

**The Case for ARF 2024**



**ARF2024**  
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
June 20-July 6, 2024



**THEME: PROSPERITY FOR ALL!**

**African Renaissance Festival, Inc.**

**DBA**

**African Renaissance Foundation**

**US Africa and Caribbean Business Forum & Cultural Festivals 2024**

**June 20-July 6, 2024**

**New York City**

**United States of America**

**THE CASE FOR ARF 2024**

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### Executive Summary of the Case for ARF2024

We, the African Renaissance Foundation (ARF), are proud to present our flagship event, the US Africa & Caribbean Business Forum & Cultural Festival (ARF2024), under the unifying theme of **"PROSPERITY FOR ALL."** Taking place from June 20th to July 6th, 2024, in New York City, this premier festival is a bold step forward in advancing US strategic interests across Africa and the Caribbean islands through trade, investment, infrastructure and youth development, and technology transfer. At the same time, we embrace and celebrate our rich African heritage, culture, and economic growth.

Our carefully curated events foster vibrant cultural exchange, economic partnerships, and community engagement among diverse populations. Distinguished speakers, captivating workshops, and thought-provoking panel discussions span topics such as business opportunities, AI benefits and risks, regulations, and the strategic use of new media for business promotion. This forum goes beyond the exchange of ideas—it ignites economic development, unlocking Africa's resources and tackling sector challenges to reinforce US strategic interests on the continent.

Through our collective investment in ARF2024, we aim to pave the way for shared prosperity, sustainable growth, and economic advancement. Join us on this vital journey toward "Prosperity for All," as we shape the event's success and forge lasting diplomatic ties for a brighter future. Together, let us make ARF2024 a beacon of collaboration, growth, and prosperity, transcending borders and achieving our shared goals.

### About ARF

ARF is a non-profit organization based in New York City, committed to promoting US strategic interest in Africa through trade and investment, infrastructure development, technology transfer, combating poverty and food insecurity, fostering people-to-people engagement, cultural exchange, and positive youth development. ARF seeks to support culturally sensitive human rights and democracy in Africa by respecting ancient African ancestral culture, traditions, customs, and norms. Our mission is conducted through various avenues such as entertainment, performance and visual arts, intellectual forums, and business collaborations between the US, Africa, and Caribbean islands. We also focus on training, mentorship, business incubation, and shared ownership. ARF advocates for reconciliation and unity between Africans in the motherland and descendants of survivors of the atrocious transatlantic slave trade in the diaspora through land ownership and dignified return, including free visa entry and citizenship in any African country of choice. We identify descendants of survivors of the atrocious transatlantic slave trade in the diaspora as people of African descent whose ancestors were pugnaciously taken to the Western Hemisphere through the inhuman transatlantic slave trade almost five hundred years ago.

### Our Vision

In recognizing the profound contributions of people of African descent to the economic, social, technological, and political fabric of the United States, we acknowledge the indelible bond between the American people and the lands of Africa and the Caribbean islands. This connection, forged in the ordeal of the tragic Transatlantic Slave Trade, serves as a beacon of resilience and unity.

Our vision is ambitious yet steadfast. We aim, firstly, to elevate the United States to a pivotal role as a primary trading partner with African and Caribbean Island States, fostering bonds of cooperation and **MUTUAL PROSPERITY** through soft diplomacy. Secondly, we hold firm to the belief that within the next decade, Africa shall rise once more, reclaiming the pride and dignity so savagely stripped away by centuries of balkanization, colonization, slavery, imperialism, and neo-imperialism.

Together, we seek to realize a future where the hope of an African child pursuing a better life in the East or West becomes a relic of the past. Through cooperation and solidarity, we work towards a time when every African can fulfill their dreams and aspirations on their own land, living in peace and prosperity, free from the shadow of past injustices. Let us rise and build a future where the legacy of Africa is restored and her potential unleashed for generations to come.

### Achievements

Since its inception, ARF has made endeavors. In the winter of 2021, ARF was incorporated under the not-for-profit laws of the State of New York. Subsequently, in 2021, ARF obtained tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 501c3 tax code, thus allowing ARF to receive grants and donations (material and financial) on a tax-exempt basis within the borders of the United States.

## The Case for ARF 2024

In 2021, operational planning for the hosting of the inaugural launching of an annual African Renaissance Festival in Accra, Ghana, under the theme "Look To Mother Africa" to celebrate the culture, arts, history, struggles, achievements, resilience, and interwoven diversity of the people of African descent in the diaspora and Africans at home while fostering dialogue, engagement, and business development opportunities.

Due to the Covid 19 Pandemic, the event was scaled down to virtual launching featuring artists from Jamaica, the United States, and Africa. In this spirit of African economic development, the 2022 Biden administration African leaders forum presents a unique opportunity for the United States to play a pivotal role in Africa's economic growth through business-to-business, people-to-people, and intragovernmental, nongovernmental, and business cooperation between the United States, Africa, and the Caribbean where many of the citizens are of African heritage.

### What we believe

We believe the United States can once more gain leadership initiative in Africa's economic and social development through soft power and smart diplomacy. America has and will always remain a dominant force for good in Africa through sustainable economic and social development initiatives with smart diplomacy and soft power at the core. We also believe that within the next decade Africa will become a unify economic and political power that provides job opportunity, social safety net and opportunity that need for African child traveling.

This festival provides a space for collaboration and interaction between the US, Africa, and the Caribbean islands, emphasizing trade, investment, infrastructure development, technology transfer, youth engagement, and cultural exchange. It seeks to celebrate indigenous African culture, promote culturally sensitive democracy and human rights, and champion reconciliation and cooperation between Africans in the motherland and descendants of those impacted by the tragic transatlantic slave trade in the diaspora.

### The Philosophical, Social, Economic, Business, Geopolitical, Cultural, and Moral Benefits of ARF2024

1. **Philosophical Benefit:** The festival embodies philosophical ideals of unity, equality, and cultural appreciation. By celebrating indigenous African culture and traditions, it promotes a sense of shared heritage and identity among Africans worldwide. Philosophically, it emphasizes the importance of recognizing and honoring diverse cultural perspectives, fostering mutual respect, and understanding among different communities.
2. **Social Benefit:** Socially, the festival serves as a platform for fostering connections and building networks between people and communities across continents. It promotes social cohesion by bringing together people from diverse backgrounds to engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange ideas, and celebrate shared values. Through cultural performances and intellectual forums, it creates opportunities for social interaction and cross-cultural learning, contributing to a more interconnected and harmonious society.

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3. **Economic Benefit:** Economically, the festival facilitates trade and investment opportunities between the US, Africa, and the Caribbean islands. By highlighting the economic potential of these regions and promoting business engagements, it stimulates economic growth, job creation, and wealth generation. Moreover, it encourages entrepreneurship and innovation by providing a platform for displaying products, services, and business ideas, thereby fostering economic empowerment and **“PROSPERITY FOR ALL.”**
4. **Business Benefit:** From a business perspective, the festival offers valuable networking opportunities and access to new markets and business partnerships. It provides a conducive environment for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and investors to exchange ideas, explore collaborations, and identify potential investment opportunities. By fostering business engagements and collaborations, it facilitates knowledge transfer, technology sharing, and capacity building, thereby enhancing competitiveness and sustainability in the global marketplace.
5. **Geopolitical Benefit:** Geopolitically, the festival strengthens diplomatic relations and promotes geopolitical stability between the US, Africa, and the Caribbean islands. By fostering cooperation and dialogue on key geopolitical issues, it contributes to peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and regional integration. Moreover, it enhances the geopolitical influence and soft power of participating countries, positioning them as key players in the global arena and advancing their strategic interests on the international stage.
6. **Cultural Benefit:** Culturally, the festival celebrates the rich heritage and diversity of American, African, and Caribbean cultures, promoting cultural exchange, appreciation, and understanding. Through art exhibitions, music performances, and cultural showcases, it highlights the vibrancy and creativity of African, Americans, and Caribbean traditions, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and mutual enrichment. By preserving and promoting indigenous cultural practices, the festival contributes to cultural preservation, identity formation, and intergenerational continuity, ensuring that these traditions endure for future generations.
7. **Moral Benefit:** Morally, the festival promotes values of justice, equality, and human dignity by advocating for reconciliation and cooperation between Africans in the motherland and descendants of survivors of the catastrophic transatlantic slave trade in the diaspora. It acknowledges historical injustices and seeks to redress past wrongs by promoting land ownership, dignified return, and citizenship rights for descendants of enslaved Africans. By confronting the legacy of slavery and promoting healing and reconciliation, the festival contributes to the moral revival and ethical advancement of society, fostering a more just, fair, and compassionate world.

## **The Case for ARF 2024**

In summary, ARF 2024 offers a multitude of benefits across philosophical, social, economic, business, geopolitical, cultural, and moral dimensions. By fostering collaboration, dialogue, and exchange among diverse stakeholders, the festival contributes to the advancement of shared values, mutual understanding, and sustainable development, thereby shaping a brighter future for generations to come.

### **The Untapped Wealth of Africa's Natural Resources**

Africa is endowed with a wealth of natural resources that holds significant potential to facilitate the continent's development and prosperity. However, the true extent of Africa's resource wealth is frequently underestimated or exploited by external interests. This narrative offers an examination of the abundant resources present in Africa's land, forests, including oil, gas, minerals, and more, from an indigenous African perspective.

Remarkably, Africa is estimated to encompass 60% of the global total natural resources, valued at an astounding \$803 trillion (Ezekwesili, 2022). This includes 30% of the remaining mineral reserves worldwide, 9% of the global oil reserves, 17% of the world's forests, and 65% of the unused arable land on the planet (Edwards, 2023; OPEC, 2022; FAO, 2022; FARA, 2022). Harnessing even a fraction of this natural wealth sustainably has the potential to revolutionize African economies and alleviate millions from poverty.

South Africa alone possesses mineral reserves valued at up to \$2.5 trillion, encompassing platinum, diamonds, and gold (Moyo, 2021). Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, and Angola collectively account for a massive portion of Africa's 9% share of global oil reserves (OPEC, 2022). The Congo Basin rainforests represent the second-largest rainforest globally, following the Amazon (FAO, 2022). Additionally, Africa's abundant fertile lands and water resources offer substantial agricultural potential (FARA, 2022).

However, this extensive abundance of resources has often posed more challenges than benefits for Africa, attributed to unfair trade agreements, illicit financial activities, and inadequate local processing (AU Commission, 2022). Realizing Africa's full potential will necessitate increased ownership over its resources, enhanced domestic beneficiation, and responsible governance to ensure that a greater portion of the wealth remains within Africa. Through appropriate reforms, Africa's monumental natural endowments can serve as drivers of sustainable development for generations to come.

### **US-Africa Trade and Investment 2000-2024**

While the United States has increased its investment in Africa over the past two decades, China has rapidly expanded its influence through trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), and infrastructure projects. US-Africa trade reached \$61 billion in goods in 2019, with FDI growing from \$10.6 billion in 2000 to \$55.8 billion in 2019 (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2020; Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2021). However, China's engagement far outpaces this, with its total trade, FDI, and debt relief to Africa estimated at \$2.58 trillion from 2000-2020 (Roston, 2013).



### China's Growing Trade with Africa

China, driven by a quest for natural resources, has significantly increased its trade and investment in Africa. Total trade between China and Africa soared from just \$10 billion in 2000 to over \$200 billion in 2020. Infrastructure investments, foreign direct investment, and debt relief provided by China have contributed to its status as a major economic partner for Africa (Roston, 2013).

Total trade: \$2.5 trillion, FDI: \$63 billion, and Debt relief: \$20 billion (Roston, 2013). So, the rough estimated grand total of China's trade, investment, and debt relief provided to Africa from 2000-2020 would be approximately \$2.58 trillion. In summary, China has become a major economic partner for Africa through rapidly expanding trade, investment, infrastructure financing, and debt forgiveness.

### A New Approach

America was born out of the desire to be free and live freely without foreign interference. Over time, we have lost our way and transformed the great vision of the founding fathers into a global hegemonic empire which has diminished the global image of the United States. It is not too late, irrespective of the US government of the day, there is an urgent need to change course on Africa and look at Africa as a mutual partner and not as a subject and aid dependent continent but as a potential trading partner and not receiver of aid. The US needs an urgent change in policy on Africa based on trade, mutual prosperity, and security cooperation based on mutual interests.

To counter the expanding influence of the Russian Federation and China in Africa, the United States must pivot from its historical aid-centric approach to one focused on mutual prosperity. This transition entails engaging in bilateral trade negotiations, providing technical assistance, and integrating African nations into global value chains, mirroring the strategy employed for Western Europe under the Marshall Plan. Following World War II, despite widespread devastation, Western European nations rebounded to become advanced economic powers and vital allies of the United States.

This transformation was driven by the mutual economic, social, and security benefits fostered by the Marshall Plan's initiatives. Similarly, implementing such measures could empower African nations to develop and thrive, cultivating mutually advantageous partnerships with the United States. As descendants of Africa and African immigrants deeply invested in the United States, we implore US policymakers to shift course and assume a leadership role in shaping Africa's economic trajectory, ensuring competitiveness amidst the geopolitical shifts of this tumultuous era before opportunities diminish irreversibly.

### Recommendations

1. Leverage the expertise and connections of the African diaspora in America by creating forums for dialogue and cooperation on mutually beneficial trade and investment.

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2. Increase educational and cultural exchanges to foster greater understanding between the peoples of America and Africa. These should involve youth, scholars, artists, athletes and more.
3. Prioritize sustainable development and transfer of skills/technology to empower African communities to be self-reliant, instead of dependent on aid.
4. Forge public-private partnerships between U.S. and African companies to enable innovation, job growth and infrastructure development.
5. Promote two-way tourism between America and under-visited destinations in Africa to spur economic activity.
6. Support Africa's regional integration efforts through trade capacity building and by expanding AGOA trade preferences to additional countries.
7. Use America's diversity and influence in entertainment to challenge stereotypes about Africa by highlighting its dynamism, cultures, and modern sectors.

The United States has an opportunity to chart a new course in Africa relations rooted in mutual understanding and shared prosperity, without paternalism. By embracing African voices and perspectives, America can become a partner in realizing the continent's immense potential.

### **The Benefit of ARF 2024 US Africa and Caribbean Business Forum**

Realizing Africa's full potential will require greater ownership over its resources, increased domestic beneficiation, and responsible governance to retain more of the wealth within Africa. While other players like China have entered the African market, the US can still be a key partner in sustainably developing Africa's resources for mutual benefit. With American investment, technology transfers, and development aid supporting resource-driven growth, Africa's immense natural wealth can catalyze broad-based prosperity on the continent and stability in the global economy. But this will require fair trade relationships, respect for African autonomy, and policies that put long-term human development ahead of short-term profits. Done responsibly and transparently, US involvement could help Africa leverage its vast natural resources to fund transformative economic and social progress.

That is why events like the African Renaissance Festival 2024 US-Africa Business Forum provide an important platform for US and African companies, policymakers, and leaders to explore these opportunities. By bringing stakeholders together to share experiences, make deals, and find mutual benefits, the Forum can help catalyze responsible and transparent US investment and cooperation to assist Africa in leveraging its immense natural resource wealth. The Forum represents a chance to build partnerships that drive resource-based growth, create jobs, enable technology transfers, and uplift millions out of poverty. The US has an opportunity to aid Africa's development by working collaboratively to transform the continent's vast natural riches into sustainable prosperity for all.

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## Tentative Agenda

Below is the Tentative Agenda for the US Africa and Caribbean Business Forum from June 24-26, 2024: It includes breakout workshops on AI, assessing business in Africa, regulation, business registration, and using new media to promote business.

### Day 1: June 24, 2024 - Fostering Collaborative Foundations

- **8:00 am - 9:00 am:** Registration and Networking - Attendees immerse themselves in morning networking, forging connections.
- **9:00 am - 9:30 am:** Opening Ceremony and Welcome Address - Setting the tone for collaborative ventures ahead.
- **9:30 am - 10:30 am:** Keynote Session: "Global Business Trends and Opportunities in US Africa and the Caribbean" - Offering insights into pathways for inclusive prosperity.
- **10:30 am - 11:00 am:** Morning Break - Networking and informal discussions.
- **11:00 am - 12:30 pm:** Panel Discussion 1: "Assessing Business Opportunities in Africa" - Promoting dialogue on comprehensive economic growth.
- **12:30 pm - 1:30 pm:** Networking Lunch - Facilitating further connections and discussions.
- **1:30 pm - 3:00 pm:** Breakout Workshops A and B: "Harnessing the Power of AI in Business" and "Navigating Business Regulation in Emerging Markets" - Ensuring shared knowledge leads to prosperity.
- **3:00 pm - 3:30 pm:** Afternoon Break - Additional networking opportunities.
- **3:30 pm - 5:00 pm:** Panel Discussion 2: "Business Registration and Compliance Challenges" - Emphasizing comprehensive strategies for collective success.
- **7:00 pm - 9:00 pm:** Evening Reception - Fostering an environment for continued networking and shared prosperity.

### Day 2: June 25, 2024 - Strategies for Sustainable Growth

- **9:00 am - 10:30 am:** Panel Discussion 3: "Strategies for Sustainable Business Growth in the Caribbean" - Exploring avenues for lasting success.
- **10:30 am - 11:00 am:** Morning Break - Facilitating networking and collaboration.
- **11:00 am - 12:30 pm:** Breakout Workshops C and D: "Maximizing New Media for Business Promotion" and "AI Implementation Strategies for SMEs" - Aligning strategies with prosperity for all.

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- **12:30 pm - 1:30 pm:** Networking Lunch - Midday opportunity for participants to connect.
- **1:30 pm - 3:00 pm:** Panel Discussion 4: "Investment Opportunities and Challenges in US Africa" - Providing insights for collective prosperity.
- **3:00 pm - 3:30 pm:** Afternoon Break - Encouraging further connections.
- **3:30 pm - 5:00 pm:** Breakout Workshops E and F: "Innovations in AI: Case Studies and Best Practices" and "Legal and Ethical Considerations in AI Implementation" - Ensuring emerging technologies contribute to prosperity for all.
- **7:00 pm - 9:00 pm:** Evening Reception - Fostering camaraderie and collaboration for shared benefit.

### Day 3: June 26, 2024 - Shaping the Future Together

- **9:00 am - 10:30 am:** Panel Discussion 5: "FinTech and Digital Transformation in the Caribbean" - Shaping a digitally shared future.
- **10:30 am - 11:00 am:** Morning Break - Networking and last-minute connections.
- **11:00 am - 12:30 pm:** Breakout Workshops G and H: "E-commerce Strategies for African Markets" and "AI and Data Privacy: Navigating the Challenges" - Aligning strategies with shared success.
- **12:30 pm - 1:30 pm:** Networking Lunch - Continued interactions fostering collaborative prosperity.
- **1:30 pm - 3:00 pm:** Panel Discussion 6: "Negotiating Business Deals and Government Benefits for Foreign Investors in Africa and the Caribbean" and "Exploring African Continental Trade Agreements and Impact on Foreign Investments" - Emphasizing benefits for foreign investors.
- **3:00 pm - 3:30 pm:** Afternoon Break - Final networking opportunities.
- **3:30 pm - 5:00 pm:** Closing Keynote: "The Future of Business in US Africa and the Caribbean" - Emphasizing mutual growth.
- **5:00 pm - 5:30 pm:** Conference Wrap-up and Acknowledgments - Recognizing collective effort for prosperity.
- **7:00 pm – 11:30 pm:** Networking and Closing Reception Dinner - Celebrating forum conclusion and reinforcing theme of prosperity for all.

ARF2024 Activities Outline

		June										July						
Activities		20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Welcoming Reception																	
2	Art Exhibit & Food Festival																	
3	Musical Festival																	
4	Business Forum																	
5	Awards Diner & Gala																	
6	US Africa Fashion Show																	
7	Boat Ride																	
8	Site Seeing																	
9	4th July Celebration Party																	
10	US Africa Queen Contest																	

Tentative Class of Guest to be Invited.

- The proposed invited guests include CEOs from leading companies across Africa and the Caribbean in key industries, as well as traditional leaders, kings, queen mothers, and chiefs from major regions. Guests will include CEOs from leading companies across Africa and the Caribbean in key industries like technology, telecommunications, financial services, agriculture, energy, and more.
- Involving traditional leaders, kings, queen mothers, and chiefs is key, as they play a significant role in land ownership, community relations, and spreading messages/priorities to their people. Their participation will help align US strategic interests in Africa with local leaders.
- NGOs with a focus on sustainable development, social impact, and economic empowerment in Africa, the Caribbean, and the US are especially encouraged to participate. Their involvement will help align business interests with social/environmental priorities.
- An exhibition area will allow partner NGOs to highlight their work and mission to attendees. NGO partnerships will be facilitated to explore collaborative opportunities with businesses.

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- NGOs can also propose and lead specialized breakout sessions on topics like sustainable practices, community development, women's empowerment, etc.

### Speakers and Presenters

- Speakers and presenters will be selected from leading businesses, academia, government, and NGOs engaged in Africa, the Caribbean, and the US.
- They will include experts across industries like technology, sustainability, economic development, and entrepreneurship.
- Speakers from the US will include government officials, business leaders, and academics providing an American perspective.
- African and Caribbean speakers will be business executives, scholars, and NGO leaders offering regional expertise.
- Panel discussions will aim to include diverse speakers from the US, Africa, and the Caribbean to allow for idea exchange.
- Presenters will be chosen based on their knowledge, experience, and ability to discuss key forum themes such as AI, regulation, capital access, and sustainability.

### Partnership

ARF 2024 is partly inspired by President Biden's Administration U.S.-Africa leaders' meeting held in Washington, DC from December 13-15, 2022. It is natural to engage the federal government through the Department of Commerce, State Department, Department of the Treasury, and other not-for-profit agencies, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Prosper Africa initiative, and other not-for-profits, including the Corporate Council on Africa. The U.S. State Department and Homeland Security will be engaged to ensure the federal government is fully apprised of every step and to facilitate travel arrangements for participants from Africa and the Caribbean.

In addition, we welcome partnerships with state and city government agencies, businesses, and academic institutions. By working together, we can make this event a true success and a catalyst for positive change. We invite all organizations aligned with ARF's mission to bring your resources, expertise, and goodwill and let us strive for mutual prosperity so that the narrative of hunger, poverty, and despair in Africa and the Caribbean can become a relic of the past. The Forum aims to build bridges and foster mutually beneficial relationships between the US, Africa, and the Caribbean - regardless of shifting political winds.

The people of Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas share deep historical connections and must cooperate to build a better, shared future. Partnership and collaboration will provide the US a competitive edge in African and Caribbean markets at a time of geopolitical struggles. By joining forces around our shared goals of economic empowerment, technological exchange, and social development, we can set an example of progress over politics. We invite all organizations aligned with ARF's mission to bring your resources, expertise, and goodwill, and let us strive for

mutual prosperity so that the narrative of hunger, poverty, and despair in Africa and the Caribbean can become a relic of the past.

### **Promotion and Multiplying Effects:**

#### *1. Production of a film*

A documentary film capturing the Forum and the different activities will be created. This material will be used to promote the idea of the Forum to a broader public in Africa, the United States, the Caribbean, Western Europe, and the entire world. Also, a live streaming channel will be created to live stream the event in real-time for a minimum cost to cover the sustainability for ARF programs and services.

#### *2. Media promotion*

The festival will be promoted through national and international media, posters, flyers, email notifications, social media, and other traditional and nontraditional mediums, as necessary. The key promotional strategy is the application of targeted digital marketing techniques purposely designed to target potential participants within a unique way. For example, the primary target will be everyone on social media with African names or located on the continent will be targeted using AI enabled targeted digital marketing.

### **Philanthropic Purpose**

One of the African Renaissance Festival's primary aims is to alleviate poverty among African American, African, and Caribbean youths on the continent and Caribbean Islands through information and telecommunications technology (ICT), utilizing artificial intelligence, new media, food security, preventative health, mentorship, incubation, entertainment, and entrepreneurship. In the United States, 38% of African American children live below the federal poverty line, compared to 14% of white children. In sub-Saharan Africa, 70% of youth live on less than \$2 per day. Therefore, a massive portion of the revenue generated from the ARF programs and events will be used to support the development and sustainability of the African American and Caribbean Center for Partnership, Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship (AACCPITE) both in the US, Africa, and the Caribbean Islands.

The mission of AACCPITE is to promote sustainable development, a clean environment, and create the next generation of African, African American, and Caribbean tech innovators and business leaders through training, mentorship, incubation, and leadership development and to promote technology exchange between African youth on the motherland and African diaspora youths. Our primary target population is African and Caribbean youths who lack the necessary resources and support to advance their heartfelt dreams in the business and technology sphere. Hence, we will pay special attention to encouraging and recruiting prospective students from less fortunate social and economic backgrounds throughout Africa and the Caribbean Islands.

With poverty so prevalent among African American, African, and Caribbean youths, cooperation between them could be mutually beneficial. African American youth can share technological

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expertise and entrepreneurship training, while African and Caribbean youth can share indigenous knowledge and access to emerging African and Caribbean markets. Such exchanges would promote innovation and economic opportunity on both sides, while advancing US strategic interests in Africa and the Caribbean Islands through soft power. Our overarching objective is to cultivate a cohort of one hundred participants who achieve millionaire status before turning forty by the conclusion of the upcoming decade, spanning from 2025 to 2035, through our program.

We intend to build AACCPITE across Africa, Caribbean Islands, and the United States with the first facility and continental headquarters of AACCPITE to be established in New York City, followed by a training center in Vance County, NC. On the continent of Africa, the first facility and headquarters will be built on donated land in Caffeglay, Nimba county, Liberia. We will partner with the Jamaican Government and the University of West Indies to secure land for the construction of the Caribbean training center. Subsequently, facilities will be built across Africa in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and Sierra Leone within five years. The facility will include classrooms, boarding rooms for students, teachers, and employees, living quarters, electric power, high-speed internet, healthcare facilities, a gym, a shopping center, a recreational hall, a farm, and other facilities that support a quality learning atmosphere and the quality of life of staff and students.

### Why Liberia

Liberia is a product of President Thomas Jefferson's proposal, which argues that formerly enslaved Africans will never be treated equally by their former owners. Therefore, it would be prudent on humanitarian grounds to return formerly enslaved Africans to Africa so that they can create a government of their own and exercise self-determination.

President Thomas Jefferson (April 13, 1743, to July 4, 1826) was an American statesman, diplomat, lawyer, architect, philosopher, and one of the Founding Fathers of America who served as the third president of the United States from 1801 to 1809.

Although many prominent African American scholars and activists argued that President Jefferson's proposal was motivated by extreme racism since he was an enslaver, for our work and in the interest of reconciliation and collaboration, we accept the former: the humanitarian argument.

Against this backdrop, the American Colonization Society (ACS) was organized in 1816. Its goal was to repatriate all blacks to Africa. Among the prominent founders and financiers of the ACS were Francis Scott Key, the composer of the U.S. national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner"; Congressman Charles Fenton Mercer of Loudoun County, Virginia; Congressman William Henry Fitzhugh Lee of Virginia; Chief Justice John Marshall, the longest-serving U.S. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (1801 to 1835); and President James Monroe, the fifth President of the United States of America (1817 to 1825).

Eventually, the new colonization organization gained support from the United States Congress itself. In 1819 Congress approved a grant of \$100,000 to support the colonization efforts. Initial attempts were made in 1820-1821 to settle ex-enslaved Americans on the West Coast of Africa on Sherbrook Island in the former British colony of Sierra Leone. But these attempts proved



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unsuccessful due to disagreements with the British and the effects of tropical diseases that the settlers were not accustomed to.

Despite setbacks, the leaders of the ACS persevered. At their seventh annual meeting in Washington, DC, on February 20, 1824, the ACS leaders decided to find a name for the colony they had founded in West Africa for the ex-American enslaved people. General Robert Goodlier Harper suggested the name "Liberia" for the colony and "Monrovia" for its capital. Both suggestions were adopted, and Liberia came into existence, with its capital Monrovia named after the 5th President of the United States, James Monroe. The February 20 meeting was chaired by Bushrod Washington, nephew of President George Washington.

Liberia was the only country created by the United States on the African continent to serve as the beachhead for propagating American civilization through Christianity in Africa and black self-governance. Given the economic and technological potential of the United States, one would think Liberia would be the most advanced country in Africa. Unfortunately, the story of Liberia is characterized by war, extreme violence, extreme poverty, and a lack of essential public services to support the five million citizens.

The lack of development was exacerbated by the fourteen years of vicious civil war, which extinguished the lives of three hundred thousand Liberians, including foreign nationals. The scale of private and public property destruction and psychological impact is incalculable. The true symbol of American philanthropy in Liberia is the John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital, commonly known locally as "JFK Hospital," which currently lies in ruins operationally.

Currently, JFK Hospital lacks essentials, including modern diagnostic machines, imaging machines, chemicals to support laboratory tests, medication, and, more importantly, the staff is left dry without pay for several months.

The case of JFK Hospital mirrors the challenges confronting Liberia's social sectors, including public universities, mailing systems, electricity, safe drinking water, farm-to-market roads in rural areas, etc. Although the United States government has made some efforts over the years to mitigate some of the challenges, there is still a lot to be done to transform Liberia into its true meaning, "Liberty in Africa." The beacon of American democratic values in Africa. These are several reasons why we feel Liberia would be an appropriate initial point for a United States-based organization sponsored project in Africa.

### Conclusion

In this era of geopolitical competition between East and West, the United States must rethink its approach to Africa. This proposal argues for a change in thinking towards mutual prosperity, respecting Africa's cultural diversity, and embracing soft power strategies. By doing so, the United States can forge a genuine partnership with African and Caribbean nations, fostering sustainable development, stability, and collective security on the continent and the Caribbean Islands.

From June 20 to July 6, 2024, we will join as partners and friends from the US, Africa, and the Caribbean, united in purpose and solidarity. Our diverse voices will converge, enriching one

another and igniting fresh ideas to propel development forward. Though the challenges ahead are significant, so is our potential for progress.

As we part ways and return home, our minds will brim with insights and inspiration, and our hearts will be buoyed by newfound friendships. Let us carry this energy with us, allowing it to gather strength and propel us ever closer to the brighter future we envision.

Progress depends on breaking down walls between people, communities, and nations. Lifting millions out of poverty, providing opportunity for all, building sustainable growth - this monumental task starts with a single step. Let this Forum and Festival be the first step into a new era of partnership between the US, Caribbean, and Africa. We cannot shape the future alone. But together, with open hearts, empathy, and perseverance, we can leave the world better than we found it.

As an African proverb says: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Let us go far, as brothers and sisters, toward the dawn of a new day. The road is long but by lifting each other up instead of putting each other down, we can accomplish incredible things. Have courage, stay committed, and keep walking forward.

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