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**FDA Launches the AfrICANDO Skills and Business Development Program and
Establishes the AfrICA Trade Development Center at the Miami Free Zone
During AfrICANDO 2011**

The Foundation for Democracy in Africa (FDA) launched its AfrICANDO Skills and Business Development Program (ASBDP) and established the AfrICA Trade Development Center (ATDC) during its 14th Annual US-Africa Trade and Investment Symposium and Expo - AfrICANDO 2011, on Thursday, September 15, 2011 at the Miami Free Zone in Doral, Florida.

The ASBDP provides technical assistance, skills and business development training, micro-finance, small business loans, and legal counseling to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Through ASBDP, FDA, and its partners, local Civil Society Organizations, and private sector professionals will assist MSMEs, particularly, those in the heavily populated rural areas in minimizing supply and value chain constraints in local and regional markets, and taking advantage of opportunities in international markets. The core objective of the ASBDP is to strengthen private sector development in select African countries and to assist in the growth and development of MSMEs in the informal sector of the economy and facilitate their integration in to the formal sector of the economy.

The ATDC is the first of its kind in the United States, and is located in the Miami Free Zone, an 850,000 square feet facility that serves as a fully functioning trade hub to the Americas. The ATDC is designed to create demand for MSME's products by providing a presence for their products in the show room of the ATDC; marketing their products via various trade shows in the Americas; and by providing logistical support, and access to distribution networks throughout the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada, thereby resulting in the expansion of US-Africa trade and investment. "Through these types of initiatives, Miami Dade is poised to become the Gateway for US-Africa trade and investment. We are ready to leverage our proximity to lucrative markets in the America's to support the expansion of US-Africa trade and investment. Today, we are the Gateway to the Americas, and our airport, seaport, and businesses are ready to engage their African counterparts in facilitating bilateral trade that benefits both the people of Africa and the United States," stated Commissioner Dennis C. Moss of the Miami Dade Board of County Commissioners and the Chair of AfrICANDO 2011.

State of Florida, Lieutenant Governor Jennifer Carroll, underscored the commitment of the State of Florida under Governor Scott, to the expansion of trade and investment between Florida and Africa; she welcomed the Honorable George Monyemangene, Consul General of South African Consulate to Florida, and announced that she will be leading a high level business mission to South Africa on behalf o of the State of Florida in October 2011, during her keynote speech at the AfrICANDO luncheon. Lieutenant Governor Jennifer Carroll also congratulated Mr. Fred Oladeinde, President of The Foundation for Democracy in Africa on the establishment of the AfrICANDO Skills and Business Development Program (ASBDP), and the opening of the AfrICA Trade Development Center in the Miami Free Zone.

Representatives from federal, state, and local US Government agencies, African Embassies, Civil Society Organizations, and the private sector, including, U.S. Trade Representative (USTR); U.S. Department of State; Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC); U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA); U.S. Department of Commerce; the Embassies of Malawi, and Namibia; the South African Consulate; African Leadership Forum (ALF); Karikis International Sarl, Burkina Faso; ASEPEX, Senegal; Port of Miami; Miami International Airport; Freight Forwarders and Custom Brokers Association; Enterprise Florida; Florida Export Finance Corporation; US Export Assistance Center; Global Trade and Insurance; the Maritime Security Council; and The Heritage Foundation, as well as, delegates from Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Congo and Rwanda, Spain, Bahamas, Egypt, El Salvador, Peru, St Lucia, Columbia, Trinidad & Tobago, Haiti, and Nicaragua participated in the event.

Topics discussed, included: "US-Africa Trade Policy," the "Advantages of Using South Florida as a Gateway /Logistics Hub for Accessing Leading Markets in the Americas, Strategies to Increase Trade between Africa and Miami Dade County, and Florida," "Doing Business in America, and Doing Business in Africa." Speaker presentations for AfriCANDO 2011 may be viewed on The Foundation for Democracy in Africa's website at: www.democracy-africa.org.

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