

Books For Africa Reception on October 6th, 5-7 p.m.
University Club of St. Paul

Ms. Joni Sussman, President of the Board of Books For Africa

Mr. Tom Warth, Founder of Books For Africa

Mr. Patrick Plonski, Executive Director of Books For Africa

Mr. Tom Elstad, Books for Africa Board Member and Thomson Reuters Representative,

Distinguished Guests, Brothers and Sisters of the African Diaspora

All Protocol Observed as we say in Africa

I am honored and pleased to be here this afternoon among dear friends and strong supporters and advocate of our longstanding friendship and to celebrate together Books For Africa ongoing collaborations with the African Union.

Allow me to seize this opportunity want to pay a vibrant tribute to the noble mission of Books For Africa and its unwavering commitment to education and strong belief in Africa. My thanks go to the donors for their generous support and continued commitment to this exalting undertaking. Providing books is foundational to

advancing education and we welcome the opportunity to partner with Books For Africa for the provision of common goods.

The African Union's theme for 2021 is "Arts, Culture, and heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want." The advancement of education on the African continent is thus critical to our work. Providing books is foundational to advancing education and we welcome the opportunity to partner with Books For Africa;

The African Union is pleased to partner with Books For Africa. Like the African Union, Books For Africa is a continental organization. It has shipped books to every one of the 55 countries on the African continent, touching every single one of the member nations of the African Union;

The scope and reach of Books For Africa is truly impressive, again, making it a good partner for collaboration with the African Union. Books For Africa has shipped over 51 million books to Africa over the past 33 years. While most of these books have been in English, books have also been supplied in French, Portuguese, Arabic, Kiswahili, Somali, and various local languages. Additionally, approximately four million digital books have been sent in computers and e-readers. The African Union looks forward to

working with Books For Africa to ship many more books of all types in the years ahead.

Ladies and Gentleman:

The contributions of the African diaspora are so key to developing the potential across the African continent. We know that the African diaspora have also been critical to the advancement of the work of Books For Africa. It is the African diaspora who are the ones who so often advocate for the needs of education in their respective countries in Africa, collect the books for shipment, raise the funds to deliver the books, identify worthy recipients for these books at schools/universities/libraries, arrange for the delivery of these books through customs and ports of call, and finally conduct site visits to make sure that the books are being properly used by recipients. Books For Africa is an excellent example whereby African diaspora and non-Africans can and do work in collaboration to bring different skills to the table in advancement of a common goal;

We all know that books are a tool in educational development. Thus, by delivering books to children, university students, and adults (seeking to advance their reading skills and general knowledge) people are being given tools to help themselves. In this

way, advancing education through providing books is truly helping people to help themselves – giving people a hand up, not a hand out!

Thank you to all the donors and supporters here tonight. The goal of the event here, followed up by an event in Washington, DC later this month, is to raise \$150,000 in the month of October to ship more books across the African continent.

I thank you for all of your financial support, and welcome you all to Washington, DC for a follow up event on October 28th to complete our Books For Africa / African Union partnership activities for the month of October.

I thank you for your kind attention