



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

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USTDA CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Welcomes Duke Ellington School for the Arts Show Choir

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 24, 2010) – In celebration of Black History Month, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency hosted the Duke Ellington School for the Arts Show Choir at its headquarters in Arlington, Virginia. Just one day after the Choir performed at the White House for President Obama, they shared songs of inspiration and celebration with USTDA and guests from around the U.S. Government to commemorate the contributions of African-Americans to the rich history of the United States.

In introducing the Choir, Acting Director Leocadia I. Zak noted that, “During this month we have the opportunity to honor the many contributions that African-Americans have made in our country. There are many important figures that come to mind such as Frederick Douglas, Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King and of course, Duke Ellington. Each of these individuals not only took action, but have inspired others through their words and deeds. During turbulent times in our nation’s history there was another inspiration as well. It came in the form of individuals joining their voices together in song. They sang of freedom, equality and faith. Their voices led the way to change.”

Arrangements included: *Take the “A” Train* arranged by Kirby Show; *It Don’t Mean a Thing, If It Ain’t Got That Swing* by Miller; and *New York State of Mind* by Mark Brymer. The Choir also sang traditional spirituals which like *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child* by Henry Smith; *We Are Marching* by Billy Funk; and *The Best Is Yet To Come* by Donald Lawrence. The show concluded with modern songs such as *Bridge Over Troubled Water* by Kirby Shaw and *Dancin’ In the Street* from “Motown Review.”

U.S. Trade and Development Agency:

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds various forms of technical assistance, feasibility studies, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. USTDA’s strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that may benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.