

Visit to Nigeria of Australian Prime Minister's Special Envoy Ms Joanna Hewitt – 15-17 April 2012

About the Special Envoy

The Australian Prime Minister, The Hon Julia Gillard MP, has appointed Ms Joanna Hewitt as her Special Envoy to Nigeria and other African countries.

Special Envoy Hewitt is currently the Commission Chair of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. She has had a distinguished career, including serving as the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Deputy Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Australian Ambassador to the European Union.

The Special Envoy's program in Nigeria

Special Envoy Hewitt's visit to Nigeria provided an opportunity to discuss ways in which Australia and Nigeria can cooperate more closely on issues of bilateral and international significance.

As part of her program, Special Envoy Hewitt was received by His Excellency Dr Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, on Monday 16 April 2012, with the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Olugbenga Ashiru, the Honourable Minister for Information and Communication, Mr Labaran Maku, and senior advisers in attendance. Special Envoy Hewitt, who was accompanied by Australian High Commissioner, HE Mr Ian McConville, praised the President's leadership in the region, Nigeria's active and constructive role in international fora, and underlined the desire of the Australian Government to further develop the bilateral relationship in the wake of solid outcomes from the President's Guest of Government visit to Australia in October 2011. The two sides agreed that agriculture and mining were two sectors where significant synergies could be developed, noting the scholarship program, and assistance in capacity building currently provided by Australia to Nigeria. President Jonathan thanked the Australian Representative for the warm welcome of the Nigerian delegation at CHOGM in Perth in October 2011.

Special Envoy Hewitt also met with the Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr Mohammed Bello Adoke S.A.N., and EFCC Chairman Ibrahim Lamorde at the EFCC/AFP Regional Engagement Meeting on Transnational Fraud for West African Law Enforcement Officers/Agencies*, which is taking place in Abuja from 16 to 18 April 2012. Also on 16 April, Ms Hewitt called on the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Olugbenga Ashiru and held bilateral discussions on a range of issues of mutual interest.

On 17 April 2012, Special Envoy Hewitt commissioned an Australian Government funded hand pump borehole project in Ijabisa, Bwari Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory. The commissioning was also attended by Australian High Commissioner HE Mr Ian McConville, his spouse Libby McCutchan and Ms Odette Touré, wife of the UN Coordinator/Resident Representative of UNDP Dauda Touré.

* a regional workshop jointly organised by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP).