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# Press release

**For Immediate Release Monday, September 13, 2004**

**US Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman to give keynote speech alongside the Honorable Rosebud Kurwijila, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture and Agriculture from the African Union after the Opening Ceremonies of the 7th Annual U.S.-Africa Trade & Investment Symposium will take place from September 16-18<sup>th</sup>, 2004 at the Wyndham Grand Bay Hotel.**

**(Miami, FL)** The 7<sup>th</sup> annual AfrICANDO Conference (US Africa Trade Symposium) announces keynote speech to be given by US Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and Commissioner Kurwijila of Rural Economy and Agriculture from the African Union..

Highlighting the theme for this year's conference which addresses *Effective and Efficient Use of Agricultural Science, Technology and Research as Tools for Development in Africa*. The African Union, who will have a delegation participating, with representatives from the African Union, Pan African Parliament and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council have declared this decade as the "*African decade for Agriculture and Water Resource Challenges and Opportunities*" that must be resolved.

AfrICANDO 2004 brings together local, national and international organizations interested in strengthening trade between Africa, the Caribbean and the United States. The objectives of AfrICANDO 2004 include the strengthening of the agricultural related Centers of Excellence, related tertiary and research institutions research capabilities in biotechnology (including genetically modified organisms), conservation of agricultural biodiversity, bio-safety, food storage, water harvesting and application

Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, the Honorable Mrs. Rosebud Kurwijila who is traveling from Africa to join the conference, shares, "it is our goal of this conference to identify strategic agricultural commodities and other key economic and industrial activities for development and to develop a coherent policy framework for public-private cooperation that will attract increased private capital into the agricultural and water sectors."

Following the two days of business forums, a Saturday platform that is an official activity of (WHADN), the Western Hemisphere African Diaspora Network that encourages interaction of the African Union with the Diaspora will place focus on building partnerships between governments and segments of civil society, including women, youth and children in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among African peoples. This Saturday Diaspora forum takes place from 9am until 12noon.

The AfrICANDO Arts & Culture Folk Life Festival then begins at 12noon until 8pm and is a one-day event (free to the public) that will showcase a multi-cultural program of local and international artists from various fields. During this Festival enjoy free concerts, African arts and craft exhibits, along with African, Caribbean and Latin Food from around the world.

Africando 2004 aims to attract the active participation of Americans, Africans and the Caribbean public and private sector during this year's technical symposiums. The three day AfrICANDO event is targeted to reach African and US agricultural businesses, educators, trade and investment experts, government administrators and representatives from international organizations to discuss technology based approaches and strategies to advance African agriculture.

It begins on Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup> with an Opening Ceremony from 9am to 10am, for which the public can attend through either Opening Ceremony Passes (\$50) which include the Breakfast and Entry to the African Union Vision and Mission Panel. Half-day passes are also available which also include the Panel on Agricultural Product Standards, Food Security and using International Standard Tools to Increase African Agricultural Export Panel and also the luncheon which follows (Half-day pass for \$75).

It will lay the foundation for new economic partnerships and AfrICANDO's hope that US food processing companies, farm related technology vendors ranging from fertilizer companies to irradiation/pasteurization companies will envision the advantages of doing business in Africa as a new market opportunity and help impact Africa's development.

Since agricultural productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa remains low and the population growth rate is at 3%, approaching nearly 800 million people, the challenge remains that food production has only been growing at a rate of 2%. Cognizant of not only the food production challenges, population growth, food insufficiency, malnutrition, unemployment and HIV/AIDS issues, the Heads of States and Governments of the African Union in February 2004 declared to invest and support programs that will use modern science and technology to reduce hunger through optimization of agricultural efficiency (increasing yield/productivity) so as to improve the nutritional standard of living for all the African people.

Institutional support has been provided by Miami-Dade County, The Jay Malina International Trade Consortium, the Port of Miami, Miami-Dade Transit Authority, Tropiculture Miami, Greater Miami Convention & Visitor's Bureau, City of Miami International Trade Board, Miami International Airport, Enterprise Florida, Florida FTAA, Inc. amongst others.

The annual AfrICANDO Symposia have covered a number of themes in the past including developing African tourism and US-Caribbean-African trade in the Global Era. The name of the conference "AfrICANDO" stems from the "Can Do" attitude towards African Economic Development that drives the annual conference proceedings and led to its inception. For more information on the 7<sup>th</sup> annual AfrICANDO Trade Symposium to attend or exhibit, please contact The Foundation for Democracy in Africa at:

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*The Foundation for Democracy in Africa (FDA) is a development organization committed to promoting democracy, sustainable development and economic growth throughout Africa. Founded in 1994, FDA's mission is: (1) to implement culturally based programs designed to strengthen and enhance the fundamental principles of democracy, freedom and economic plurality throughout Africa, and (2) to help integrate emerging African democracies into the mainstream of the global economy, thus cultivating the pathway for peace and prosperity in Africa.*

*FDA's area of focus include: Democracy and Governance, Elections and Political Processes, Education and Training, HIV/AIDS, Business Development, Trade and Investment Promotion, Rule of Law.*

*FDA is a Washington, DC based non-profit 501© (3), non-governmental, non-partisan institution with offices in Miami, Florida. In 1996, the Foundation was granted consultative status (special) as*

*a non-governmental organization (NGO) with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). FDA also is registered with the U.S. Agency for International Development as a Private Voluntary Organization (PVO).*

*The Institute for Democracy in Africa (IDA) is headquartered in Miami, Florida, and operates as FDA's think tank. IDA was established in 1994 to create an academic and research environment for incubating and nurturing innovative democratic approaches to solving the social, political and economic problems facing African nations.*