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SENATOR CARDIN ANNOUNCES \$400,000 IN FEDERAL FUNDS TO ESTABLISH PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY AFRICA TRADE OFFICE

UPPER MARLBORO -- **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD) today joined **Prince George's County Executive Jack Johnson**, county officials and business leaders to announce \$400,000 in federal funding to establish a Prince George's County Africa Trade Office.

The Africa Trade Office will partner with Small Business Administration and Prince George's County to help facilitate business between African companies and small businesses in Prince George's County seeking trade opportunities. The Office will provide logistical and technical support to connect small businesses with growing African trade opportunities.

"We are part of a global economy and Prince George's County has a strong, vibrant business community interested in expanding trade opportunities with Africa," said Senator Cardin, a member of the Senate Small Business Committee. "In securing these funds for the Africa Trade Office, I am optimistic that Prince George's County businesses will be able to build and grow these future trade opportunities."

"I would like to thank Senator Cardin for supporting the new Prince George's County Africa Trade Office and for understanding that the global marketplace of the future means internationalism," Johnson said. "The resources you are providing will advance bilateral trade and commerce between Africa and county businesses, while adding more jobs and investment opportunities for our county."

The Prince George's County Africa Trade Office will build on opportunities present since enactment of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2000. AGOA provides reforming African countries with the most liberal access to the U.S market without a Free Trade Agreement. It has been successful in increasing two-way trade with Africa and diversifying products to be traded. Since 2001, non-oil AGOA imports total \$3.5 billion, an increase of 22%.

Today, Africa has a critical housing shortage and lags far behind in computer and communications technology. Prince George's County's businesses are uniquely qualified to assist in future African development in these sectors. African countries interested in trading opportunities with Prince George County include: Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Tanzania and South Africa.

