

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 965

To establish a comprehensive United States Government initiative to build the capacity of young leaders and entrepreneurs in Africa, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

Ms. BASS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To establish a comprehensive United States Government initiative to build the capacity of young leaders and entrepreneurs in Africa, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Young African Leaders
5 Initiative Act of 2021” or the “YALI Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of Congress that—

1 (1) the Young African Leaders Initiative,
2 launched in 2010, is a signature effort to invest in
3 the next generation of African leaders;

4 (2) Africa is a continent of strategic importance
5 and it is vital for the United States to support
6 strong and enduring partnerships with the next gen-
7 eration of African leaders; and

8 (3) the United States Government should
9 prioritize investments to build the capacity of young
10 emerging African leaders in sub-Saharan Africa, in-
11 cluding through efforts to enhance leadership skills,
12 encourage entrepreneurship, strengthen public ad-
13 ministration and the role of civil society, and connect
14 young African leaders continentally and globally
15 across the private, civic, and public sectors.

16 **SEC. 3. YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE PROGRAM.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the De-
18 partment of State the Young African Leaders Initiative
19 (“YALI”) program.

20 (b) DUTIES.—The YALI program shall seek to build
21 to capacity of young African leaders in sub-Saharan Africa
22 in the areas of civic engagement, entrepreneurship and
23 business development, including through efforts to—

24 (1) support young African leaders by offering
25 professional development and a global network to

1 share expertise, including in the areas of civic lead-
2 ership, elections, human rights, good governance and
3 public management;

4 (2) provide increased economic and technical
5 assistance to young African leaders and entre-
6 preneurs, to strengthen ties between United States
7 and African businesses.

8 (c) FELLOWSHIPS.—The YALI program shall award
9 Mandela Washington Fellowships to young leaders who
10 have demonstrated strong capabilities in entrepreneurship,
11 innovation, public service, and leadership, and who have
12 had a positive impact in their communities, organizations,
13 or institutions.

14 (d) REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CENTERS.—The YALI
15 program shall offer training to young leaders who have
16 demonstrated strong capabilities in entrepreneurship, in-
17 novation, public service and leadership, and who have had
18 a positive impact in their communities, organizations, or
19 institutions, by seeking to establish regional leadership
20 centers in sub-Saharan Africa.

21 (e) ACTIVITIES.—

22 (1) UNITED STATES-BASED ACTIVITIES.—The
23 Secretary of State, in coordination with the Admin-
24 istrator for the United States Agency for Inter-
25 national Development, shall oversee all United

1 States-based activities carried out under the YALI
2 program, including the following:

3 (A) The participation of Mandela Wash-
4 ington Fellows in a six-week Leadership Insti-
5 tute at a United States university or college in
6 business, civic engagement, or public manage-
7 ment, including academic sessions, site visits,
8 professional networking opportunities, leader-
9 ship training, community service, and organized
10 cultural activities.

11 (B) The participation by Mandela Wash-
12 ington Fellows in an annual Mandela Wash-
13 ington Fellowship Summit, to provide such Fel-
14 lows the opportunity to meet with United States
15 leaders from the private, public, and non-profit
16 sectors.

17 (2) AFRICA-BASED ACTIVITIES.—The United
18 States should continue to support overseas initiatives
19 of the program, including the following:

20 (A) Quality leadership training, profes-
21 sional development, and networking opportuni-
22 ties for Mandela Washington Fellowship alumni
23 upon their return to their home countries, in-
24 cluding online courses.

1 (B) Training for young African leaders at
2 regional leadership centers established in ac-
3 cordance with subsection (d), and through on-
4 line courses offered by such centers.

5 (C) Opportunities for networking with—

6 (i) alumni of the Mandela Washington
7 Fellowship;

8 (ii) alumni of the programs at YALI
9 Regional Leadership Centers established in
10 accordance with subsection (d), who offer
11 leadership training programs at higher
12 education institutions in sub-Saharan Afri-
13 ca; and

14 (iii) American and African profes-
15 sionals and experts.

16 (D) Opportunities through the United
17 States Africa Development Foundation to facili-
18 tate professional development and sharing of
19 expertise in the home countries of Mandela
20 Washington Fellowship alumni and throughout
21 the African continent.

22 (3) IMPLEMENTATION.—To carry out this sub-
23 section, United States diplomatic and consular posts,
24 the Administrator of the United States Agency for
25 International Development, the Secretary of State,

1 and agency external partners managing and imple-
2 menting the YALI program—

3 (A) shall promote United States policy
4 goals in Africa by providing tools and resources
5 to help young African leaders develop important
6 skills and connections, including through online
7 campaigns and public diplomacy initiatives;

8 (B) shall establish a system for moni-
9 toring, evaluating, and improving the YALI
10 program; and

11 (C) may accept financial contributions
12 from foundations, corporations, private donors,
13 program partners, and implementing agency ex-
14 ternal partners intended to foster the goals of
15 the YALI program.

16 (f) REPORTS.—

17 (1) STRATEGY.—The Secretary of State, in co-
18 ordination with the Administrator of USAID, shall
19 submit to the appropriate congressional committees
20 a strategy for implementing the YALI program, in-
21 cluding the following:

22 (A) YALI program goals, targets, and
23 planned outcomes for each year and, separately,
24 for the YALI program generally during the du-
25 ration of its implementation.

1 (B) A YALI program monitoring and eval-
2 uation plan, including metrics for measuring
3 YALI program progress and determining
4 whether YALI program goals, targets, and
5 planned outcomes of growing the United States
6 and Africa trade relationship, strengthening
7 civil society and public administration, and sup-
8 porting innovation and investment in the next
9 generation of African leaders have been met an-
10 nually and, separately, for the YALI program
11 generally, during the duration of its implemen-
12 tation.

13 (2) ANNUAL REPORTS.—The Secretary of
14 State, in coordination with the Administrator of
15 USAID, shall submit to the appropriate congres-
16 sional committees and publish in a publicly acces-
17 sible, internet-based form, an annual report for the
18 5-year period beginning on the date of the enact-
19 ment of this Act on—

20 (A) YALI program progress and an assess-
21 ment of the metrics, goals, targets, and out-
22 comes referred to in paragraph (1)(A), includ-
23 ing information relating to YALI program im-
24 plementation and outcome activities during the
25 year covered by each report; and

(B) recommendations for improvements or amendments to the YALI program and strategy, if any, that would improve their effectiveness during subsequent years of YALI program implementation.

(3) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than December 1, 2025, the Secretary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of USAID, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a final assessment report that evaluates YALI program implementation and outcomes during the entire duration of YALI program operation, including recommendations regarding whether the YALI program should be reauthorized and any changes that would improve its effectiveness.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives;

(B) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives;

(C) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate; and

1 (D) the Committee on Appropriations of
2 the Senate.

3 (2) IMPLEMENTING AGENCY EXTERNAL PART-
4 NERS.—The term “implementing agency external
5 partners” means any external partner that is not a
6 United States Government agency, and may include
7 one or more of the following entities:

- 8 (A) Local or multinational corporations.
- 9 (B) Nongovernmental organizations.
- 10 (C) Universities.
- 11 (D) Regional institutions.

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