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## Trade with Africa: A Great Opportunity for Miami-Dade County

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**FOREWORD****Trade with Africa: A Great Opportunity for Miami-Dade County****Alex Penelas, \*****Mayor, Miami-Dade County**

Prior to my recent trade mission to South Africa and Botswana, I had long thought that Miami-Dade County has a symbiotic relationship with Africa. I had no way of knowing, then, how right I was and how vital the continent is to this County. Visiting South Africa and Botswana, I knew that both of these African nations are emerging democracies with a crying need for commerce and tourism. Similarly, Miami-Dade has a continuing need for international trade, as well as tourism.

In addition, it was an outstanding chance to open new markets, win new friends, and develop cultural and economic ties. What I discovered was that the relationship between the County and the sub-Saharan nations is not dissimilar from a condition that existed 30 years ago between Latin America and South Florida. At that time, our trade with other countries in the Western Hemisphere was nominal. Local business leaders, as well as County officials here had enough vision then to travel to Latin America to build relationships and open avenues of communication and commerce. And, look what happened. We are now the indisputable gateway to Latin American and Caribbean rim countries. Now, it is time to expand our horizons.

No amount of briefing could have prepared me for the enthusiasm, warmth and affection with which we were greeted, not only by government officials and business leaders, but by people on the street. There is a sense of anticipation in these countries, as they strive to reorganize their society after years of political and lifestyle inequalities. With the arrival of post apartheid trade, South Africa, particularly, seeks acceptance to the world's business community.

The inspirational highpoint of my trip was a private audience in Capetown with Archbishop Desmond Tutu, one of South Africa's legendary leaders and a Nobel Peace Prize winner. We talked at length about our two countries working together to help bring prosperity to his country and other sub-Saharan nations. From Johannesburg to Soweto to Durban to Capetown in South Africa, and to Gabarone in Botswana, we attended briefings and met a wide range of officials and business people. At each of these gatherings, we talked about the importance of two-way

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trade and we got to know each other. More than that, we got to like each other.

That was an important objective of our journey, because it made everything else easier. It gave us the openings to tell the people we met about our massive Miami International Airport and our thriving Port of Miami, each of which will play an important commercial role between these two nations and our County—particularly the need to restore direct flights between Miami and Johannesburg.

Geography is an important part of the growing commercial bond between sub-Saharan countries and Miami-Dade County. We are their closest major United States port. Our goal is to become the primary port for our mutual import and export trade. A strong bilateral trade relationship would open additional markets, as well. Since Capetown and Durban are key ports of entry for the flow of products from such countries as China and India, it would bring Miami-Dade County into the transshipment loop of South Africa and southern Asia.

Conversely, trade with these countries opens immense investment prospects for Miami-Dade County entrepreneurs. Another special opportunity of trade with these countries is to take advantage of the African Growth and Opportunities Act, known as AGOA. This Federal act allows for tariff free imports between Africa and the United States. This is a boon indeed to import/export companies on both sides of the Atlantic.

We can help the people of these countries in many other ways. Many government employees there were until recently denied sufficient educational opportunity, and as a result their technical skills are deficient. As an additional gesture of goodwill, I invited the governments to send selected personnel here to learn advanced technological skills in government management.

I look at Africa as our partner for the future. As the world shrinks, and the importance of national borders diminish, Miami-Dade County stands ready to become the natural epicenter of global business. With these emerging nations as our partners, we can create a world that benefits us all.

That is why the efforts of this law review in this issue to elevate African legal concepts in our community are so important to trade in Miami-Dade County. The first article is directly linked to South Africa and Botswana's economy, Trade Liberalization: Savior or Scourge of SADC Economies? Both these countries are members of SADC—the premier economic block in Southern Africa. The section is introduced by Tony Onkromah, Co-Chair of my African Trade Task Force.

The second section, The Great Lakes of Africa is introduced by Ambassador Richard Bogosian, a career Foreign Service Officer who has been Ambassador to several African countries. In Prosecution of War Crimes by The International Tribunal for Rwanda, Dr. Alex Obote Odora

tells us the latest in International legal efforts to bring to justice those that killed 800,000 ethnic Tutsi and moderate Hutus in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. He gives us a unique viewpoint as a participant, rather than an academic coldly analyzing this through the remoteness of a library or computer. Dr. Odora is there in the front lines and his article is gripping because of that. Phillip Kasaija, a lecturer in East Africa's famous Makerere University, brings us a unique account of the Ugandan Invasion of Democratic Republic of the Congo ("DROC") in 1998, ushering us into the quagmire that has occurred in that country, as belligerents from all over the continent have poured in troops into this, Africa's First World War.

The Next Section, the Rule of Law in Africa gives us an eclectic collection of articles, expertly introduced by UM's own Professor Twinning who grew up in East Africa. The articles range from the catch all Carlson article to the Depiction of Law in African Literary Texts by Emmanuel Yewah. Finally, Akin Alao takes on Nigeria's 1963 constitution, which broke all colonial legal ties to the United Kingdom.

The Women in Africa Section tackles two themes that are important to the US and Miami-Dade, Female Genital Mutilation and Asylum seekers in the US. As an entry port for many international visitors because of its Airport, Miami-Dade County sees all spectrums of the Asylum questions, from those fleeing repressive regimes, to those fleeing cultural persecution. This section followed by the next is introduced by the Executive Editors of the Review.

Finally, in Conflict Resolution in Africa, two articles focus on Sierra Leone, West Africa's 'open sore.' Sierra Leone has brought us horrifying pictures of mutilated men, women and children. One of the Sierra Leonean articles is written by Ian Martinez, the Editor In Chief of the Review and who as a Summer Associate at the County Attorney's Office wrote and designed the briefing book used for my trade mission to Africa last summer. Ademola Abass' article illustrates that with cooperation, regional intervention in Africa is feasible in order to stop a conflict. Together these articles provide historical analysis of why this crisis happened and how Africa is trying to come together and stop it. Finally, Yemi Akinseve-George writes of the prospects of African Court of Human Rights and developments in that arena to bring to fruition a long needed continental solution to the continent's problems.

It is my honor, to introduce this, the University of Miami's first law review to deal exclusively with African legal issues. May their first endeavor be a corner stone for our legal and academic communities to build up and link with those in Africa, thus achieving our goal of increased trade between Miami-Dade County and Africa.