



Mandela Washington Fellowship Summit

AUGUST 3-4, 2021 | VIRTUAL

Leadership for the Future: Resilience and Inclusion

Plenary - Acting A/S Lussenhop Transcript

Speaker

- Matthew Lussenhop, Acting Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Session Transcript

Thank you, Yolanda, for the introduction.

Greetings, and welcome Mandela Washington Fellows to the 2021 Summit! My name is Matt Lussenhop, and I'm the acting assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and it is my pleasure to welcome the 700 distinguished Fellows, along with the Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni, our valued Leadership Institute Partners representing 26 academic institutions across the United States, as well as U.S. Government representatives and other program stakeholders.

And I want to thank the ECA program team and our implementing partner, IREX, for creating an innovative six-week leadership program, Focus Projects, and Communities of Practice that enabled Fellows to explore their areas of interest and build networks. I also want to thank our Leadership Institute Partners, who remained flexible during this extraordinary time to ensure an enriching and educational experience. Impressively, the Leadership Institute hosts and IREX developed over 400 programming videos to guide your leadership development.

2021 Fellows, you embody the principles of resilience and inclusion which are woven throughout this year's Summit and exemplify our bureau's mission to build mutual understanding between people of the United States and other countries around the world. And you will soon become U.S. Exchange Alumni, joining a network of more than 1.5 million alumni of our programs around the world.

Through your Fellowship, you've deepened your understanding of topics such as social entrepreneurship, organizational development, and ethical leadership. You've also exchanged ideas with other Fellows and counterparts in the United States, and we encourage you to continue networking during the Summit and via the Fellowship Portal.

As Alumni, you can now apply for opportunities such as the Reciprocal Exchange, which would allow a U.S. expert or collaborator to travel to your country to work on a project of mutual interest. And today, I'm pleased to announce that the Department of State is committing an additional \$200,000



dollars to support the 2021 Fellows in project implementation. You will be eligible for a special application of the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund, or AEIF, available through U.S. embassies, and you will learn more about that tomorrow.

I hope you'll think about how you can leverage these opportunities and collaborate with others to advance your work. And as you reflect on these opportunities, consider the experiences of other Fellowship Alumni who have embraced the notion of servant leadership, like our outgoing Leadership Impact Award Winner Ibrahima Kalil Gueye. The Leadership Impact Award annually recognizes the achievements of one outstanding member of the Mandela Washington Fellowship Alumni Network. 2020 Leadership Impact Award Winner Ibrahima is a 2018 Fellowship Alumnus from the Presidential Precinct, and he runs Open and Transparent Guinea, a program that has reached 10,000 citizens, promoting transparency and good governance. Ibrahima has been an excellent representative of the Fellowship this year.

As our 2020 award comes to a close, we are also excited to announce the 2021 Leadership Impact Award Winner tomorrow. The secretary of state and I hope that you take advantage of the opportunities provided by this week's Summit and the Fellowship as a whole.

Secretary Blinken is a strong supporter of programs like the Mandela Washington Fellowship, and he has met with participants and Alumni of the Fellowship both in the United States and in Africa. And it's now my distinct honor to welcome our Secretary of State, Antony Blinken. Antony J. Blinken is the 71st U.S. Secretary of State, confirmed by the U.S. Senate on January 26th of this year. Over three decades and three presidential administrations, he has helped shape U.S. foreign policy to ensure it delivers results for the American people in partnership with people around the world. Secretary Blinken is proud to lead the department where he got his start in government nearly 30 years ago. His wife, Evan Ryan, once led the bureau that I'm in now, overseeing the Mandela Washington Fellowship and our other exchange programs. Outside of government, the secretary has worked in the private sector, civil society, and journalism. So, without further ado, please welcome Secretary Blinken.