

same values of democracy. We have come to accept that democracy is the only way.

And democracy goes with development. And if you come to Africa, our people are yearning for only one thing: improvement in their daily lives. And there can be no development without peace, which means that we should do the things which will ensure that there is peace and that there's no room for conflict.

The United States has been a model, and I'm happy that we are cooperating with one another on all kinds of fronts and they are yielding results. And I was telling Mr. President that when one of the roads was commissioned, and it was built with money provided by the MCC under our first compact; you should have seen the joy on the faces of the Ghanaians because there had been a radical transformation in their lives. I mean, that is what governance is all about: to see people happy because they now have what they did not have.

So I've assured the President that we have elections this year, but we are going to ensure that there is peace before, during, after the

elections, because when there is no peace, it's not the leaders who will suffer, it's the ordinary people who have elected us into office.

So we have a big challenge, and we know that some of our friends in Africa are looking up to us, and we dare not fail them. I have no doubt at all that we have embarked on a useful journey, and we'll get to the very end. I've told him that both of us are facing elections, but our ships will be able to sail safely to their final destination, I want to assure you.

So thanks a lot for the wonderful reception. We'll go back with happy memories. And of course, this will also reassure our people that the kind of cooperation, which started with Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, our first President, is growing from strength to strength.

*President Obama.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*President Mills.* Thank you, Mr. President.

*President Obama.* Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

## Statement on International Women's Day March 8, 2012

On International Women's Day, the United States celebrates the many achievements and milestones in the ongoing struggle for gender equality around the world and reaffirms our commitment to accelerating progress. We are committed to a future in which our daughters and sons have equal opportunities to thrive, because when women succeed, communities and countries succeed. With this promise in mind, we are launching new initiatives on women's political participation and economic empowerment, combating violence against women, promoting women's roles and perspectives in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and supporting the work of U.N. Women and other key partners.

Experience shows that true democracy cannot be built without the full and equal partici-

pation of half our population. Women's economic empowerment is essential for economic recovery and growth worldwide. Successful transitions in the Middle East and North Africa will depend on women's ability to shape their countries' futures. From Egypt to Yemen and beyond, over the last year, we have seen women lead local and national efforts to protest corruption, demand accountability, and establish new institutions.

The United States also recognizes the need to elevate the perspectives of particularly marginalized women worldwide, including refugees and displaced persons, ethnic and religious minorities, and women with disabilities. On this day, and every day, we stand with the women and men who bravely champion dignity, freedom, and opportunity for all.