MISSION STATEMENT

The Governor’s Commission on African Affairs serves as an advisory board to the Governor and agencies within the Executive Department on matters relating to the African Diaspora of Maryland, including matters relating to economic, workforce and business development.
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Dear Friends:

On May 14, 2009 I signed an executive order to establish the Governor’s Commission on African Affairs to effectively address the concerns of the Maryland African Diaspora. I am proud to join the staff and members of the Commission in presenting their 2011 report.

Diversity is one of Maryland’s greatest strengths. For this reason, I believe it is important to recognize the African Diaspora which plays a vital role in moving the State forward. By identifying and addressing issues in the African Diaspora, I am confident that this Commission will help strengthen and grow our One Maryland.

As we make steady progress, I will rely on the Governor’s Commission on African Affairs to help expand opportunities for the growing African Diaspora in business, employment, education and many other areas.

Sincerely,

Martin O’Malley
Governor
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE
GOVERNOR’S OFFICE OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

The Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) coordinates community and
volunteer activities statewide and advises the Governor on policies to enhance and improve
community programs. This Office also oversees the work of the Governor’s Office on
Service and Volunteerism, Volunteer Maryland and community affairs services within the
Executive Branch of Maryland government. Additionally, GOCI coordinates outreach to
ethnic communities across Maryland, overseeing the Governor’s Office and Commission
on Asian American and Pacific Islander Affairs, the Governor’s Commission on African
Affairs, the Governor’s Commission on Hispanic Affairs, the Maryland Commission on
Indian Affairs, and the Governor’s Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs.

As a Governor’s Coordinating Office, GOCI is able to engage the resources of multiple
State agencies and coordinate policy and activities related to community initiatives. By
creating the Governor’s Commission on African Affairs, Governor O’Malley has affirmed
his strong commitment to the Maryland African Diaspora.

Under the leadership of Chair Valentina Ukwuoma, Vice Chair Jewru Bandeh and
Assistant Director Iman Awad, the Governor’s Commission on African Affairs has already
become an integral part of the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives. Together,
we expect to make great strides toward ensuring greater access and opportunities for the
African Diaspora in Maryland. In order to achieve this goal, we will continue to reach
out to the community, engage key stakeholders, and mobilize participation in support of
community initiatives.

Israel C. “Izzy” Patoka, Executive Director
Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives
Dear Friends,

It is my heartfelt honor to present on behalf of the Governor’s Commission on African Affairs the 2011 Annual Report.

For the past three years, the Commission has worked diligently to provide the African Diaspora in Maryland with the opportunity to better understand and better utilize state resources to further enhance our community’s economic, business and community wellbeing. The Commission continues to engage the African Diaspora in order to gain a deep understanding of their needs and concerns.

In 2011, the Commission hosted their first African Summit entitled *African Immigrants: Our Community, Our Voice, Our Strength*. The Commission hosted an empowering assembly and dialogue of over 150 people including Ambassadors, embassy representatives, community leaders and various African organization representatives.

The Commission has been humbled to witness the community becoming more engaged with the State and excited to see African organizations continue to flourish. In the next year, we hope to continue this engagement, expand our efforts to and to also become more active in our state’s legislative process.

As the Commission begins to work on the 2012 initiatives we hope to continue to expand on the knowledge gained through our 2011 accomplishments and extensive outreach efforts.

Sincerely,

Valentina Ukwuoma
Chair
COMMISSIONERS

- **Valentina Ukwuoma**, Chair (Nigerian, Howard County)
  Head Bureau of Solid Waste, Department of Public Works, Baltimore City

- **Jewru Bandeh**, Vice-Chair (Gambian, Montgomery County)
  Assistant Director, Montgomery County - Upcounty Regional Services Center

- **Alex Agwuna** (Nigerian, Howard County)
  Vice President, Meridian Management Group, Inc.
  Member, Board of Directors for Universal Surgical Associates
  Member, Board of Directors, Friendship Association Education Assistance, Inc.

- **Kwaku Agyemang-Duah** (Ghanaian, Talbot County)
  Transportation Planner, Department of Transportation, City of Annapolis
  Member, American Planning Association

- **Ollie Anderson** (Prince George’s County)
  President and Founder, Anderson International, LLC
  Co-founder and Chairman, Board of the New Initiatives Community Development Corporation
  Member, Prince George’s County Economic Development Corporation
  Board of Directors

- **Tebabu Assefa**, (Ethiopian, Montgomery County)
  Social Marketing and Media Consultant, Trees for the Future
  Member of the Montgomery County Executive’s African Affairs Advisory Group
  Board Member, Takoma Foundation

- **Nicholas Azinge, M.D.**, (Nigerian, Prince George’s County)
  Medical Director, Greenbelt Medical Associates

- **Mumin Barre**, (Somalian, Montgomery County)
  Litigation Case Manager, The Travelers Property Casualty Insurance Company
  President, Somali Diaspora Network
  Co-Chair, Montgomery County Executives African Affairs Advisory Group

- **Sarian Bouma**, (Sierra Leonean, Anne Arundel County)
  CEO, Sianna Productions
  Board Member, African American Business Women’s Association
  Co-Host, “Heart of a Winner” Radio Show

- **Watchen Harris Bruce**, (Liberian, Baltimore City)
  Vice President & Business Banker, PNC Bank
  Member, Maryland Liberia Sister City Committee

- **Sylvester Ezeani**, (Nigerian, Prince George’s County)
  Senior Network Engineer, Government of the District of Columbia
  Member, National Certified Public Manager (CPM) Consortium
  Member, Board of Director’s, Friendship Association Education Assistance, Inc.
Yonas Kefle, Ph.D., (Ethiopian, Frederick County)
Adjunct Professor of Economics, Frederick Community College
Second Vice President, Literacy Council of Frederick County
Economic Development Chair, Frederick County Branch of NAACP

Alfred Nkere, (Congoese, Baltimore County)
Managing Director, East International Holdings
Member, Baltimore Chapter of the African Chamber of Commerce

Joseph Offoha, (Nigerian, Baltimore County)
Nurse, St. Joseph Medical Center

Chukwuma Okeke, Pharm.D., (Nigerian, Baltimore County)
Owner and Pharmacist, Broadway Pharmacy, LLC
Treasurer, African Alliance Group
Member, Ihitte-Uboma Association of Maryland

Anthony Okolo, (Nigerian, Prince George’s County)
Program Manager, Prince George’s County Department of Public Works and Transportation

Modupe Oladapo, (Nigerian, Baltimore City)
Student Services Representative, Community College of Baltimore County
Member, WGTS 91.9 Radio Station Dream Team

Adetoun Olumide, (Nigerian, Baltimore County)
Legislative Aide, Delegate Shirley Nathan-Pulliam
President, Nigerian Youth Association of Maryland
Secretary, Baltimore Chapter of the African Chamber of Commerce

Eva Shaw-Taylor, (Ghanaian, Prince George’s County)
Contracts Specialist, Internation Division of the Department of Homeland Security
Senior Grants and Contracts Manager, University Research Company, LLC
Vice President, American Association of Grant Professionals, National Chapter

Mamadou Sy, (Mauritianian, Baltimore City)
Baltimore Metro Area Program Coordinator, Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area

Paschal Udumukwu, (Nigerian, Baltimore County)
President and CEO, High Point Construction, LLC
President and Founder, African Alliance Group

Staff:
Iman Awad
Assistant Director
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Governor’s Commission on African Affairs (GCAA) was created under the leadership of the O’Malley/Brown Administration in 2009 through Executive Order 01.01.2009.07. Being the first state-level Commission of its kind, the Commission aims to set a standard for other states. Focusing on business, workforce, and community development the GCAA every year establishes a work plan to fulfill the development in the three arenas as charged by the Executive Order.

One of the biggest accomplishments for the Commission on African Affairs was in regards to hosting the first African Summit in the historic Takoma Park. The Commission brought together representatives from Maryland state government, Ambassadors, embassy representatives, community leaders and members of the greater community to discuss the needs and concerns of the African Diaspora. The Summit was entitled African Immigrants: Our Community, Our Voice, Our Strength and represented the strength in coming together and working collaboratively with African organizations across the states to enhance the wellbeing of the Diaspora. The Summit informed the Commission’s 2012 initiatives and has served to strengthen the Governor’s Commission of African Affairs as the State’s voice for the community.

In addition to the Summit, the Commission was also an integral partner in aiding the establishment of the first Nigerian Sister State. Coming together with community leaders and the Office of the Secretary of State, members of the Sister State committee presented potential states in Nigeria for the relationship. In the end, the State opted for a dual Sister State with Ondo State and Cross Rivers State in Maryland. The Commission will continue engaging with the Secretary of State and the Sister State committee to ensure the best programs are instituted and to ensure sustainability in the relationship.

As the Commission continues to strive to represent the diversity of the community in Maryland the following report details the 2011 accomplishments and highlights 2012 initiatives. To stay up to date on the Commission initiatives and events within the community, visit the Commission’s website at: www.african.maryland.gov.
COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

To more efficiently execute its charge and more effectively distribute its responsibilities, the Commission has formed four committees. Focusing its efforts in workforce, social service, business and community development, the Commission developed a comprehensive 2011 workplan in order to outline the priorities and provide public information to the African Diaspora in Maryland.

Full Commission Initiatives:

**Short Term Goals:**
- Identify African communities and community representatives as liaisons to the Commission
- Maintain and update database of African resources and businesses

**Long Term Goals:**
- Organize trade mission to Africa
- Study state government’s current language access policy and identify additional opportunities and ways to increase language access services for communities with limited English proficiency
- Review legislative and executive policies/programs affecting African and immigrant communities and make recommendations
- Identify opportunities to partner with the Governor’s Ethnic Commissions on issues of mutual concern

Workforce Development Committee:

This committee will study African appointments to boards and commissions, and to other decision making positions within state government. The goal of this committee will be to increase employment and representational opportunities for Africans in state government.

**Short Term Goals:**
- Foster more opportunities for African appointments to Maryland Boards and Commissions
- Keep track of openings for Boards and Commissions
- Study workforce demographics for Africans in Maryland
- Assess and report on Maryland vacant positions

**Long Term Goals:**
- Maintain database on African workforce
- Implement programs to promote state employment for Africans
- Conduct training to address under employment
Business Development Committee
This committee will study African participation in the MBE program and state government contracting. This committee will also explore ways to promote trade with Africa and foreign direct investment from Africa.

Short Term Goals:
- Identify resources to promote growth for African businesses
- Foster international trade
- Conduct study of African exports

Long Term Goals:
- Promote more business from Africa to Maryland
- Help African businesses in Maryland grow
- Elevate businesses to be contracted as primary contractors from sub-contractors, assist in MBE certification
- Conduct business workshops for African business community

Social Services Committee
This committee will work to promote and increase access to state programs and services including social, health, and educational programs. This committee will also address how to meet the needs of communities with limited English proficiency.

Short Term Goals:
- Study and address African health issues
- Interact with hospitals, refugee groups for more information on community
- Assess cultural issues and cultural competency
- Study Africans in the educational system
- Address and raise awareness of domestic violence and other issues

Long Term Goals:
- Create and maintain data on African community
- Use data to implement recommendations for community
Community Development Committee
This committee will work to reach out to African communities and promote cultural awareness throughout the State. This committee will also study ways to plan for the anticipated and continued growth of the African population.

Short Term Goals:
- Conduct outreach to African arts and cultural organizations in Maryland
- Promote more activities for cultural awareness
- Draft letters to different organizations to promote cultural awareness
- Participate in upcoming African events, festivals, fairs and summits
- Connect and meet with state agencies
- Partner with African American community

Long Term Goals:
- Develop clearinghouse of community resources
- Create database on African community
- Work for more accurate demographics on African-born residents
- Participate in panels for African summits to raise awareness
- Keep in touch with other states and remain aware of events
- Host African tradeshow
AFRICAN SUMMIT REVIEW

On November 19, 2011, The Commission on African Affairs hosted the FIRST Annual African Summit entitled, African Immigrants: Our Community, Our Voice, Our Strength. The event took place in the historic City of Takoma Park and the Commission’s guests were welcomed by the Mayor, Bruce Williams.

In addition to Mayor William’s participation, the Commission was honored to host the Ambassador of Sierra Leone and Embassy representations from Kenya, Mozambique, Benin, and Ghana. The event was attended by over 150 leaders of Maryland’s distinguished African community.

Keynote Speakers Included:

- Ike Leggett, Montgomery County Executive
- Angelle Kwemo, Legislative Counsel to Congressman Bobby Rush
- Mimi Alemayehou, Office of the President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation

Other Speakers Included:

- John P. McDonough, Maryland Secretary of State
- Wanjiru Kamau, Founder and Executive Director of the African Immigrant & Refugees Foundation
- Mamadou Sy, Program Director of the Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area Refugee and Immigrant Services
- Valentina Ukwuoma, Chair, Governor’s Commission on African Affairs
- Jewru Bandeh, Vice Chair, Governor’s Commission on African Affairs
The Commission’s goal was to gain a better understanding of the needs and concerns of Maryland’s African Diaspora. Throughout the Summit, there was a clear indication of the need to build partnerships between the Immigrant African and African American communities in Maryland. The following seminars were hosted during the Summit:

- “Empowering the Second Generation and Resources for Africans in Maryland
- “Dialogue for Maryland and African Business Opportunities”
- “Immigration and Education Resources”

From the Summit, the Commission was able to determine the following areas of interest:

**Advocacy and Community Empowerment** – Promoting collaboration and networking among African community organizations, groups, service providers, advocates and leaders. Many would like see programs and resources dedicated to African community capacity building and creating a stronger voice.

**Business Development Assistance** – Greater promotion of Maryland-Africa business/trade relations; addressing barriers to access to doing business with the State of Maryland for African small businesses. Many experience difficulty navigating the State Minority Business procurement process; Helping African businesses understand what they can do to succeed in Maryland.

**Trade** – Promoting trade between Africa, Maryland and the USA; A need to develop and maintain resources with easy access and available technical assistance.

**Education** – Getting involved in the education system/schools, with focus on African youth. Need for special programs to help students of African descent in/out of school; helping connect youth with their African roots/heritage.

**Immigration** – Supporting the Dream Act proposal; Working in collaboration with other immigrant groups, communities, advocates and leaders on immigration related issues at the federal, state and local levels.
**Information Resource** - Creating a comprehensive African Resources Database dedicated to and focused on helping Africans access information related to business, education, government, social services, community interests, etc throughout the State – Linking Africans to information to help themselves and others in need.

**Sister State Program** - Promoting Africa through the Maryland-Africa Sister State program. This is a great example of people to people and less government initiative and form of community and international development.

**African Embassies** – Promoting and building stronger networks and working relationships with African Embassies at the local and state levels. Embassies can and should play a bigger role in promoting trade, business, community and cultural education.

The Commission strongly believes in the necessity of civic engagement in the State but also highlighting the importance of maintaining an African cultural identity. Through the creation of the Governor’s Commission on African Affairs there is now a platform to directly advise Maryland’s Executive Cabinet on the needs and concerns of the community. The Summit was held in order for the Commission to provide the Governor with the best policy directives and by utilizing the intellectual and cultural richness of the community and beginning what will surely be a long standing dialogue between the State of Maryland and the African Diaspora.
MARYLAND EXPORTS TO AFRICA – AN OVERVIEW

As Maryland continues to position itself on a global scale, the Commission is interested to expand the economic relationship between the State and Africa. In 2011 the Commission utilized information from the International Trade Administration to understand Maryland’s current export trends in Africa.

Overall, Nigeria ranked in the top twenty of Maryland’s total exports. Exports to Nigeria in 2011 were reported as just over $168 billion. Leading the exports to Nigeria is transportation equipment at $153 billion. Second, was machinery (excluding electrical) at $5 million.

Overall, in 2011 the total exports from Maryland to the entire region of Africa amounted to over $835 billion. In general, transportation equipment is the largest export from Maryland to Africa. The total amount of Maryland exports to the region is over $550 billion. The top African countries that Maryland exports to are: Nigeria, Benin, South Africa, Ghana, Malaysia, Angola, Algeria, Mozambique, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Liberia, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Namibia, Senegal, and Madagascar. These countries are amongst the top 100 countries to which Maryland exports.

In an effort to support the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development’s interest to attract business to Maryland the Commission will continue to explore how to expand our economic ties to Africa and develop mutually beneficial economic initiatives.

All the information in this report was extracting from the International Trade Administration: www.trade.gov.
SISTER STATE INITIATIVE – NIGERIA

According to the Maryland Secretary of State’s office, Sister State relationships “are official links between local governments enacted by the Mayor or Governor of each region. The endorsement of local authorities, coupled with the support of volunteers, empowers all sectors of a community to participate in the global arena – unleashing citizen diplomacy at the grassroots level.” Maryland is already afforded the opportunity to share this link with Bong County and Maryland County in Liberia.

In an effort to expand Maryland’s ties to Africa, the Commission encouraged the Secretary of State to explore an additional relationship in Africa with Nigeria. According to the 2000 Census, which included detailed information on ancestry, detailed that the Nigerian population was the largest representative body from the Maryland African Diaspora.

The Maryland Sister States Program provides citizens and businesses a unique opportunity to build relationships in other parts of the world. Each Sister State relationship is strategically chosen to enhance the economic, cultural, and educational interests of the people of Maryland. The Sister States Program provides a forum for economic development, international trade, and increased global understanding. Additionally, the program promotes cultural understanding through high school, college, and university exchanges, and a variety of cultural and athletic exchanges. Most importantly, we are driven by Marylanders like you, and we’re always open to new participants.

The mission of the Maryland Sister States is to:
- Provide international opportunities for Maryland businesses
- Provide information and resources about Sister States and our relationships with them
- Provide business and personal contacts at home and abroad
- Foster cultural awareness through exposure and knowledge
- Provide opportunities to travel abroad and to meet international visitors coming to Maryland.
THE COMMISSION WEBSITE

A primary goal of 2011 was to maintain the Commission's website, making it another community resource for the African community. Its intended function is to be a clearinghouse of information that could positively impact the African community in Maryland and a mechanism to access government services. An important element of the website is the online Community Forum, open to constituent organizations to post upcoming community events and useful links. We encourage the submission of relevant information to our office for inclusion on the Commission’s website. Additionally, the website serves to chronicle Commission events and important documents regarding the African community of Maryland. This 2011 Annual Report, as well as other documents, are posted on the website. A constantly updated list of community resources can also be found on our website.

www.african.maryland.gov