SENATE RESOLUTION

8645

By Senators Hunt and Sheldon

WHEREAS, The West African nation of Togo has, since 2006, made important human rights and democratic reforms that include generally free and fair legislative elections; and

WHEREAS, Togo's population of 7.7 million people represent a broad diversity of tribal traditions and religious beliefs and has, as a nation, welcomed refugees from neighboring countries; and

WHEREAS, Togo has sought to increase access to primary education by eliminating school enrollment fees; and

WHEREAS, Recent efforts to improve its business climate and attract investment by embracing free enterprise and entrepreneurship is providing an environment where individuals can better lift themselves out of poverty and attain self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, The United States Government is recognizing these economic reforms by inviting Togo to host the 2017 African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum, which will bring together government, private sector, and civil societies from 38 African countries and the United States to explore ways to increase trade between the U.S. and Africa; and

WHEREAS, Togo is an important and valuable trading partner with the State of Washington as evidenced by its trade with the Tumwater-based natural body products organization, Alaffia; and

WHEREAS, Alaffia's headquarters and production facility in Tumwater provides jobs for over 120 employees; generates a total of 284 direct, indirect, and induced jobs; and creates more than 41 million dollars in annual economic activity in Thurston County; and

WHEREAS, Alaffia directly and indirectly employs more than 11,000 people in the nation of Togo; creates economic prosperity that is empowering women through Alaffia's fair-trade practices; pays four times the local wage; and provides funding for maternal health care, education, and other empowerment programs; and

WHEREAS, Alaffia's projects have resulted in 57,575 trees planted, 32,842 school supply recipients, 7,482 bikes distributed, 24,927 eyeglasses donated, and more than 4,463 babies safely delivered in villages in Togo;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate recognize the significant progress made by the nation of Togo and Alaffia in advancing the human condition; and acknowledge the potential value for both Washington state and Togo in increasing opportunities for trade; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Honorable U.S. Ambassador David Gilmour, to the Alaffia Empowerment Council from the Nation of Togo, to Alaffia Founder Olowo-n'djo Tchala, and to Alaffia Co-Founder Rose Hyde.

I, Hunter G. Goodman, Secretary of the Senate,

do hereby certify that this is a true and

correct copy of Senate Resolution 8645,

adopted by the Senate

April 13, 2017

HUNTER G. GOODMAN

Secretary of the Senate