

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2545

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 SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 29, 2021

Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself and Mr. ROUNDS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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 emerg-
10 ing young 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 Program (referred to in this Act as the “YALI Pro-
20 gram”).

21 (b) **PURPOSE.**—The YALI Program shall seek to
22 build the capacity of young African leaders in sub-Saharan
23 Africa in the areas of business, civic engagement, or public
24 administration, including through efforts—

1 (1) to support young African leaders by offering
2 professional development, training, and networking
3 opportunities, particularly in the areas of leadership,
4 innovation, civic engagement, elections, human
5 rights, entrepreneurship, good governance, and pub-
6 lic administration; and

7 (2) to provide increased economic and technical
8 assistance to young African leaders to promote eco-
9 nomic growth and strengthen ties between United
10 States and African businesses.

11 (c) FELLOWSHIPS.—The YALI Program shall award
12 fellowships through the Mandela Washington Fellowship
13 for Young African Leaders Program to young African
14 leaders who—

15 (1) are between 18 and 35 years of age;

16 (2) have demonstrated strong capabilities in en-
17 trepreneurship, innovation, public service, and lead-
18 ership; and

19 (3) have had a positive impact in their commu-
20 nities, organizations, or institutions.

21 (d) REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CENTERS.—The YALI
22 Program shall seek to establish regional leadership centers
23 in sub-Saharan Africa to offer training to young African
24 leaders who—

25 (1) are between 18 and 35 years of age;

1 (2) have demonstrated strong capabilities in en-
2 trepreneurship, innovation, public service and leader-
3 ship; and

4 (3) have had a positive impact in their commu-
5 nities, organizations, or institutions.

6 (e) ACTIVITIES.—

7 (1) UNITED STATES-BASED ACTIVITIES.—The
8 Secretary of State, in coordination with the Admin-
9 istrator of the United States Agency for Inter-
10 national Development and the heads of other rel-
11 evant Federal departments and agencies, shall over-
12 see all United States-based activities carried out
13 under the YALI Program, including the participa-
14 tion of Mandela Washington fellows in—

15 (A) a 6-week leadership institute at a
16 United States university or college in business,
17 civic engagement, or public management, in-
18 cluding academic sessions, site visits, profes-
19 sional networking opportunities, leadership
20 training, community service, and organized cul-
21 tural activities; and

22 (B) an annual Mandela Washington Fel-
23 lowship Summit to provide such fellows the op-
24 portunity to meet with United States leaders
25 from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors.

1 (2) AFRICA-BASED ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary
2 of State, in coordination with the Administrator of
3 the United States Agency for International Develop-
4 ment and the heads of other relevant Federal de-
5 partments and agencies, should continue to support
6 existing Young African Leaders Initiative programs
7 in sub-Saharan Africa, including—

8 (A) access to continued leadership training
9 and other professional development opportuni-
10 ties for Mandela Washington Fellowship for
11 Young African Leaders alumni upon their re-
12 turn to their home countries, including online
13 courses, technical assistance, and access to
14 funding;

15 (B) training for young African leaders at
16 regional leadership centers established in ac-
17 cordance with subsection (d), and through on-
18 line and in-person courses offered by such cen-
19 ters; and

20 (C) opportunities for networking and en-
21 gagement with—

22 (i) other alumni of the Mandela
23 Washington Fellowship for Young African
24 Leaders;

1 (ii) alumni of programs at regional
2 leadership centers established in accord-
3 ance with subsection (d); and

4 (iii) United States and like-minded
5 diplomatic missions, business leaders, and
6 others, as appropriate.

7 (3) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Secretary of
8 State, in coordination with the Administrator of the
9 United States Agency for International Development
10 and the heads of other relevant Federal departments
11 and agencies, shall seek to partner with the private
12 sector to pursue public-private partnerships, leverage
13 private sector expertise, expand networking opportu-
14 nities, and identify funding opportunities and fellow-
15 ship and employment opportunities for participants
16 in the YALI Program.

17 (f) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Not later than 180
18 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
19 retary of State, in coordination with the Administrator of
20 the United States Agency for International Development
21 and the heads of other relevant Federal departments and
22 agencies, shall submit a plan to the appropriate congres-
23 sional committees for implementing the YALI Program,
24 which plan shall include—

1 (1) a description of clearly defined program
2 goals, targets, and planned outcomes for each year
3 and for the duration of implementation of the YALI
4 Program;

5 (2) a strategy to monitor and evaluate the
6 YALI Program and progress made toward achieving
7 such goals, targets, and planned outcomes; and

8 (3) a strategy to ensure that the YALI Pro-
9 gram is promoting United States foreign policy goals
10 in Africa, including ensuring that the YALI Pro-
11 gram is clearly branded and paired with robust pub-
12 lic diplomacy efforts.

13 (g) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
14 of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for
15 the following 5 years, the Secretary of State, in coordina-
16 tion with the Administrator of the United States Agency
17 for International Development, shall submit to the appro-
18 priate congressional committees and publish in a publicly
19 accessible, internet-based form, a report that contains—

20 (1) a description of the progress made toward
21 achieving the goals, targets, and planned outcomes
22 described in subsection (f)(1), including an overview
23 of the implementation of the YALI Program during
24 the previous year and an estimated number of YALI
25 Program beneficiaries during such year;

1 (2) an assessment of how the YALI Program is
2 contributing to and promoting United States-Africa
3 relations, particularly in areas of increased private
4 sector investment, trade promotion, support to civil
5 society, improved public administration, and fos-
6 tering entrepreneurship and youth empowerment;
7 and

8 (3) recommendations for improvements or
9 changes to the YALI Program and implementation
10 plan, if any, that would improve its effectiveness
11 during subsequent years of implementation of the
12 YALI Program.

13 (h) DEFINED TERM.—In this section, the term “ap-
14 propriate congressional committees” means—

15 (1) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
16 Senate;

17 (2) the Committee on Appropriations of the
18 Senate;

19 (3) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the
20 House of Representatives; and

21 (4) the Committee on Appropriations of the
22 House of Representatives.

1 (i) SUNSET.—The YALI Program shall terminate on
2 the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment
3 of this Act.

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