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PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Embassy Celebrates 241st Anniversary of American Independence

U.S. Ambassador W. Stuart Symington is hosting the 241st anniversary celebration of the independence of the United States of America in Abuja today.

Current and former government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, business, political, and traditional leaders, media executives, civil society representatives, leaders in academia, and other friends of the United States will be in attendance.

Ambassador Symington says the occasion is an opportunity to underscore how much Americans share with Nigerians. *"We share families, friends, interests, and principles. All across this land, from Birnin Kebbi to Calabar, from Maiduguri to Badagry, Nigerians have welcomed me warmly and showed me the wonders of this country and its people. In almost every place, I have also met Americans whose lives are dedicated to their work with and for Nigerians."*

The Ambassador will share his thoughts about a commonality shared by the United States and Nigeria – both nations' incredible diversity. According to Ambassador Symington, just like the United States, Nigeria is a wonderfully diverse nation whose differences and diversity are sources of strength and a reason for pride. He recalls that, *"Whenever I meet a Nigerian, I ask, "What do you like the most about your country?" The invariable reply, from more than a thousand Nigerians, is "I like the Nigerian people." I like our diversity, our resilience, our energy, our warmth, our spirit, our food..."*

He will also cite some of the difficulties the United States has faced in order to preserve its union and he will credit its success to the resilience of visionary leaders and citizens committed to ensuring justice for all. Symington believes Nigeria is capable of facing and overcoming the same challenges. *"Today, Nigeria is fortunate to have such leaders and citizens. Together they are dedicated to*

keeping Nigeria united and just and to ensuring every Nigerian is heard and taken into account and treated fairly.”

The Independence celebration in Abuja will feature entertainment by American singer, song-writer and State Department Arts Envoy Andy Allo. Allo has also provided a Master Class and worked with Nigerian musicians in a jam session as part of the activities during her visit. A goodwill message from a representative of the Nigerian Government is expected during tonight’s festivities.

The anniversary marks the adoption of the Declaration of Independence 241 years ago on July 4, 1776

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