



Mrs Yamate, Ambassador Robert Yamate; Augustin and Volanirina Andriamananoro

We celebrate the 241st year of U.S Independence. Congratulations to HE M. Ambassador Robert Yamate and his wife. Let's us make America and Madagascar's friendship, great again !...



Towards 2018, Madagascar Election, the US ambassador endorsed the principle of democracy with transparency and inclusive elections during which the people choose his or her representative.



Speech of Ambassador Robert T. Yamate

during July 4th Celebration

at « *Villa Philadelphia* » Ambaranjana, Antananarivo - June 30, 2017

« Thank you everyone for joining us today, to help us celebrate the 241st anniversary of American Independence, and the 150th anniversary of the establishment of American-Malagasy relations.

In 1866, one hundred and fifty years ago, President Andrew Johnson sent the first representative of the United States Government, Mr. John Finkelmeier, to negotiate a treaty with the new sovereign of Madagascar, Queen Rasoherina.

In his dispatches back to Washington, Finkelmeier told of the gracious people he found in Madagascar, of the beauty of its seaside towns, and of the wealth of natural resources that gave this island such enormous potential for growth. He marveled at the intricacies and complexities of the Malagasy traditions and customs, and of the energy and vibrancy he found in Toamasina – along with the accompanying high price of real estate in this bustling port city. His overall impressions can be summed up in this phrase from one of his earliest letters home. “The country of Madagascar has far surpassed my expectations.” Many of us here today still

repeat that same phrase, "The country of Madagascar has far surpassed my expectations."

The first U.S.-Madagascar treaty was signed during a period of enormous change for our two countries. The United States had just emerged from a civil war, and was recovering from the loss of one of our greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln. As former slaves began to take their roles as free citizens, there were enormous social and political changes taking place through our society. In Madagascar, Queen Rasoherina had been on the throne for just three years and, following the death of her husband, was looking to redefine her country's relationship with Europe on terms that respected Madagascar's sovereignty.

Despite the uncertainty that prevailed in both our nations, in 1867, the United States of America and Madagascar signed a treaty and found a way to build a partnership – a friendly and cooperative relationship that benefited the people in both countries at that time, and which continues to this day.

As Madagascar continues to create and strengthen a stable democracy, America will continue to be its partner, as we have for 150 years. Through USAID, we will continue to fund improvements to health care, agriculture and nutrition. This year we launched, together with the Ministry of Public Health, an exciting new \$33 million community health activity – Mahefa-Miaraka (which means 'We're Able Together') to improve the health of millions of Malagasy women and children. Just last week, we awarded \$33 million for a water, sanitation and hygiene program, designed in close collaboration with the staff of the Ministry of Water, Energy and Hydrocarbon.

We will continue to sponsor artists like Kenny Wesley to build cultural bridges between our people. We will continue to promote military-to-military cooperation, to provide training to military personnel by engaging in joint exercises, and through donations of equipment like the Metal Shark Patrol Boat we presented to the government earlier this year. We will continue to support people who want to master English through scholarships, exchange programs, English Language fellows, and especially through the work of Peace Corps volunteers, where nearly 150 volunteers work side by side with Malagasy students, farmers and health workers fostering collaboration and friendship between our cultures while promoting education, food security and good health.

Americans and Malagasy share an innovative and entrepreneurial spirit, and we embrace, we welcome, and we adapt to change and diversity in our lives. It is evident as we see the effect of

urbanization to the thousands of small businesses that line the streets of Antananarivo and other major cities throughout the country. I see it in the Mandela Fellows and other Young African Leadership Initiative participants, who are brimming with ideas on how to spur economic growth and development. I see it the public and non-profit sector, as my colleagues and I work with our partners in the government and NGOs to devise innovative responses to problems in Madagascar, such as the effects of climate change, the ongoing drought in the South, and the seasonal cyclones that wreak havoc on coastal areas.

There can be no doubt that our countries will both face many kinds of change over the next 150 years of our relationship. But I have no doubt that as Madagascar continues to develop into a more prosperous state with a robust democratic tradition; our partnership will only strengthen, to the benefit of both our countries.

Last November, the United States held the election for our 45th president, an election that many thought would be historic for the election of the first female president. Instead, it was historic for the election of the first person with no prior government experience, as either an elected official or a military leader, but nevertheless was a titan of American business and a model of entrepreneurial success that caught the imagination of the American people. The victory of Donald Trump, and now President Trump, came as a surprise to many experts and pollsters, and while those who supported other candidates were disappointed, we – as Americans – accepted the result as a nation.

Since taking office, President Trump and his administration have worked to find common ground with Democratic and Republican lawmakers so that he can implement the policies he thinks are best for the country and fulfill his campaign promises of creating a stronger and more secure United States – which will in turn lead to a more stable world for all of us.

While our U.S. elections called attention to the existing differences between various groups within our country and the challenges we face as Americans, we acknowledge those differences and we will continue to face those challenges together, as Americans.

I will readily admit my country – America – remains deeply divided in a political sense and while many remain disappointed with the outcome of our Presidential election last year, our electoral process remains sacrosanct. Our electoral process has withstood the test of time since independence in 1776 and is a Constitutional right – a Constitutional right of the people, by the people, and for the people.

And so, as Madagascar looks to 2018 for your own presidential and legislative elections, keep in mind the most recent American example where we overcame a difficult and contentious election – out of respect for the electoral process. No matter how difficult, no matter how contentious – have the free, fair, inclusive, and transparent elections that are in the best interests of the Malagasy people, let the Malagasy people decide, and let the Malagasy people take responsibility of the results – whatever they may be.

Thank you very much, God Bless Madagascar and God Bless the United States of America ».

U.S. Ambassador Robert T. Yamate



L'ambassadeur américain plaide pour des élections libres, transparentes et ouvertes à tous. Pour cela, le diplomate demande à ce que la population ait le choix souverain.

Ouvertes. Un caractère des élections évoqué, dans le discours de Robert Yamate, ambassadeur des États-Unis. Rappelant l'exemple des péripéties de la dernière présidentielle américaine, pour aborder celle à venir à Madagascar en 2018, le diplomate a mis l'accent sur le

fait qu'il faudrait laisser le dernier mot à la population par le biais du vote.

Dans son allocution, à l'occasion de la célébration avant l'heure de « *l'Indepen-dence day* », à la résidence des États-Unis à Ambaranjana, le 30 juin 2017, Robert Yamate a déclaré, concernant les élections à venir dans la Grande île:

« *Quelles que soient les discordes, faites en sorte d'avoir des élections libres, crédibles, ouvertes, transparentes et où tout le monde pourra participer, dans le souci de l'intérêt de la population. Laissez à la population le dernier mot. C'est à la population qu'incombe la responsabilité des résultats des élections* »

Pour appuyer ses propos, Robert Yamate a pris l'exemple de la dernière élection présidentielle américaine. « *Pour la première fois, une personne n'ayant aucune expérience dans la conduite des affaires publiques, dans le commandement militaire, a été élue. (...) Cette élection a mis en exergue les clivages entre différentes communautés aux États-Unis (...) Je concède qu'il y a encore une scission profonde dans le domaine politique. Et il est vrai que plusieurs Américains sont déçus de ce résultat (...) seulement, tous savent que les règles électorales sont sacrées et inviolables* » , a-t-il déclaré.

À l'instar de Timothy Smart, son homologue britannique, lors de la célébration du 91^e anniversaire de la reine Elizabeth II, le 23 juin à Ivandry, l'ambassadeur américain a également formulé le vœu de voir des élections transparentes et crédibles à Madagascar l'année prochaine. La traduction en malgache du discours du diplomate ajoute cependant le mot « *misokatra* »

, qui, en français, signifie
« *ouvert* »

Participation de tous

Lorsque la version traduite en malgache de l'allocution parle également d'élection où tout le monde pourra participer, il est probable que le choix du mot «*ouvert*» pourrait tendre vers deux sens. Un scrutin où tous les électeurs pourront participer, mais aussi, où tous les candidats pourraient prendre part. Et dans un contexte de préparatifs électoraux où la crainte d'un nouveau «*ni...ni*» taraude certains camps politiques, les mots choisis par l'ambassadeur américain pourraient avoir eu une résonance particulière aux oreilles de quelques personnalités présentes dans l'assistance.



Outre les représentants du pouvoir exécutif conduits par le général Béni Xavier Rasolofonirina, ministre de la Défense nationale assurant l'intérim au ministère des Affaires étrangères, et quelques chefs et représentants d'institutions, Marc Ravalomanana, président national du parti «*Tiako i Madagasikara*» (TIM) était aussi de la partie. L'ancien chef d'État et ses fils ont, visiblement, accompagné son épouse Lalao Ravalomanana, maire d'Antananarivo.

Au milieu des invités, ont également été aperçus Augustin Andriamananoro, vice-président du groupe des partisans de Andry Rajoelina (Mapar). Invité sur le plateau de TV5 monde, jeudi, Hery Rajaonarimam-pianina, président de la République, a justement été questionné sur

l'autorisation ou non de Marc Ravalomanana à être candidat à la prochaine présidentielle. « *Je pense qu'il n'appartient pas au Président en exercice, ou à l'ancien Président de décider de son sort. Il y a des organes qui y sont dédiés. Laissons-les faire* »

, a répliqué le locataire d'Iavoloha.

Questionné par les journalistes lors d'un point de presse durant l'évènement d'hier, l'ambassadeur américain a indiqué que plus que dans le processus, c'est souvent la période pré-électorale, durant laquelle se tiennent les préparatifs et les campagnes, qui constitue la principale source de problèmes. En réponse au diplomate, le général Rasolofonirina a soutenu? dans ce processus en vue de l'élection de 2018: « *je suis confiant que la population malgache saura, le moment venu, faire preuve de sagesse et de patriotisme dans l'intérêt de la nation* »

Garry Fabrice Ranaivoson – L'Express de Madagascar, 1^{er} juillet 2017