cautious in his statement, so we rate his statement True.

TRIBUTE TO RAYMOND DAVIS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the distinguished public service of Raymond Davis, who for 40 years has served the U.S. Senate, first for the Architect of the Capitol and later as a technical assistant and information specialist in the Office of Public Records for the Secretary of the Senate. His institutional knowledge and understanding of filing processes and disclosure laws have been invaluable in helping the Senate fulfill its