

## **American and African Business Women's Alliance (AABWA)**

### **"State of the Organization" 2006 End-of-the-Year Report**

**An Introductory Message From AABWA-USA Chairperson Dr. Gloria B. Herndon and AABWA-USA Vice Chair and Founder Sandra E. Taylor, Esq.**

**T**his past year for the American and African Business Women's Alliance (AABWA) was once again a year of re-assessment and re-organization both programmatically and financially. Against the backdrop of a global community continuing to undergo vast changes due to a myriad of political, economic and social trends and events, AABWA-USA has managed to re-position itself in order to become more sustainable and relevant to its members and their constituencies. Moreover, AABWA-USA is actively engaged in ensuring that several pro-active steps are being taken in order to build upon our efforts and strengthen our capacity to do even more in 2007 and beyond. During 2006, several actions implemented by the members of the AABWA-USA Board of Directors included: (a) review and approval of a major fundraising and membership campaign; and (b) development of a five-year strategic plan for the organization. The attached report highlights these important initiatives as well as some of our major accomplishments during 2006 and upcoming activities and events planned for 2007.

**A**s Africa settles into the 21st century, AABWA-USA recognizes that new challenges and opportunities for empowering women and improving their lives come with their own unique set of issues and concerns, especially with regard to doing business in the global marketplace. AABWA-USA will therefore continue to seek innovative ways to foster trade and investment opportunities and improve access to markets in Africa and America through custom-designed advocacy and training programs, which focus on business and entrepreneurship, leadership skills, coalition building, communication, negotiation, information and communication technology, marketing, marketing research and business plan development. Aspiring women entrepreneurs are still afforded far fewer opportunities than men, endure ongoing and sometimes inordinate challenges and get far too little credit for the successes that they have achieved in the business world. Even so, there has never been a time or place where it is easier for women to add a unique business perspective to an entire culture in their effort to succeed in today's global marketplace.

**A**ABWA-USA intends to accomplish this innovative work by bringing together the leadership of AABWA and its members, along with key stakeholders in academia, business and government, in order to develop effective strategies for establishing a comprehensive business knowledge and skills development platform for women that are doing business in Africa. The world, as both a political village and a global marketplace, has created interdependence among women doing business internationally. As a result AABWA remains committed to seeking practical solutions that will help to improve entrepreneurial opportunities in Africa for women – both African and American – doing business across both continents. Another new initiative being undertaken by AABWA in 2007 will be to gain a greater degree of influence in the political arena on the African continent so as to more effectively influence business opportunities for its members and their constituencies. For instance, several current women leaders on the African Continent serving as role models for AABWA's members are: H.E. Ambassador Gertrude Inbengwe Mongella,

President of the Pan-African Parliament of the African Union (AU), and the highest ranking female political official in Africa; Ambassador Amina Salum Ali, Permanent Representative for the African Union's Representational Mission to the United States; H.E. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, current Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa; and H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the West African country of Liberia, as the first-ever democratically elected woman head of state on the African continent.

**M**oreover, AABWA-USA applauds the giant step made by United Nations' Secretary-General Kofi Annan to establish an independent policy, advocacy and operational agency that enhances and empowers the rights of women. If implemented and funded as recommended, the new organization will begin to correct over six decades of UN neglect and indifference toward women. Hopefully this long overdue effort will give a stronger voice and greater visibility towards addressing the challenges impacting women in political, economic and social areas on the African Continent. In addition, AABWA applauds the recent appointment of Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro of the United Republic of Tanzania as the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations.

**A**ABWA-USA also fully believes that with its roster of corporate sponsors, collaborative partners, board of directors and management team, it has the potential to become a powerhouse of international business resources for American and African women entrepreneurs. Looking to the future, AABWA-USA foresees increasingly accelerating opportunities for women entrepreneurs and women corporate executives to realize their growth and development potential in the global marketplace. AABWA-USA therefore stands ready, willing and able to provide the resources and expertise necessary to foster such progress for our members and the constituencies that they serve.

**I**n conclusion, we ask that you – our members, supporters, sponsors, collaborators and colleagues – join us in bridging the gaps in order to further advance the socio-economic status of women doing business on the African continent.

**B**est Regards,

Dr. Gloria B. Herndon

AABWA-USA Chair

Sandra E. Taylor, Esq.

AABWA-USA Vice Chair and Founder

## **ABOUT AABWA**

The American and African Business Women's Alliance (AABWA) was created in February 2001 by American and African business women convinced of the need for a private sector driven organization focusing on mentoring, training, networking and promoting trade and investment opportunities between the United States and Africa and among African countries. AABWA was incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in the District of Columbia in 2003. AABWA's primary goals are: (a) to build leadership skills and business knowledge amongst African women and between American and African women which will contribute towards enabling African business women to successfully engage in importing/exporting opportunities; and (2) providing American business women with the requisite knowledge and insights into African markets so that they can successfully do business with their counterparts in African countries.

## **MEMBERS OF AABWA-USA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Dr. Gloria B. Herndon, AABWA-USA Chair and President & CEO of GB Herndon and Associates; Sandra E. Taylor, Esq., AABWA Founder and AABWA-USA Vice Chair and Senior Vice President for Corporate Social Responsibility of the Starbucks Coffee Company; David J. Saunders, AABWA-USA Executive Director and CEO of Venue International Professionals, Inc.; Marty Bond, Vice President of Development for CEDPA; Sarian Bouma, CEO, Capitol Hill Building Maintenance, Inc.; Vickie Cooper-Enchia, CoEn Consulting, Ghana, Ltd; Dr. Sharon B. Freeman, President, All American Small Business Exporters Association; Dr. Susan B. Hester, Enabling Environment Director, TIPCEE; Phyllis Shearer Jones, President & CEO, ELAN International, LLC; Hon. Lauri J. Fitz-Pegado, Principal, The Livingstone Group; and Margo Jackson Spencer, President, Jays International, Inc.

## **AABWA MEMBER COUNTRIES**

Botswana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, United States, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

## **AABWA'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

AABWA-USA maintains close collaborative partnerships with a variety of entities dedicated to trade and investment opportunities between the United States and the 53 nations of Africa. AABWA's strategic partners include: Corporate Council on Africa; Starbucks Coffee Company; Chevron; DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund; Vital Voices Global Partnership; Center for International Private Enterprise; Students In Free Enterprise-Africa; Constituency for Africa; All American Small Business Exporters Association; Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; Uganda Investment Authority; U.S. Small Business Administration; and Opportunities Industrialization Centers, International. AABWA effectively utilizes these strategic partnerships to further enhance its ongoing ability to offer business training, networking and mentoring programs for women engaged in trade and investment opportunities throughout the African continent.

## **AABWA'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

AABWA promotes business opportunities as well as training and education through mentoring, networking, and advocacy programs. AABWA also seeks to foster and facilitate international and intra-Africa trade and investment opportunities through "strategic partnerships" and "mutual collaborations" within both the African continent and the United States. Through its strategic partnership with the Corporate Council on Africa, the AABWA-USA Secretariat is located within the CCA's offices in Washington, D.C. The AABWA-USA management team is comprised of an Executive Director, David J. Saunders, and an AABWA Program Assistant (vacant), as well as is capably complimented by an active AABWA-USA Board of Directors. The AABWA-USA Board is comprised on American and African business persons that are highly experienced and capable leaders ranging from individual entrepreneurs and association executives to seasoned corporate managers.

**R**ecently, the members of the Board of Directors of AABWA-USA conducted a series of strategic planning meetings in order to evaluate how to restructure the AABWA organization, and considered the following critical challenges:

- Promotion of an in-depth public awareness and understanding program about how American and African women-owned businesses and entrepreneurs can successfully do business in Africa;
- Attraction of new interest among women doing business in Africa, in particular within the local and regional chambers of commerce, women-focused trade associations, and small business development institutions of African nations;
- Identification and support of the mobilization of resources for the transfer of knowledge and technical skills about how to successfully do business on the African continent and how to trade with the United States;
- Building strategic linkages among American and African organizations, institutions, corporations and individuals with a mutual interest in AABWA's programs and initiatives; and
- Generation of ongoing revenue streams through associated grants and contracts for the sustainability of AABWA's programs and initiatives.

In addition, a new initiative will be undertaken in 2007 by AABWA in order to gain a greater degree of influence in the political arena on the African continent so as to more effectively influence business opportunities for its members and their constituencies.

**A**s a result, AABWA-USA intends to follow-through on these initiatives in 2007 to include:

- Development of a Strategic Plan that will refocus on the core mission of AABWA-USA. This document will become the action plan for the implementation of AABWA-USA's growth and development to ensure its overall sustainability. It will include: (a) redefining organizational mission and functions; (b) development of a database of key organizational partners; (c) recruitment of subject matter experts;

(d) establishment of performance measurement criteria; and (e) development of a plan of action and milestones schedule. In addition, the members of the Board of Directors of AABWA-USA will approve a comprehensive Annual Operational Budget, and restructure the existing AABWA-USA Board's Membership and Standing Committees. The Executive Director will be directly responsible for the administration of the strategic plan and overall day-to-day management of the AABWA-USA Secretariat;

- Implementation of an Annual Fundraising Outreach Campaign in order to generate financial sustainability for the organization. This will include an increased fundraising commitment from the members of the AABWA-USA Board of Directors and the recruitment of a professional fundraising consultant. In addition, plans are underway for a major annual fundraiser event and the establishment of an AABWA-USA Corporate Advisory Council. Lastly, AABWA-USA will continue to establish strategic partnerships with a myriad of professional, civic and faith-based organizations that have an interest in business women becoming more actively involved in Africa's economic growth and development; and

- Implementation of an Annual Membership Outreach Campaign in order to expand its constituency base far beyond its current membership base with more intense and strategically targeted efforts within the grassroots, professional and corporate communities. This will include the establishment of AABWA-USA Chapters in selected cities across the United States as well as the strengthening of AABWA-Africa Chapters in various countries across the African continent. In addition, AABWA-USA will conduct regional African Business Roundtables (ABRs) across the United States and in Africa as well as initiate an "AABWA-Africa Regional Representative Mentoring Program" whereby the various AABWA-Africa Chapters will be grouped into geographical regions similar to the economic regions on the African continent (i.e. – ECOWAS, SADC, COMESA, etcetera).

### **MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2006**

- On February 2nd-4th, Members of AABWA-USA Board of Directors participated in an inaugural Leadership Retreat of the African American Unity Caucus (AAUC). This event was a gathering of the "coalition of the willing" for African and African-American leaders of Africa-focused organizations and programs for a two-day retreat to share, learn, plan and dialogue about the presence and the promise of the AAUC;

- On May 22nd-24th, Dr. Gloria B. Herndon, AABWA-USA Chair and David J. Saunders, AABWA-USA Executive Director, participated in the Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE) 2006 USA National Exposition that was held in Kansas City, Missouri. SIFE is a global, non-profit organization that offers college and university students in more than 1800 campuses in forty-seven countries around the world the opportunity to develop leadership, teamwork, and communication skills through learning, practicing and teaching the principles of free enterprise. Each year, SIFE holds a USA competition in order to pay tribute to the extraordinary educational outreach projects across the United States. There were also excellent networking opportunities for AABWA's leadership to interact with global corporate sponsors of various SIFE programs on the African continent;

- On September 5th, AABWA-USA was represented at the third annual African and American Women's Unity Caucus (AAWUC) hosted by Africare and the Constituency

for Africa during the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Legislative Week in Washington, D.C. At this forum, AABWA participated in a roundtable discussion amongst key stakeholders of women-led non-governmental organizations, businesses, academia and government agencies on the topic of advocacy initiatives for women issues in the Diaspora. The theme of this forum was "And Still I Rise – Women, Political Power and the African Diaspora". Featured speakers included H.E. Dr. Inonge Mbikusitpata Lewanika, Ambassador of Zambia; H.E. Barbara Masekela, Ambassador of South Africa; Ms. Epsy Campbell Barr, Women Advocacy Leader and President, Action Citizen Party, Costa Rica; and Dr. Georgina Falu, President, The Falu Foundation. In addition, there was a special guest, Dr. Maryam Babangida, former first lady of Nigeria and Founder, Better Life for African Women (BLFAW);

- On October 26th, AABWA-USA held a Strategic Planning Meeting in order to discuss and plan for various programs and initiatives for 2007. Major outcomes of this planning meeting were the decisions to establish mentoring linkages within AABWA-Africa based on regional and country-specific alliances and consider hosting a Women's Conference on African Leadership in Zambia. In addition, plans are currently underway to utilize college and university intern(s) throughout the year to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the administrative position of the AABWA Program Director; and

- On December 15th, Dr. Gloria B. Herndon, AABWA-USA Chair met with Ambassador Amina Salum Ali, the African Union's Permanent Representative to the United States. They discussed potential linkage strategies between AABWA and the African Union with regard to how to enhance and build capacity for African women in the fields of politics, economics and civil society. Dr. Herndon received a commitment from Ambassador Ali to consider possible collaborations with AABWA programs and initiatives for 2007.

AABWA has also decided to reconsider conducting its first-of-a-kind Virtual Conference on the African Continent tentatively to be held in the fall of 2007. AABWA intends to utilize the three U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Hub Competitiveness Centers located in Accra, Ghana (Western Africa); Gaborone, Botswana (Southern Africa); and Nairobi, Kenya (Eastern Africa) as the focal points for AABWA members to come together and participate from a regional perspective. The AABWA Virtual Conference will be comprised of three components at each location as follows: (a) a pre-recorded video speakers' session; (b) an interactive session moderated by an AABWA-USA facilitator in each venue; and (c) a two-hour "live" interactive session that will include utilizing internet linkages at all three venues. In addition, each regional location will be expected to also host its own AABWA Reception and Trade Show Exhibition as well as offer several optional post-tour opportunities to conference participants. Please continue to check AABWA's website for further details regarding the upcoming 2007 AABWA Virtual Conference.

**F**or more details about AABWA-USA's recent accomplishments and planned activities and events for 2007, please visit our website: [www.aabwa.com](http://www.aabwa.com).