

**Statement of Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr.**  
**August 16, 2007**

Tomorrow, August 17, I will have the honor of briefing the Consul General of Nigeria, Ibrahim Auwalu, on the many successful economic development initiatives that have taken place in the central city of Milwaukee, especially in the 15<sup>th</sup> District. The fact that a nation such as Nigeria, the sixth-largest producer of oil in the world and an economic leader in Africa, has taken note of Milwaukee's business model in the central city is gratifying. But even more gratifying is the fact that this meeting will likely serve to propel Milwaukee forward as an even stronger economic leader in Wisconsin and in the United States.

As Nigeria and the United States deepen and fortify their many partnerships, Milwaukee is in position to play a significant role. In late September, the President of Nigeria will visit the United States in New York, and he has already expressed interest in having a delegation of Milwaukee's central city business leaders and elected officials meet with him during that time. Tomorrow's meeting will set the stage for that September meeting, as well as future business and diplomatic collaborations between Milwaukee and Nigeria.

It is my pleasure to share this opportunity with leaders from the 15<sup>th</sup> District that I represent, such as Renee Booker, President and CEO of the North Avenue Community Development Corporation, and other Milwaukee business leaders such as Valerie Daniels-Carter. In addition, Dr. Ali Garba, a native Nigerian and dedicated Milwaukeean, has earned my appreciation and thanks for helping to initiate this first introduction.

Most of all, the Consul General of Nigeria deserves thanks from Milwaukee's citizens for recognizing what we have accomplished and our vision for future developments that will continue to transform and revitalize our inner city. It is our privilege to host him and to assist him in his diplomatic mission.

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