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Minority Business Development Agency, B&C International, and National Business League to grow U.S. MBEs through partnerships with African Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises

*B&C International has developed an ecosystem to open business resource
centers across Africa.*

WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 3, 2021 – Today, the U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), B&C International (B&C), and The National Business League announce an initiative to strengthen commercial engagement between the Federal Government, U.S. Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), and African Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs). To operationalize this effort, business resource centers funded by philanthropic and corporate sources are being established across Africa, with the first in Cape Town, South Africa. The business resource centers are the outgrowth of more than four years of discussions with African and other international business leaders at the annual Select USA Investment Summit around providing greater access to global markets for U.S. MBEs.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding, MBDA and B&C are establishing a partnership to create and identify significant opportunities for MBEs by exposing them to business opportunities on the continent of Africa.

“This partnership with B&C International supports our need for a more robust economic approach for U.S. MBEs and African SMMEs to foster foreign direct investment, joint ventures, and merger and acquisitions,” said MBDA Acting National Director Edith J. McCloud. “This will help them gain the scale necessary to position them for opportunities within global supply chains.”

With the recent progress toward the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, Africa will continue to be a tremendous opportunity for economic growth for U.S. and African small businesses. The business resource centers will organize on the ground ecosystems for U.S. MBEs, promote import and export opportunities, and provide access to market information.

The National Business League, the oldest and largest trade association for Black businesses in the U.S and founded by Booker T. Washington, will lend its connections to 2.6 million small businesses to the initiative. “This is a pivotal time. We will foster commerce-driven activity between Africa and the U.S., by strengthening Black and African businesses throughout the diaspora” said Ken L. Harris, Ph.D., President/CEO of the National Business League, Inc.

“Through this work new doors have been opened, progress has been made, but there is still more to be done. These business resource centers will show the collective power of our MBE’s and African businesses,” says Mr. Robert J. Brown, CEO, B&C International.

“We have a storied contribution on the continent of Africa. I am proud of B&C’s history in South Africa and of the future we are dedicated to create, but now is the time for a new narrative. This partnership helps create a blueprint that includes U.S. MBEs and African SMMEs as keys to American and African economic prosperity,” said Larry Yon, Senior Partner with B&C International.

This is not B&C’s first blended social and economic impact center in South Africa. In March 2020, before Covid-19 spurred global lockdowns, B&C in partnership with Careerbox, a South African recruitment and skills development organization, opened a library and skills development center in Umlazi, South Africa.

“By including the U.S. MBDA and other partners, these business resource centers will be an access point for U.S. small businesses and corporations to tap into the potential of the African talent pool, solve global problems, and create meaningful economic impact in America and the continent of Africa,” stated Lizelle Strydom Pottier, Managing Director of Careerbox,

About Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)

MBDA, www.mbda.gov, is the only Federal agency dedicated to the growth and global competitiveness of U.S. minority-owned businesses through the mobilization and advancement of public and private sector programs, policy, and research. Our services better equip minority-owned firms to create jobs, build scale and capacity, increase revenues and expand regionally, nationally and internationally. For more than 50 years, MBDA has been a dedicated strategic partner to all U.S. minority-owned businesses, committed to providing greater access to capital, contracts, and markets.

About B&C International

B&C International, <https://www.bandcinternational.com/>, is the oldest Black-owned global strategy and business advisory consulting firm in the United States. Dr. Robert J. “Bob” Brown, B&C’s Founder and Chief Executive, is credited with designing Executive Order 11458, which established the U.S. Office of Minority Business Enterprise (today is known as the Minority Business Development Agency ‘MBDA’) within the U.S. Department of Commerce. For over 40 years, B&C has played a vital role in driving philanthropy, business expansion and investment between the United States and the continent of Africa. B&C’s transatlantic ecosystem includes U.S. and African small businesses, corporations, governments, industry associations, educational institutions, and influencers.

About National Business League (NBL)

NBL, <https://nationalbusinessleague.org/>, is the first and largest nonprofit, non-partisan, and non-sectarian Black business and professional trade association, which was founded on August 23, 1900, by the iconic Booker T. Washington. Committed to empowering an intergenerational economic shift towards wealth building by equipping an entrepreneurial class of sustainable businesses, the NBL has more than 120,000 members nationwide, with regional offices in Atlanta, GA, Detroit, MI, Los Angeles, CA, and Washington, D.C., as well as more than 367 local league chapters across the country. The organization provides access to 2.6 million Black businesses throughout the United States.

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