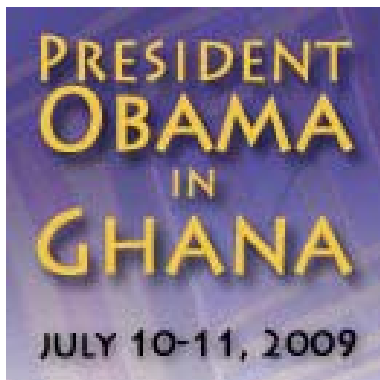


U.S. Embassy Kinshasa

The American Cultural Center



“Freedom is Your Inheritance”

In his first trip to Africa as U.S. President, Barack Obama gave a historic speech before the Ghanaian Parliament in Accra on July 11. Public Affairs Section Kinshasa held several events to promote the speech and engage local audiences. On the day of the speech, some 30 journalists watched a live broadcast and then participated in a discussion moderated by Public Affairs Officer Katya Thomas. On Monday July 13, the speech was rebroadcast to a select group of opinion leaders who participated in a lively and broad-ranging discussion. Finally, Thomas hosted a lunch of opinion leaders at her residence to continue the conversation sparked by the speech. Please visit the Embassy website and America.gov to learn more (and let the President know what you think.)

Freedom of Information Seminar and Anuarite Prize Announcement

A national seminar on a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), sponsored by AMICUS and supported by Embassy Kinshasa, took place in Kinshasa from July 13-17. The opening ceremony was held at the Grand Conference Room in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and included remarks by Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Samuel Brock, DRC Minister of Communications and Media Lambert Mende Omalanga, and President of AMICUS Jean-Baptiste Otshudi, among others. In his remarks, Brock expressed the support and commitment of Embassy Kinshasa in helping the Congolese enact a law that would guarantee the freedom of information for the press and public.



More than 100 journalists, academics, political and civil society leaders from all over the country participated in a packed schedule of workshops and presentations. After a week of hard work, the event ended with closing remarks by PAO Katya Thomas, followed by a reception at Ambassador Garvelink's residence. The sponsor of the seminar, AMICUS, is a non-profit organization made up of Congolese alumni of U.S. government-supported educational and exchange programs.

In related news, Embassy Kinshasa announced the first annual Anuarite Prize on July 8 at the PD Auditorium. Each year, a cash prize will be awarded to a Congolese woman who, through courage, hard work, perseverance and community service, has helped make her country a better place.

The prize is the result of a partnership with Embassy Kinshasa, AMICUS, the Ministry of Culture and Art, UNESCO, and the International Women's Club. The deadline for applications is November 8, 2009. The winner will be announced on International Women's Day, March 8, 2010. For more information about the FOIA seminar and the Anuarite Prize - including application forms if you know a woman of courage and would like to nominate her—please visit AMICUS's website (<http://amicusalumni.com>).

Workshop on U.S– DRC Economic Relations

On Thursday June 18, the Working Group on Commercial Relations between the U.S. and DRC held its first meeting at Economic Counselor Elizabeth Jaffee’s residence. Participants included members of the DRC government, private sector and civil society. The working group’s goal is to promote and strengthen commercial ties and investment between the two countries. This first meeting was the scene of a lively discussion concerning the investment climate and economic potential of the DRC. Some recommendations included: performing a detailed study of U.S./DRC business relations to identify strengths and weaknesses; organizing activities to promote trade; helping the DRC government and private sector organize a workshop on « Doing Business in the U.S. »; and exploring possibilities for technical assistance.



CALI News: Pagne, Parrots and Pop-Stars



The newest member of the CALI staff is a six-month old African Gray parrot. Please visit the CALI Facebook page and help us give her a name.



Could this be CALI-Man?

The most recent CALI graduation looked like a fashion show as several students wore hand-made clothing sewn from CALI pagne. More than 300 students graduated from levels 4, 6 and advanced classes. The keynote speaker was Embassy Consul David Boyle. CALI students were represented by Ms. Barryl Sandra, who delivered remarks. PAO Katya Thomas and Assistant Public Affairs Officer Stephen Weeks also spoke at the ceremony.

Self-Help Project Inaugurated

Deputy Chief of Mission Samuel Brock inaugurated the newest Ambassador’s Special Self-Help project with Congolese NGO “La Vie Pour Tous” (VIPOT) on Wednesday, July 8 in the Kinshasa community of Masina. The project provided funding to buy new sewing machines and equipment for VIPOT’s education center.

Under a previous Special Self-Help project, the Embassy helped construct the sewing classroom and provided an initial set of sewing machines. After cutting the ribbon to re-inaugurate the sewing classroom with new machines and equipment, Brock and Pauline Kompany Sona, president of VIPOT, handed out training certificates to a group of 20 women, all graduates of the latest sewing class. Several graduates were visibly touched by the ceremony as this was the first “graduation” in which they had ever participated. VIPOT’s sewing classes provide women with life skills and employment training, so they can be more self-reliant.

The Ambassador’s Special Self Help program is a grass-roots assistance program funding small, community-based development projects. Applications for the program can be found on the Embassy website.

