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## Zambia has good deal to offer

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Our relationships with the rest of the world need some updating.

Things are changing. A large delegation from Zambia was in Seattle this week making a case for investment, not charity, as the cure for poverty.

It's an argument many in Africa have been making for years, usually in the other Washington.

While few in the world's leading capitalist nation are biting, China is pouring money into the continent in search of influence and profit. In Zambia, the Chinese invest in mining, retail and construction.

Viewed from the U.S., Africa seems a solid mass of disease, war, unstable dictators and rampant corruption.

The Zambian delegation, including the country's president, argued that this view is full of stereotypes that do not apply to their country.

Zambia is a country of 12 million in southern Africa. Copper mining is central to the economy, but tourism, manufacturing and agriculture are growing.

The Zambians were invited way out west to Seattle by the Initiative for Global Development, which believes eradicating deep poverty would eliminate many of the ills, including diseases and conflicts, that afflict the planet.

Members call themselves "business leaders working to end poverty."

Getting people out of poverty is the right thing to do, but it also can be profitable for business and relieve

governments in developed nations of numerous international headaches.

The U.S. ambassador to Zambia has said a stable Zambia contributes to the U.S. goal of peace, democracy and economic growth in southern Africa.

IGD was founded three years ago by Bill Gates Sr.; Daniel J. Evans, the former senator and governor; former EPA administrator Bill Ruckelshaus; Weyerhaeuser heir Bill Clapp; and John Shalikashvili, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The delegation also scheduled meetings at Starbucks, Microsoft, Boeing and elsewhere.

At the session I attended, the president, Levy Mwanawasa, and his ministers made a compelling case for investment. How'd you like to pay no taxes on business earnings?

They talked about their new zero-tolerance policy on corruption and their commitment to democracy, stability and economic growth.

And, said the minister of commerce, trade and industry, the weather is perfect.

What are we waiting for?

Well, actually, the weather isn't perfect. It gets pretty hot there, and then there is the matter of infrastructure, and if they have cured corruption they are the only nation anywhere to have done so.

Zambia still has problems, but curing poverty would help solve them.

Business investment (not exploitation) is necessary.

Mwanawasa invited American entrepreneurs to visit and see that "the truth is the opposite of what you think is true."

It's not exactly the opposite, but Zambia seems to be at a point where investment could benefit Zambians and offer the U.S. new opportunities to make money and make friends.