

TOPAFRICANEWS Green Magazine

*Combatting Climate Change
through the U.S INNOVATIONS*

**AMERICA is
Back**



**What weapons do Biden and Harris
bring to the forefront of Climate
Change?**

U.S sets innovative targets to combating climate related effects

From the development of new innovations to the financing and providing technical support, the United States is coming back to the battle of combating the climate change crisis through innovations and more committed than previous administrations.

According to officials from the State Department, the United States is putting more effort into climate change as projections for climate related crises may be higher than one can forecast today.

In November, 2020 while he was speaking at the event organized by the U.S Elect President Biden to present members of his Government, John Kerry, the U.S special Envoy on Climate Change hailed Biden's ambitious determination on the Climate Crisis adding that "The President Elect is right to recognize that Paris agreement alone is not enough."

Although the United States is back on the front to cooperate with other countries in tackling the effects of climate change, there is much that this world's most powerful country prioritizes.

However, the country's leaders believe current goals are not enough due to the violence of the struggle so the effort put into that struggle must increase on a continuous basis.

Speaking to journalists who attended the U.S climate Change Virtual Reporting Tour which was organized the U.S Foreign Press Centre Bureau in May 2021, Dr. Jonathan Pershing,



Dr. Jonathan Pershing, a senior advisor to the State Department's Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change

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He said that the fact that some people in the world think that the problem of climate change does not concern them, would be a mistake because the world is more threatened than some people think.

He explains that most of the people live in places where the effects of climate change might be not even very much in terms of a day to nighttime change.

"But the reality is, the last time the world had that kind of a significant change in temperature, huge areas were either under ice when it was colder or were covered by water when it was slightly warmer. These are massive shifts when you look at global averages and it's happening at a rate that's faster than anything we've ever seen in geological history." Dr. Pershing said.

"It's moving very, very quickly, much faster than communities and people can adapt." He added.

Analysts of global politics find that it is time for super powers and developing countries to

work together to find solutions to the effects of climate change that continue to manifest itself in a variety of ways, including epidemics, droughts, floods and more.

He noted that "those effects are killing enormous numbers of people. They're destroying communities. They're destroying habitat and wildlife."

To better understand the effects of climate change on human health, Dr. Pershing argues that so far there are epidemics that continue to threaten human health largely due to the fact that these effects are causing people to attack animal dens, as a result of pressure that human beings are putting on nature.

He said "Consequences of things like zoonotic diseases that come as we both encroach on those wild areas, but also as the disease vectors move because the temperature has changed and the precipitation has changed, these are things that are leading to increase not only in things like malaria but in things like the Zika virus."

So, now, what's the American administration doing?



General Motors Electric Vehicle Charging Experience

Dr. Pershing said that the Biden team has been in for just over three months, almost four months now, and the framework had a couple of different pieces.

President Biden announced early in his term, and certainly ran in part on this as a campaign platform, that he intended to really take seriously the climate agenda and to address it with a great deal of urgency.

Among other things, he put the United States back into the Paris agreement.

“We have begun to work on our own long-term strategy, and we held a summit of leaders from the world on the 22nd of April, on Earth Day, to really bring to the attention of the world our intent, and to help catalyze what we thought could be additional actions globally.” Dr. Pershing highlighted.

He noted that the U.S is driving toward a commitment to get to net zero of pollution by 2050.

“We are driving towards actions that the President has put into executive orders that call for decarbonizing the U.S. electricity system by 2035 by installing significant numbers of charging stations or electric vehicles, by putting in place building efficiency programs, and by putting resources to rebuild the American economy post-COVID and rebuild our infrastructure in ways that are low or zero-carbon.” Explains Dr. Pershing.

The U.S. says the fight is not just about Americans, but about working with all nations to find a better and faster solution.

“So, our agenda – ours in the U.S. as we work domestically, ours as we work as part of a global community, ours in the global context – is to try to solve that problem and do so with as much speed and efficacy as we can and not leave people behind.” He said.

How is the U.S set to deal with the rising

global warming emissions?

In this regard, Dr. Pershing said the United States is ready to do more, including innovating to address climate change.

He revealed that “The single largest share of emissions in the United States is coming from the transportation sector. The power sector – generating electricity – is second. Industrial activities are third. Agricultural land use remains – make up the remainder.”

“So, transport is the number one issue. There are a number of options in the transport sector. We can divide it up into road transport and then shipping and aviation. Roads can often be matched up a bit with rail, but we think about roads as both heavy-duty vehicles as well as cars. That structure and that system is a focal point to the United States.” Said Dr. Pershing, the senior advisor to the State

Department’s Special Presidential Envoy for Climate Change.

President Biden committed to the installation of 500,000 charging stations, which makes it much more plausible to get electric vehicles recharged whenever people are traveling.

“But we’re also looking at finding ways to create incentives for the consumer to purchase vehicles and for the manufacturers to make more of them. And we’re thinking about the supply chain in batteries and how that technology advances and where does that go.” He noted.

“In that sense, it’s not the only sector, because once you’ve got an electric vehicle, you then have to charge it, and what is the power going to come from to make that vehicle run?” Dr. Pershing asked

“Well, at the moment the U.S.

energy system has a pretty heavy share of fossil-intensive sources, including coal and gas, so very little oil in our power generation mix.” He said

However, Dr. Pershing told journalists that the U.S is therefore looking at how to decarbonize the power sector and what are the mechanisms through which they might do that.

And at the other end, it’s very clear that the U.S can do a fair amount with electricity in managing its industrial emissions.

“A lot of the lower-temperature industrial emissions can be managed with electric motors and electric heat. That’s a way to kind of take the same clean electricity and apply it to that sector.” Explains Dr. Pershing.

U.S General Motors Predictions would help us understand when the World will be satisfied in the Use of Electric Vehicles



General Motors reveals its all-new modular platform and battery system, Ultium, Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at the Design Dome on the GM Tech Center campus in Warren, Michigan. (Photo by Steve Fecht for General Motors)

While countries around the world are continuing their efforts to change the way people transport goods from petrol and fuel vehicles to electric or solar powered transport system, based on the urgent need for the shift, some stakeholders agree that the industrial production of Electric vehicles and accessories is still in its infancy in order for this shift to reach in countries around the World.

Recently in Rwanda there have been showcased some innovations that bring results to E-mobility.

However, what is clear is that infrastructure such as Charging Stations is limited in addition to higher cost of Electric-powered vehicles. Different countries continue to set

goals for having a Net zero emissions based on their projections; however, this requires efforts and cooperation between countries in order to achieve the measures set out in the various agreements for the protection of the environment.

In a recent interview with TOPAFRICANEWS, a number of leaders who have come up with new approaches to transportation, especially in the United States highlighted the variation where some countries around the world are still burdened by the shift from harmful transportation to more environmentally friendly transport.

Tom Cooney, the vice president of global public policy at General Motors explains that all countries



For U.S citizens, there is a \$7,500 consumer incentive for new EV buyers in the United States from the federal government.

are not at the same level in responding to the climate change adding that “You can see that in countries that are really successful like Norway,... they have extremely successful policy settings that encourage infrastructure, public charging stations that are government supported, consumer incentives for purchases of EVs, investment tax credits for research and development into batteries and additional manufacturing capacity.”

According to the 2018 data from Statista.com on the world’s top three markets by total Electric Vehicles sales in 2018, It showed that China stood first with 1,053,000 EV unit sales. The United States stood second with 361,000 unit sales, followed by Norway with 73,000 sales.

Also, the recent statistics released by IEA showed that Electric car sales topped 2.1 million globally in 2019, surpassing 2018 –which was already a record year.

Sales rose 6% from 2018, following several years of over 40% annual electric car sales growth.

The 2019 increase is embedded within the third year of global car market contraction, and the global electric car market share reached a new record of 2.6%, up from 2.4% in 2018 and 1% in 2017.

The electric car stock therefore increased 40% year-on-year in 2019, indicating strong sustained EV sector development after annual successes since 2016 and a positive outlook for attaining the 36% average annual stock growth needed to reach the SDS target by 2030.

China was the world’s largest market (1.06 million electric cars sold in 2019), followed by Europe (560 000) and the United States (326 000); these three regions accounted for over 90% of all sales in 2019.

However, Norway continues

to have the highest market share for sales (56% in 2019), followed by Iceland (23%) and the Netherlands (15%).

Despite manufacturers putting so much investment in bringing to the market such vehicles, one of the calls is to get electric cars that are not expensive depending on the financial means among the people.

Affordability of electric vehicles all over the world is a critical question and as explained by Mr Tom Cooney: “We believe that this will happen in the next several years, sometime over the course of the next decade.”

As explained by Experts from the U.S based General Motors car manufacturer company, the best way to reduce the cost of electric vehicles is to offer a lower range car simply because when the range is high it also needs a high range battery which normally makes the cost high.

Using the example, Mr. Jack Hund, Michigan Orion Assembly Plant Launch Manager said “For instance, the orig-

inal Bolt was a significant investment for our company, and the original Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) was around 37,000 U.S. dollars. And the Bolts that we're producing now that just came off of the line yesterday and we're shipping to commerce, they start at MSRP of 31,000."

If you look at these prices, they are not affordable to everyone in developing countries, where for example if converted the company's price into Rwandan francs you noticed that an electric bolt car in Michigan factory price, the affordable price is between Rwf 37 million and Rwf 31 million without importation costs.

However, for U.S citizens, there is a \$7,500 consumer incentive for new EV buyers in the United States from the federal government.

"There's also 50 states, and some states have their own EV incentives or tax write-offs or rebates for purchase of an EV, all of which are designed to help with climate change and help with this adoption. And so that's – the consumer incentives are very important." Said Tom Cooney, the vice president of global public policy at General Motors.

Rwanda opens space for investors in Electric mobility

Not only in the United States, where the government is ready to help buyers of Electric vehicles, there are other countries, such as Rwanda, that are also putting in place incentives for anyone using equipment such as electric vehicles or e-motos.

In October 2019, Volkswagen launched a pilot project in partnership with Siemens to test the feasibility of electric mo-

bility in an African country. The pilot project is part of Volkswagen's operations in Rwanda. Volkswagen has signed a joint development agreement with Siemens to provide the charging infrastructure.



Rwanda is one of the countries that are very ambitious to respond to the climate crisis by introducing new innovations in Transport

Speaking at the recent inaugural event on E-mobility solutions, the Director General for Transport in Rwanda's Ministry of Infrastructure, Eng. Alfred Byiringiro mentioned that Rwanda's Government approved a new set of incentives that will help meet its goals in sustainable transport. The new incentives are meant to catalyze the adoption of electric vehicles.

He also mentioned that Rwanda updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) which outlines the importance of electric vehicles and the enforcement of vehicle emission standards as key mitigation measures on the path to reduce greenhouse gases.

DG Byiringiro said that the incentives are expected to serve Rwanda's long-term goal to be a carbon-neutral nation as articulated in its Vision 2050.

In a presentation made by a representative of Rwanda

Development Board (RDB), it was highlighted that Rwanda is actively encouraging investment in the e-mobility sector.

RDB outlined some of the initiatives to encourage investment of this kind including a preferential corporate income tax rate of 15% for investors operating in e-mobility. Firms operating in the energy, ITC, and mass transport industries also qualify.

Rwanda's new incentives are quite comprehensive and will certainly help catalyze the transition to electric mobility which may encourage more countries in the region to follow with similar incentives.

Combating Climate Change through Transportation: Rwanda CAN work the U.S way



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Expanding pedestrians or cyclists lines is one of the solutions that will help reduce traffic emissions

Today the whole world is thinking about actions aimed at addressing the effects of climate change.

From Rwanda to overseas, the slogan is the same. Climate change is a problem that threatens the world and its inhabitants.

Scientists believe that the global warming rate has gone so far that without action, Humanity will find itself in a more dangerous situation than the current global challenges including extreme heat, extreme cold, floods, extreme winds, the loss of biodiversity, loss of human life and more.

Aside from the fact that countries like the U.S.A have already made progress in making their citizens live a fair life, however, their industrial development, for instance, is the origin of Ozone layer destruction, Air pollution, etc...and there are other countries that seem to be affected but not the ones that have caused the problem.



In this case, it is important to appreciate where the world is now to agree on a way for dealing with the issue as stated above. Andrew Wishnia, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Climate Policy at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy in the U.S. The Department of Transportation, said there is a lot to be considered for the protection of humanity and the protection of the Earth and the U.S is ready to share the expertise with other countries and vice versa.

“If we’re looking at transportation electrification scale, for example, we don’t have to look farther than Norway or the Netherlands or other countries which are doing really impressive EV charging build-out, and also build-out of electric vehicles as well.” Mr. Andrew said

Recently, when some of the solutions to climate change were showcased in Rwanda, it was clear that there are some infrastructures that are being innovated out there that can be used but also, they are fewer than those that need to use them.

Here we can talk about the use of electric cars but still they are expensive and charging stations or battery replacement not available.

When we talk about environmentally friendly transportation, we mean transportation that uses a type of energy other than traditional fuel. So, TOP AFRICA NEWS reporter addressed a question to Mr. Andrew Wishnia as in his capacity to respond to how is the U.S. ready to share transportation innovations with developing countries? For instance, cars are expensive. How will industry make it easier for customers to buy different types of mobility?

Mr. Andrew said “The United States stands ready to share and socialize sort of best practices from our end, but one thing that I just wanted to convey to the group is we also want to look at success stories, and for that

matter, what has worked and what hasn’t across the world so that we can deploy these clean energy opportunities in a way that’s prudent for taxpayers and leverage those resources appropriately.”

Some strategies are simple and easy to emulate

For sure, this would be good news for countries that are still struggling to reach the desired level in dealing with the issue of climate change through for instance the transportation innovations.

However, there are some innovations that the U.S is set to deploy that one can be emulated without waiting for technical support.

With respect to options outside of cars, one might think of options to reduce trips, which includes active transportation, right.

From the side of the U.S Government Mr. Andrew is quoted as revealing that the U.S for instance wants to increase opportunities for expanded pedestrian infrastructure, expanded bicycle infrastructure to have what we call in the United States more complete streets so that there’s options for all road users.

“And by the way, those complete streets have co-benefits of not only being more climate friendly, but most importantly being safer as well, right. It reduces traffic speeds, and it also provides options for people to be able to go from one place to another more comfortably on a bicycle or by walking. So those are the kinds of activities that we want to promote. Again, we’re – we don’t want to force anyone to do anything that they don’t want to do. We want to



provide as many options as possible” Mr. Andrew said. According to American Jobs Plan which is yet to be approved, the U.S has allocated \$50 billion fund for infrastructure projects across the whole-of-government, including at the Department of Transportation, but are also thinking about resilience and adaptation strategies as part of all of the programs. “We also have a \$174 billion fund for transportation electrification. And really, that’s an effort to stimulate as much transportation electrification scale to meet the moment and to reduce emissions to align with our net zero strategies.” He said.



Some of the things you should know about the Biden-Harris administration’s domestic climate policy goals

Gina Mccarthy, the White House National Climate Advisor, highlighted some of the contents of the Biden-Harris Leadership Program in addressing the effects of climate change.

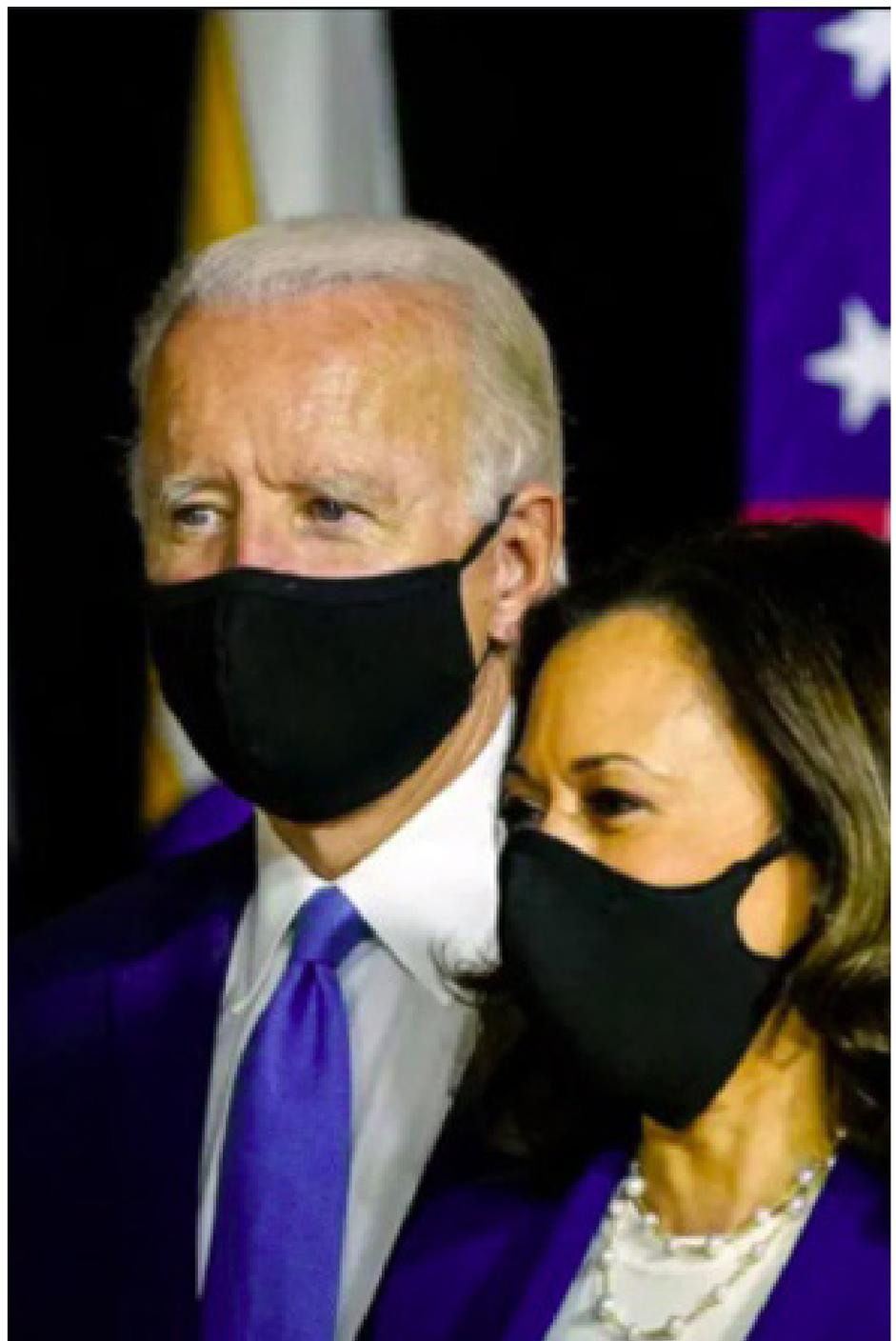
In an hour-long interview with 50 journalists from around the world, Madam Gina Mccarthy pointed out that the United States is now taking the issue of climate change as an issue that affects not only today’s life but also future generations.

She said this at the time when the whole World is preparing for the Great Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, which will be a major event for the countries, to highlight their plans to address the issue.

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP26, is the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference.

It is scheduled to be held in the city of Glasgow from 1 to 12 November 2021 under the presidency of the United Kingdom.

Gina Mccarthy said “We understand the challenges ahead. What we have to do is to get commitments that we need and deliver on them in time for us



to feel people will think of Glasgow as our best opportunity to meet our children's expectations"

According to the overview of the Biden-Harris administration, there are some notes retained from the discussions with Gina Mccarthy on Wednesday 12th May 2021, third day of the Foreign Press Center's Virtual Reporting Tour on combating the climate crisis.

More U.S interventions were highlighted but the key points were that the U.S. in its plans to do something important in addressing effects of climate change include the fact that:

∅ There's a tremendous opportunity to transition to clean energy, to address climate change, and also to grow the economies of the future.

As points to the above move:

∅ President Biden joined the Paris Agreement on his first day. The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP 21 in Paris, on 12 December 2015 and entered into force on 4 November 2016. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

∅ President Biden created a national climate task force. The taskforce was put in place to make sure that what the U.S is doing domestically is positioning the country to be effective, and raising the strength and profile and commitment of the world to this issue of climate change.

∅ President Biden nominated Secretary John Kerry, as the presidential envoy on the international front on climate. This one



Gina Mccarthy, the White House National Climate Advisor,

of Biden's first steps in making good on campaign pledges to confront climate damage more broadly and forcefully than any previous U.S. administration.

∅ Through the National Determined Contributions, the country commits to achieve net-economy wide greenhouse gas emissions by 50 to 52 percent.

Among many other programs:

∅ Today U.S is deploying cost-effective cleantech technologies and products

∅ The Country is looking at how to regrow and reshape economy in ways that meet the President's goal of building back better

∅ From day one President Biden's commitment saw that tackling the climate crisis presented an important and necessary opportunity to grow the U.S economy.

∅ U.S eyes to build a more resilient and sustainable infrastructure, and that's going to compel

and propel the country to actually move forward to lead to innovative manufacturing as well as exports of clean energy technology.

∅ U.S is looking at growing jobs where line workers are building thousands of miles of transmission lines for a clean, modern, resilient grid.

∅ U.S is going to support automakers to build modern, efficient electric vehicles and charging infrastructure across the country, initially 500,000 electric charging stations will be built so people are comfortable buying an electric vehicle that's going to be so beneficial to both the planet and the people.

∅ Construction workers are urged to expand carbon capture and also invest in the innovation opportunities with green hydrogen to forge cleaner steel and cement.

∅ Farmers are expected to use cutting-edge smart technology and tools to make American soil the next frontier of carbon innovation.



Remarks by DUSABEMUNGU Ange de la Victoire during the Closing of the three Week Virtual Reporting Tour that was held in the United States with the coordination of the U.S Foreign Press Bureau and Meridian International

KIGALI, 28TH May 2021

First of all, I would like to thank the United States Embassy in Rwanda for its trust in me and for choosing me among the many journalists , who write about the environment and climate change in Rwanda, to participate in the concluded virtual reporting tour.

The fact that I was selected is because I really put a lot of effort into writing about the environment and climate change.

I thank the U.S. Foreign Press Bureau and Meridian International for accepting a journalist from Rwanda to participate in such an important tour.

Regarding this issue of climate crise, we must know that our future living conditions will depend on the choices a human being is making today on safeguarding Environment and Nature.

During this trip of which we participated in virtually, we saw a lot of innovations that we used to think were dreams.

There are some innovations that we have seen in the U.S.A during the tour that are common as in our country despite the different levels and capacity in each country but the important thing is that the knowledge we have gained in your country is ready to be translated in our local reporting and this will help us to share climate change stories in a more professional and curious manner to bring to the attention the global Intervention in responding to climate change.

Hopefully you have seen some of the articles that come out from this tour shared with you via the canvas system.

The Rwanda Environmental Journalists' Network has expressed special thanks to you that I have participated in this tour. It is a privilege for all of us in the Network and I would like to say that the tour has opened my eyes and I am ready to share with them story ideas that can be covered as far as climate change reporting is concerned.

As you might be aware, of the questions I have asked, I have always asked how ready are the U.S companies to share their innovations with developing countries without mentioning Rwanda but surely I meant Rwanda when I was referring to developing countries.

Some of the responses I RECEIVED are shared with Rwandan readers via the articles we have published on TOPAFRICANEWS.com.

Also note that our website is visited by a big number of U.S citizens as your country ranks second with regular visitors on www.TOPAFRICANEWS.COM and that justifies how our News website has a bond with the U.S citizens.

Although we were unable to meet face to face, we firmly believe that without COVID 19 we would have been able to travel to Michigan and Colorado charting on other subjects not only climate change.

We also think that we would benefit from many friends in your country including friends in real life and friends in Media Business, such as applying for partnership with the visited companies. This has not been possible but we would like to inform you that at TOPAFRICANEWS.COM the doors are open, either for those who want to advertise or for those who want to help us to promote our magazine to another level now that we are celebrating our third birthday as a media Company.



The wishes are many: We want to stay together in this group and continue to share information from your country on a regular basis.

We want to make sure that there are opportunities that will allow us to move forward. The fact that your embassies have trusted us is an indisputable sign that we are good ambassadors of the United States in our respective region and we do so by amplifying the message from your home country whenever you need us to.

We also want to come to the United States physically and enjoy the beauty we have seen in the B-roll videos you shared with us in addition to these wonderful programs you prepared for us throughout these three weeks that we have spent together.

Let me take this opportunity to assure you that our Media house, as owner and founder, is ready to work with Foreign Press Bureau in whatever circumstances, BUT circumstances that are not intending to undermine my home country's well being and the wellbeing of the citizens of Rwanda and Africa of course.

Together we can save the planet, together we can prosper.

Thank you very much.

