

## National Urban League advances economic development opportunities during historic mission to China

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BEIJING (Feb. 9, 2010) – A National Urban League delegation of more than 40 prominent businesspeople, educators, public officials and community leaders, led by Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial and Blair Taylor, president and CEO of the Los Angeles Urban League, took part in a historic cultural and trade mission to Beijing that not only opened the door for future investment and business opportunities between African-Americans and China, but secured two education partnerships before the trip was even over.

Hosted by the China-United States Exchange Foundation, the delegation – the first national African-American leadership group of its size to visit Beijing -- participated in a full schedule that included meetings with top China leaders in commerce, trade and education; sight seeing and cultural exchanges.

In addition to Taylor, a number of Urban League affiliate presidents were part of this mission: N. Charles Anderson (Detroit), James Buford (St. Louis), Donna Jones Baker (Cincinnati), Esther Bush (Pittsburgh), Patricia Coulter (Philadelphia), George Dean (Phoenix) and Maudine Cooper (Washington, D.C.). The National Urban League's Board of Trustees also was well represented on the mission with former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater, Bob Brown (B&C Associates, Inc.), Laneshia Anderson (Shell Oil Company) and Kendrick Ashton (Parella Weinerg Partners). Some of the other delegates were Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory, National Newspapers Publishers Association Chairman and Los Angeles Sentinel Publisher Danny Bakewell, 100 Black Men of America Chairman Albert Dotson and Janice Bryant Howroyd, chairman and CEO of Act \* 1 Group, a global human resources and staffing company.

Some of the Chinese leaders the delegation met with were: Tung Chee Hwa, founding chairman of the China-United States Exchange Foundation; Donald Tang, CEO of Citic Securities International Partners; Ambassador Liu Guijin, who led a discussion on China-Africa relations; Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs He Yafei, who hosted a lunch for the delegation in the same room where the Chinese welcomed President Barak Obama; Wang Chao, assistant minister of the Ministry of Commerce and numerous scholars at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences where Morial and Dr. Franklin Gilliam, dean of UCLA School of Public Affairs, delivered a presentation on the history of African-Americans in the U.S.

While the mission focused on economic development opportunities between the Chinese and African-Americans, Morial noted that this trip could have a larger impact. "Our cultural and trade mission was to explore common interests with the Chinese to bring Chinese investment to the African-American community, but this positive visit will go a long way in helping overall relations between China and the U.S.," he said.

The mission came just months after President Barack Obama's tour of Asia. It's also the result of a similar mission conducted by Taylor. In 2006 he led a smaller delegation from California that visited Shanghai and Beijing. The National Urban League's first global mission also has come just before the official launch of its 100th anniversary celebration.

The trip produced immediate results. Even before the delegation left Beijing to return to the U.S., Chinese officials made a commitment to establish a Confucius Institute for the first time at

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a Historically Black College and University. Named after the famous Chinese thinker, the Confucius Institute is a non-profit program that promotes Chinese language and culture among world Chinese learners while providing a good environment for learning. Xavier University in New Orleans will be the first HBCU to receive this program that is currently at more than 350 institutions worldwide.

“Xavier is grateful for the opportunity to be in the universe of colleges and universities worldwide with membership in the Confucius Institute in China, and we thank the Chinese officials for extending this honor” said Xavier President Dr. Norman C. Francis. “This partnership, designed to increase the global education of our students and university community is a valuable part of our education mission.”

Chinese officials also agreed to partner with the National Urban League to form an educational and cultural exchange program. The National Urban League expects to develop and facilitate the program that will focus on urban communities with African-American and Chinese teachers and students participating.

Morial said there are affiliates who have programs in place that are ready to engage in such a program. For example, the Greater Pittsburgh Urban League has an accredited K-5 charter school that emphasizes math and sciences integrated with computer technology, and the Los Angeles Urban League already works with Crenshaw High School on an exchange program where its students and Chinese students write to each other.

To begin next steps with these partnerships, meetings will begin taking place after the Chinese New Year.

“This trip has been a success from beginning to end,” said Taylor. “We felt like we left Beijing with a better understanding of the Chinese and we left them with a better understanding of African-Americans. This provides a perfect foundation for us to move forward.”