

St. Louis Will Host U.S. Africa Sister Cities Conference in May, 2005
Delegates From Across Africa, U.S. & Other Nations Will Attend Four-Day Event

MARCH 16, 2005, St. Louis, Missouri ... The U.S. Africa Sister Cities Conference, a major event involving community leaders, business executives, educators and diplomats from across Africa, the U.S. and other nations, will be hosted in St. Louis Wednesday May 25 through Saturday May 28, 2005.

"This is a significant conference for municipal leaders, politicians, business executives and royalty who will convene in St. Louis to address African trade development, healthcare, cultural exchange and humanitarian issues," said Robert R. Heuermann, Jr., executive director of the St. Louis Center for International Relations. "It will be meaningful for all who attend and open doors to new economic exchange opportunities."

Dr. John Wright, conference chairman and chairman of the St. Louis-Senegal Sister Cities Committee, said, "We expect the U.S. Africa Sister Cities Conference to attract substantial interest regionally and globally. Pro-active involvement by African leaders working to address crucial issues such as trade, economic development and the AIDs crisis, and participation by leaders from other nations addressing similar issues, will distinguish this event," added Dr. Wright, who is chairman of the African Heritage Association in St. Louis.

Conference workshops, seminars and diplomatic receptions are open to anyone who registers for the entire conference or for individual activities. A few of many workshop topics are "Population Growth & Wealth Distribution," "Addressing the HIV/AIDs Crisis in Africa & the U.S." and "How to Establish a New Sister Cities Relationship."

An International Business Summit with officials from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the U.S. Department of Commerce also will be featured. More information is at the website www.USAfricaSisterCities.org.

* The May 25 opening night reception hosted St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley at the Missouri Historical Society will feature a unique exhibit called "Captive Passage," which traces evolution of the African slave trade, plus debut of the art show "Great Kings & Queens of Africa."

* Elected officials from across Missouri will host a reception starting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday May 26 at the Sheraton Clayton Plaza Hotel, the conference headquarters.

* St. Louis Mayor Francis G. Slay will host a reception and African Arts Festival Show at 7:00 p.m. Friday May 27 at the Saint Louis Art Museum.

* The U.S. Africa Sister Cities Luncheon will be at noon Saturday May 28, with the Conference Closing Reception that night at 7:00 p.m.

The conference coincides with the St. Louis African Arts Festival, a popular annual event showcasing a variety of cultural, education and musical activities that will be held in Forest Park May 28-30.

Hosts for the U.S. Africa Sister Cities Conference are St. Louis Center for International Relations, Sister Cities International of Washington, D.C., the St. Louis, Missouri-Senegal Sister Cities Committee and the U.S.-Africa Sister Cities Foundation of Washington, D.C., plus St. Louis City and County governments. Anheuser-Busch Cos., Inc. is presenting sponsor. The Missouri Historical Society, Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis African Arts Festival, St. Louis Gateway Classic Sports Foundation and Washington University Black Alumni Council are co-sponsors.

The St. Louis Center for International Relations is a non-profit entity administered jointly by St. Louis City and St. Louis County governments. Its primary mission is to promote the St. Louis region's international profile and develop socio-economic exchanges with other cities to attract more business investment and to expand educational opportunities locally. It is the development arm of St. Louis' fourteen Sister City relationships and their committees, including the St. Louis-Senegal Sister Cities Committee.

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