



Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs

2025 Annual Report to the Governor

Submitted by:
Susan C. Lee
Secretary of State
January 2026

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2025 Subcabinet Membership



Secretary of State (Chair)

Susan C. Lee

Supported by:

- Michael Lore, *Deputy Secretary of State*
- Mary E. (Mendy) Nitsch, *Director of International Affairs*
- Joseph Gebhardt, *Senior Advisor*
- Alexandria Liu, *Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations*
- Dr. Akilah Alleyne, *Deputy Director of International Affairs*
- Rosanna Mantova, *Assistant Director of International Affairs*
- Lucas Lin, *Executive Aide*
- Naomi Kim, *Executive Aide*



Lieutenant Governor

Aruna Miller

Staff Working Group Member(s):

- Sandeep Boppana, *Director of Operations*
- Brandon Uebel, *Staff Assistant*



Department of Agriculture

Secretary Kevin M. Atticks

Staff Working Group Member(s):

- Stone Slade, *Director of International Marketing*



**Department of Commerce
Secretary Harry Coker, Jr.**

Staff Working Group Member(s):

- Ricardo Benn, *Deputy Secretary, Division of Innovation and Growth*
- Jessica Reynolds, *Senior Director, Office of International Investment and Trade*
- Aisha Booker, *Director of Foreign Direct Investment*



**Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

Staff Working Group Member(s):

- Rachel Lamb, Ph.D., *Assistant Secretary for Climate Policy and International Affairs*



**Maryland Higher Education Commission
Secretary Dr. Sanjay Rai**

Staff Working Group Member(s):

- Tiffany Majors, *Chief of Staff*



Department of Transportation
Acting Secretary Kathryn B. "Katie" Thomson

Staff Working Group Member(s):

- Lyn Farrow, *Director of External Affairs*

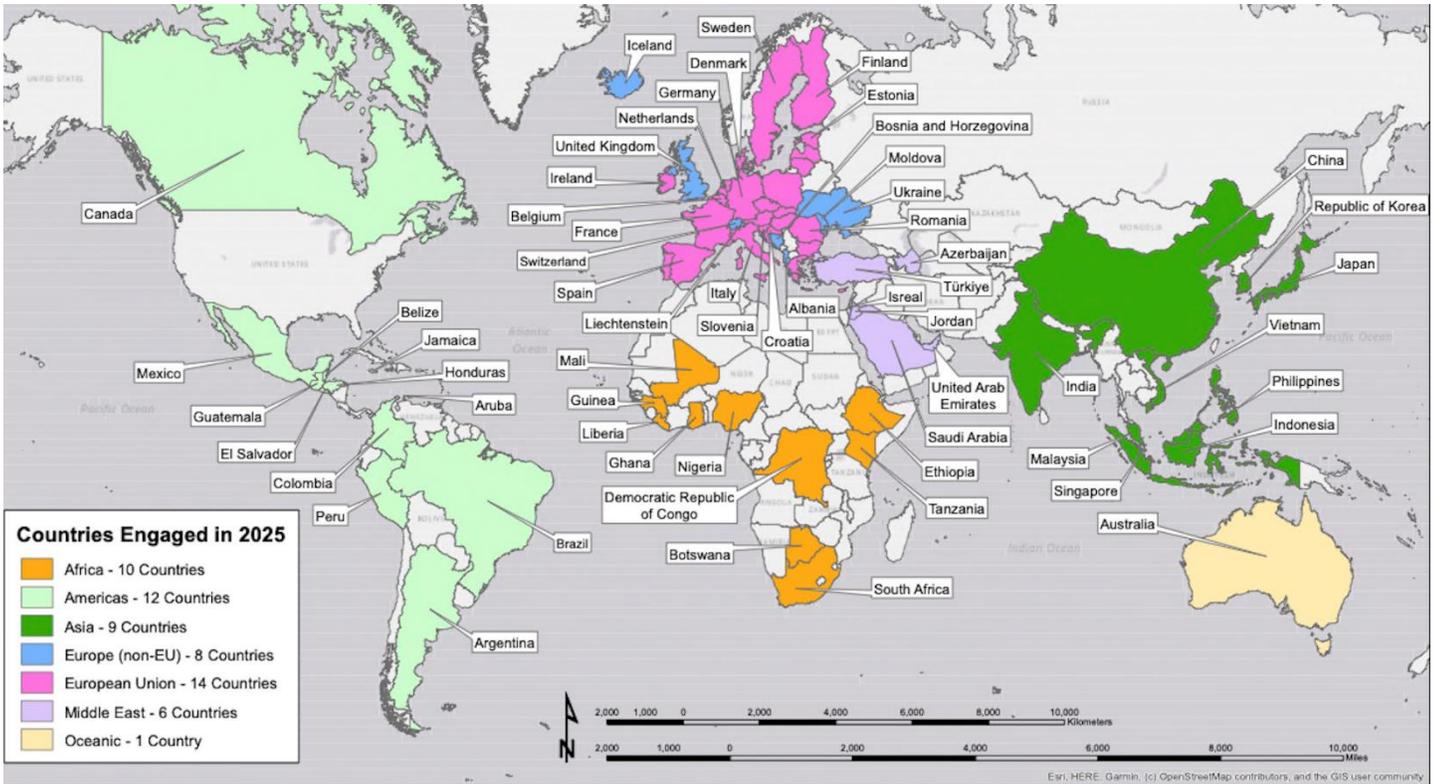


Maryland Military Department
Major General Janeen L. Birckhead, Adjutant General

Staff Working Group Member(s):

- Tony Campbell, Ph.D., *Director of Legislative Affairs*
- Major Jason Booth, *Director of the State Partnership Program*

Map of 2025 Countries Engaged



Map of Countries Engaged by Subcabinet Members in 2025, made with assistance from Maryland Department of the Environment GIS Analyst Frank Siano

2025 Countries Engaged

Office of the Secretary of State

1. Africa: Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, South Africa
2. Americas: Argentina, Aruba, Brazil, Canada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru
3. Asia: Azerbaijan, China (PRC), India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia Singapore, South Korea, Vietnam, Australia
4. Europe: Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom
5. Middle East: Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

Lieutenant Governor

1. Africa: Ghana
2. Asia: India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Vietnam
3. Europe: France, Netherlands, Spain

Department of Agriculture

1. Africa: Democratic Republic of the Congo
2. Americas: Mexico, Peru
3. Asia: China (PRC), Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Australia
4. Europe: Germany, Ireland, Italy, United Kingdom
5. Middle East: United Arab Emirates

Department of Commerce

1. Africa: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, South Africa
2. Americas: Argentina, Belize, Canada, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico
3. Asia: China (PRC), India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Australia
4. Europe: Estonia, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
5. Middle East: Israel, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

Department of the Environment

1. Asia: China (PRC), Japan
2. Americas: Brazil, Canada
3. Europe: Belgium, Denmark, France, United Kingdom

Maryland Higher Education Commission

1. Asia: China (PRC), India, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam
2. Americas: Aruba

Department of Transportation

1. Asia: China (PRC), Japan, South Korea, Australia
2. Americas: Canada
3. Europe: Germany, Ukraine, United Kingdom

Maryland Military Department

1. Asia: South Korea
2. Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Romania

Achieving Progress in International Affairs

Maryland's subnational diplomacy is managed by the Office of the Secretary of State ("OSOS") in conjunction with the Governor's Office and the Subcabinet for International Affairs. (The work of an affiliated organization, Sister States of Maryland, Inc., is not included in the State's portfolio of international activities.)

The main activities in the State's subnational diplomacy and international affairs include the following:

A. The Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs, which is chaired by Secretary of State Susan C. Lee. The Subcabinet consists of the Secretary of State, the Lieutenant Governor, the Cabinet Secretaries for Agriculture, Commerce, the Environment, Higher Education, and Transportation, and the Adjutant General who heads the Maryland Military Department. The Subcabinet members meet quarterly to discuss previous and upcoming international activities from all the represented Departments.

B. Diplomatic meetings and correspondence with Ambassadors and Embassy officials, with the meetings mainly taking place at the OSOS Office in Annapolis or at an Embassy in Washington, DC. In 2025, the OSOS had more than 60 diplomatic meetings and communications with international entities.

C. Communications with Maryland's 21 Sister States, which are located in 18 countries. Most of these communications are virtual or by email correspondence. However, in 2025, the OSOS had in-person meetings with Sister State government officials from Anhui, China; Hauts-de-France, France; Kanagawa, Japan; and Gyeongsangnam-do, South Korea. The Maryland Department of the Environment also met with Sister State officials in Rio de Janeiro State, Brazil.

D. Trade Missions to Foreign Countries. These include the Governor's Trade Mission to Japan and South Korea in April 2025; the Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of State, and Secretary of the Environment Trade Mission to Québec, Canada; the Commerce Trade Mission to Ontario, Canada in November 2025; and the Commerce and the OSOS Trade Mission to the Middle East in December 2025.

E. Diplomatic Events Hosted or Attended by the Secretary of State. For example, the OSOS co-hosts the diplomatic reception (called "Embassy Night") at the Washington International Horse Show every October. The recent WIHS Embassy Night in October had more than 300 guests, including the Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, and a number of Ambassadors, Embassy officials, Maryland Cabinet Secretaries, state and local government officials, corporate executives, and top equestrian athletes, trainers, and executives. The Secretary of State and her OSOS team also

regularly attend events hosted by Embassies in Washington, DC. Recent Embassy events attended include Japan, France, the European Union, China, Taiwan, Germany, Switzerland, Türkiye, and Vietnam.

F. Meetings with Community Organizations. Community organizations have been formed by immigrants from their home countries, and the Secretary of State and her team members attend many of their events during the year. Notable community organizations that hold events attended by the OSOS include organizations formed by people from Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan, and certain African countries and Latin American groups.



Subcabinet for International Affairs Quarterly Meeting, October 2025. From left to right: Adjutant General Janeen L. Birkhead, Governor’s Chief of Staff Lester Davis, Secretary of State Susan Lee, Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain, and Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Atticks

2025 Key Collaborative Engagements

With high levels of participation and communication throughout the year, the Subcabinet for International Affairs was able to make significant progress on all its Strategic Goals in 2025. The following are highlights of the Subcabinet’s achievements made through its collaborative efforts:

1. Relationship with Japan

Maryland and Japan share a longstanding, robust partnership spanning more than four decades, serving as a model for subnational diplomacy. Guided by the Subcabinet for International Affairs, 2025 featured a full year of high-level engagements that further deepened economic, cultural, and diplomatic ties between the two regions.

The year began with Maryland’s participation in Japan–Maryland Night at the Japanese Ambassador’s Residence, hosted by Ambassador of Japan H.E. Shigeo Yamada and attended by Governor Wes Moore, Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, Secretary of State Susan Lee, senior Cabinet officials, business leaders, and community members. A short time later, Governor Moore announced that he selected Japan as the destination for his inaugural Trade and Investment Mission, which received high-level support from the Embassy of Japan.



Japan Ambassador Shigeo Yamada, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, and Governor Wes Moore at the 2025 Japan – Maryland Night Reception

While in Japan, Governor Moore worked to connect government and business leaders with Maryland’s lighthouse sectors—life sciences, quantum computing, and aerospace— over 20 high-impact engagements. Governor Moore was accompanied by Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr., Secretary of State Susan Lee, and staff. Highlights included a private meeting with Chief Cabinet Secretary Hayashi Yoshimasa, leadership of JETRO, METI, and Hitachi; and key outcomes included a new life sciences Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sister State Kanagawa Prefecture (signed by Governors Moore and Yuji Kuroiwa) and strengthened port-to-port collaboration with Yokohama. Follow-on engagements included Commerce’s participation in Japan Health and the World Expo in Osaka, advancing foreign direct investment and export opportunities for Maryland companies.



Governor Wes Moore and Governor Yuji Kuroiwa renew the Maryland – Kanagawa Memorandum of Understanding in the fields of life science and healthcare in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan

Throughout 2025, Maryland leaders continued sustained engagement with Japanese government, business, and cultural partners. Highlights included Governor Moore’s hosting of Ambassador Yamada at the Preakness; Japan Heritage Night with the Baltimore Orioles; the opening of Hitachi Rail’s manufacturing facility in Hagerstown which will support 1,300 jobs and \$350 million in annual wages; Lt. Governor Aruna Miller’s attending the 50th anniversary of Shimadzu Scientific Instruments Corporation (headquartered in Maryland for five decades); and continued cooperation in areas such as environmental resilience, life sciences investment, tourism, and community exchange. These efforts reinforced Maryland’s reputation as a reliable and trusted partner and demonstrated the enduring strength of the Japan – Maryland relationship.

2. Relationship with the Republic of Korea

In 2025, the Subcabinet for International Affairs strengthened Maryland’s active relationship with the Republic of Korea. Over two days, Governor Moore conducted 13 high-impact engagements with senior government officials, global corporations, investors, and academic leaders during his 2025 Trade and Investment Mission to the Republic of Korea. Governor Moore was accompanied by Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr., Secretary of State Susan Lee, and staff. Planned and executed in coordination with the Department of Commerce and the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS), the Mission positioned Maryland as a premier destination for South Korean investment in aerospace, quantum technologies, and life sciences. Highlights included a private meeting between Governor Moore and Acting President of the Republic of Korea Han Duck-soo; a meeting with executive leadership of Samsung Group; and a full day of aerospace industry-related events graciously hosted by Gyeongsangnam-do Governor Park. Key outcomes included the renewal of the Aerospace Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Sister State Gyeongsangnam-do and multiple agreements between Maryland and South Korean universities to expand research collaboration, talent pipelines, and student exchange, and a later announcement by Samsung Biologics of its first manufacturing venture in the United States to be based in Maryland.



Governor Moore meets with Governor Park Wan-su and participates in an Aerospace Roundtable in Gyeongsangnam-do Province, South Korea

Throughout the year, Subcabinet members also advanced Sister State cooperation with Gyeongsangnam-do and Jeollanam-do, hosted South Korean business and government delegations, and supported ongoing investment discussions in biotechnology, advanced manufacturing, infrastructure, and energy. These efforts contributed to concrete outcomes,

including South Korean investment activity through Maryland TEDCO's \$50 million fund targeting Korean life sciences companies, Samsung Biologics' \$280 million acquisition in Rockville supporting more than 500 jobs, and NatureCell's planned expansion in Baltimore City, expected to create over 500 jobs.



Governor Wes Moore and Secretary of State Susan Lee celebrate Korean American Day in Maryland with former Ambassador of Korea Cho Hyun-dong and leaders of the Korean American community

Maryland's commitment to Korea was reinforced through continued participation in business, scientific, and community forums, including Korean American Day with former Ambassador of Korea H.E. Cho Hyun-dong, Korea-U.S. Business Night, and life sciences and medical symposia. Together, Governor Moore's Trade Mission to the Republic of Korea and sustained year-long engagement reaffirmed Korea's essential role in Maryland's global outlook and strengthened Maryland's standing as a trusted, long-term partner for Korean government, businesses, and communities.

3. Relationship with France

Under the leadership of the Subcabinet for International Affairs, Maryland had many important engagements in 2025 with France and our Sister State, Hauts-de-France (HdF), which strengthened the close, historic relations between our two regions.

In January, the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) International Affairs Director Mary E. (Mendy) Nitsch met with representatives from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Embassy to discuss the Maryland–France relationship, our future activities, and in general, Maryland's subnational diplomacy efforts. Director Nitsch was accompanied at this meeting by OSOS Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations Alexandria Liu and Assistant International Affairs Director Rosanna Mantova.

The Maryland representatives briefed the French diplomats on the Sister State relationship between Maryland and Hauts-de-France, including current initiatives in higher education, business, and the equine industry. Conversations also highlighted the OSOS's engagements with the diplomatic community in Washington, DC and the Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs' collaborative approach to promoting the State's international goals and activities. In turn, the French diplomats described their government's National Commission for Decentralized Cooperation, the body responsible for fostering and overseeing partnerships between local and regional authorities in France and their international counterparts, such as Maryland.



Governor Wes Moore meets with the Ambassador of France Laurent Bili and Consul General Caroline Monvoisin

This meeting set the stage for the significant engagements that followed in 2025, which included the French Ambassador's meeting with the Governor of Maryland in July and the meeting between

the Governor and the Vice President of the Hauts-de-France region, at which they signed a renewed Sister State Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in October.

In July, Governor Wes Moore, joined by Secretary of State Susan Lee and Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain, met with French Ambassador H.E. Laurent Bili and Consul General Caroline Monvoisin to discuss the historical collaboration between Maryland and France and opportunities for continued cooperation, including on environmental and sustainability initiatives. This engagement set the stage for subsequent Sister State activities later in the year.



Governor Moore signs an MOU with Hauts-de-France Vice President François Decoster

Hauts-de-France Vice President François Decoster and his delegation visited Maryland in October for a two-day visit coordinated by the OSOS. In preparation for the visit, the OSOS held regular planning meetings with counterparts in the Hauts-de-France regional government and facilitated advance planning with key Maryland partners, including the Maryland Horse Industry Board, the Maryland Department of Commerce, and the World Trade Center Institute, to align the delegation program with shared priorities.

The visit culminated in Governor Moore and Vice President Decoster signing the renewal of the Maryland–Hauts-de-France Sister State MOU, expanding cooperation in priority areas including quantum technologies, life sciences, education, and the equine industry.

The signing ceremony highlighted the importance of people-to-people exchange, featuring a presentation by educators from the Pasteur Institute of Lille and Saint Vincent de Paul High School showcasing French student projects focused on Maryland. The event brought together senior state leadership, members of the French diplomatic corps, and the visiting Hauts-de-France delegation, reflecting the cross-agency and international scope of the partnership.

In addition to the MOU signing, Vice President Decoster and the Hauts-de-France delegation participated in a series of economic, education, and sector-focused engagements designed to deepen collaboration across priority areas. These included attendance at the World Trade Center Institute's Taste of Business Reception; meetings with Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. and Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain; discussions with the Maryland Higher Education Commission on academic collaboration; and a site visit to the Prince George's Equestrian Center to advance dialogue on equestrian education, training, and industry development. The French delegation also engaged in historical and cultural cooperation, including a meeting facilitated by Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore with the Maryland 250 Commission to discuss national and local plans for the 250th anniversary and Hauts-de-France interest in the Lafayette graduate exchange competition.

Maryland maintained active diplomatic engagements with France over the course of the year. In May, Deputy Secretary Lore and OSOS Assistant International Affairs Director Mantova, along with Secretary of the Environment McIlwain and Assistant Secretary for Climate Policy and International Affairs Dr. Rachel Lamb, attended a special reception at the Ambassador's Residence recognizing the opening of the Third U.N. Oceans Conference, hosted by the City of Nice. The event provided an opportunity to highlight Maryland's leadership in Chesapeake Bay restoration, and in combatting climate change and ocean acidification. On July 14, Secretary Lee, accompanied by Deputy Secretary Lore and her OSOS team, met with French Ambassador Bili and Consul General Caroline Monvoisin at the French National Holiday reception at the Ambassador's Residence, along with Secretary McIlwain and Patrick Capurro, Chairman of the Maryland–Hauts-de-France Sister State Committee. In December, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain was invited by the French Embassy to deliver the keynote address at its 10th Anniversary Paris Agreement event, highlighting Maryland's leadership in subnational climate action. Also in December, Secretary of State Lee attended a holiday reception at the Ambassador's Residence commemorating the Comte de Rochambeau and 250 years of U.S.–France friendship. Ambassador Bili delivered remarks honoring the historic partnership between the two nations and previewed activities of the America 250 Commission.

Together, these engagements reinforced Maryland's close relationship with France and demonstrated sustained, high-level collaboration across diplomatic, environmental, and people-to-people dimensions.

4. Relationship with Europe

Led by the Subcabinet for International Affairs, Maryland advanced a set of strategic engagements with European partners, in addition to France, throughout the year, reinforcing the State's role as a subnational leader in diplomacy, trade, innovation, and sustainability.

European Union

Engagements with the European Union (EU) featured prominently, especially through high-level dialogue with the EU Ambassador H.E. Jovita Neliupšienė. On March 21, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore and Assistant International Affairs Director Rosanna Mantova attended A Conversation with the EU Ambassador at George Washington University where discussions focused on EU-U.S. relations, trade dynamics, and emerging opportunities in technology. Ambassador Neliupšienė highlighted the EU's interest in partnering with U.S. states, especially as European technology firms expand their quantum research.

The momentum culminated in an October 29 formal meeting between Governor Wes Moore and Ambassador Neliupšienė, a meeting facilitated by Secretary of State Susan Lee. The leaders discussed shared priorities including sustainable energy, environmental protection, life sciences, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and trade and investment. Following the meeting, Governor Moore and the EU Ambassador jointly addressed the inaugural EU Circularity Forum in Annapolis, co-hosted by the State of Maryland and the EU Delegation to the U.S. The Forum brought together 150 policy makers, business leaders, financial institutions, and experts to advance transatlantic cooperation on circular economy solutions and showcased Maryland's national and international leadership in sustainability. This event, led by Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain and Department of the Environment staff, launched new collaboration tracks with EU partners focused on packaging, construction, textiles, and critical minerals.



Governor Wes Moore hosts EU Ambassador Jovita Neliupšienė and EU Delegation for the inaugural Circular Economy Forum co-hosted by the State of Maryland and the European Union

Estonia

Maryland’s 30+ year partnership with Estonia was actively strengthened in 2025. In October, Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. visited Estonia, where he attended the Tallinn Digital Summit, an exclusive global leadership forum hosted by the Prime Minister. At the summit, Secretary Coker participated on the “High Stakes, High Gains: National AI and Cyber Innovation” panel. He also met with high-level officials, including Piret Sauter, Director of Distant Markets at Enterprise Estonia; Erkki Keldo, Estonian Minister of Economy and Industry; and Jonatan Vseviõv of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These discussions advanced dialogue on AI governance, cybersecurity cooperation, and innovation-driven economic growth. The following week, in Maryland, Deputy Secretary of State Lore made remarks at the Estonian Aerospace and Defense Industry Reception hosted by the Washington International Trade Center at BWTech at the University of Maryland Baltimore County South, a B2B event. Representatives from the Estonian Aerospace and Defense Industry Association gave presentations on innovations and opportunities for collaboration in security, defense technology, and aerospace solutions.



Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. with Taavi Einaste and Minister Erkki Keldo at the Tallinn Digital Summit in Estonia

Earlier in the year, on the government-to-government side of the partnership, the OSOS hosted Chairman Marko Mihkelson and three other members of the Foreign Affairs Committee from the Parliament of Estonia.

Ireland

Maryland's bilateral partnerships with other individual European countries also continued to generate outcomes. Engagements with Ireland brought notable economic development results including site visits with two Irish companies, both of which verbally indicated decisions to locate in Maryland at the Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc. (FITCI) following their visits. These outcomes reflect the impact of ongoing trade promotion efforts tied to Maryland's Ireland-focused activities. Deputy Secretary Lore further supported these efforts through engagement with the Maryland-Ireland Trade Commission, participation in a reception at the Irish Ambassador's Residence, and coordination meetings to plan an upcoming delegation from Tipperary County expected in mid-March of 2026. Another significant development involved discussions led by Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt with Irish American leaders to frame a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Maryland and Ireland.

Germany

Maryland also strengthened ties with Germany through a combination of diplomatic, educational, and economic initiatives. Secretary of State Susan Lee and her staff engaged with German Ambassador H.E. Jens Hanefeld several times during the year, including at the German Day of Unity reception and the German Christmas Market at the German Ambassador's Residence. These engagements opened the doors to opportunities for Maryland-Germany cooperation, including potential Sister State and Sister City relationships. Secretary Lee and Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt had a meeting with Member of Parliament and Transatlantic Coordinator Metin Hakverdi and German Embassy staff to discuss the possibility of a Sister State relationship in the Hamburg-Hannover region.



From left to right: Chief of Staff Max Kanzow, OSOS intern Isaac Hawkins, Secretary of State Susan Lee, Member of Parliament and Transatlantic Coordinator Metin Hakverdi, OSOS Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, Embassy of Germany Political Counsellor Ruben Schwarz, and OSOS Executive Aide Lucas Lin

The State also hosted several German delegations throughout the year. In September, Deputy Secretary Lore hosted a German Fulbright delegation from the University of Maryland College Park at the State House to highlight the State’s legislative process and subnational diplomacy efforts. The Maryland Port Administration supported visits by German Embassy staff to the Port of Baltimore to discuss logistics and trade opportunities.



The Department of Commerce Office of International Investment and Trade leads a mission to MEDICA, the largest medical tradeshow in the world, in Düsseldorf, Germany

The Department of Commerce also led a delegation of Maryland companies to the MEDICA Trade Fair in Düsseldorf, the world’s largest medical device trade show, to support the companies’ exports and to promote Maryland as a destination for foreign direct investment.

Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain and Assistant Secretary Dr. Rachel Lamb participated in high-level climate meetings hosted in Bonn, Germany and directly engaged many subnational governments on pathways to raise climate ambition, including working with officials from Baden-Württemberg in southwestern Germany.

Türkiye

Maryland also expanded dialogue with the Republic of Türkiye through diplomatic engagements. Secretary of State Susan Lee took the opportunity to reference Maryland’s interest in strengthening its ties to Türkiye, particularly with the Izmir region, to Ambassador of Türkiye H.E. Sedat Önal.

In support of Secretary Lee’s conversation with the Ambassador, Assistant International Affairs Director Rosanna Mantova presented a Governor’s Proclamation to Ambassador Önal at the Embassy Reception for the 102nd Anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye. Also, the OSOS, led by Secretary Lee and Senior Advisor Gebhardt, initiated discussions concerning improving the Sister State relationship with Türkiye.



Assistant Director of International Affairs Rosanna Mantova presents a Governor’s Proclamation to Ambassador Önal at the Embassy Reception for the 102nd Anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Maryland also reaffirmed its solidarity with Bosnia and Herzegovina through participation in key commemorative and remembrance events. In June, Deputy Secretary Lore, Assistant International Affairs Director Mantova, and OSOS staff attended the 30th Anniversary Commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC. Organized by the Congress of Bosniaks of North America, the event brought together genocide survivors, Members of Congress, diplomats, faith leaders, and human rights advocates to honor more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys massacred in July 1995. Later in the year, Deputy Secretary Lore provided remarks during the anniversary celebration of the Maryland–Bosnia and Herzegovina Exchange Council (MBHEC), which celebrated two years of MBHEC and 22 years of the State Partnership Program. These engagements highlighted the depth of Maryland’s people-to-people, military, and diplomatic ties with Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore with MBHEC Co-founder Adnan Hadrović and Brigadier General Edin Čizmić at the 30th Anniversary Commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide in Washington, DC.

Belgium

Maryland engaged the country of Belgium on two significant occasions in 2025. In March, on behalf of MDE, Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb participated in an in-person “Next Generation Budgets” workshop held in Brussels, Belgium, to learn more about climate budgeting and how countries from around the world have employed green budgeting tools to advance state climate and environmental goals. This in-person workshop is part of a year-long project that MDE, DBM, and the Comptroller's Office are participating in together on behalf of Maryland.

Later in the year, in June, Governor Wes Moore and Secretary of State Susan Lee met with Ambassador of Belgium H.E. Frédéric Bernard. The OSOS supported preparations for the meeting by coordinating with the Governor’s Office and Maryland Department of Commerce to compile briefing materials and ensure a productive discussion. Conversation topics included: increasing international trade and investment and exchanges in life sciences, pharmaceuticals, and other areas that will benefit both regions.



Governor Moore Meets with the Ambassador of Belgium Frédéric Bernard

Maryland’s engagements with the transatlantic have advanced the State’s economic and innovation priorities, and reinforced the State’s leadership in subnational diplomacy with Europe.

5. Relationship with Canada

Building on Governor Wes Moore's meeting with Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in July 2024, Maryland continued to strengthen its ties to our country's northern neighbor in 2025. Guided by the Subcabinet for International Affairs, the collaborative relationships that Maryland is now building with Québec and Ontario portend excellent future cooperation in trade, investment, environmental protection, tourism, and transportation, which will bring benefits to both Marylanders and Canadians.

Early in 2025, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) engaged with the Province of Québec on climate, environmental, and transportation issues and discussed with provincial representatives having a new, broader Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Québec that would encompass those subjects.

In May, Dr. Rachel Lamb, Assistant Secretary of Climate Policy and International Affairs at MDE, represented Maryland in attending Québec's Smart and Sustainable Mobility Showcase in Philadelphia. The Showcase's purpose is to highlight the ways that local governments and companies can work together to deploy medium and heavy-duty electric vehicles and related infrastructure and technologies, and thus better protect the climate and environment. Maryland, through the leadership of MDOT, MDE, Commerce, and OSOS, is currently preparing to host a Baltimore stop on the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Showcase with Québec in 2026.

In September, Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain and Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb met with Québec officials in New York City to explore areas for ongoing collaboration around climate and clean energy and further plan a future visit to Montréal. When the visit took place in November, Secretary McIlwain and Dr. Lamb had fruitful discussions with Québec officials about Maryland's climate leadership on clean energy, methane, and the circular economy and Québec's initiatives on these subjects.



Secretary of State Susan Lee and Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. promote Maryland's lighthouse sectors to Tourisme Montréal and Invest Québec International

The environmental-related discussions with Québec officials spawned a Maryland Trade Mission to Canada in November that was led by Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. and Secretary of State Susan Lee. Secretary Coker, Secretary Lee, and agency staff members met with Québec businesses, provincial government officials, and a representative of a Québec government pension fund which is a significant investor in North America. The highly productive meetings in Montréal centered on trade and investment in Maryland's life sciences and emerging technologies, the role of small business, and the potential for increased tourism and air travel between the two regions. The Maryland delegation also toured key sites for research and innovation in the Montréal area (a high-tech hub). After the Québec meetings, Secretary Coker and Commerce representatives traveled to Toronto, where they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the provincial government emphasizing collaboration between Maryland and Ontario in business, trade, and investment, and in particular the life sciences and quantum technologies.



Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. and Ontario Minister of Red Tape Reduction Andrea Khanjin sign a renewed MOU supporting economic cooperation and increasing bilateral investment and trade

Commerce, through its Office of International Investment and Trade (OIIT), also sought business opportunities for Maryland in Canada throughout the year. For example, OIIT staff visited Vancouver, British Columbia in June, seeking investment and trade opportunities of benefit to the State.

6. Relationship with the Middle East

The Maryland Department of Commerce and the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) together advanced Maryland's engagements in the Middle East in 2025 by establishing diplomatic relationships and laying the foundation for long-term economic and innovation partnerships with key stakeholders in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Focused on the State's lighthouse sectors, these efforts followed Governor Wes Moore's highly successful meeting a year earlier with the King of Jordan in Annapolis.



Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. engages with Qatar Investment Authority in Qatar

The year's engagement began with high-level diplomatic outreach in November, when Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ricardo Benn and OSOS Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Affairs Alexandria Liu met with senior commercial officials of the Embassies of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to present Maryland's strategic growth plan and lighthouse sector focus. In December, Secretary of State Susan Lee and Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. attended the United Arab Emirates National Day celebration in Washington, DC supported by Deputy Secretary of Commerce Benn, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore, and Special Assistant Liu. The event provided an opportunity to reinforce Maryland's relationship with Ambassador of the UAE H.E. Yousef Al Otaiba, strengthening personal relationships critical to future collaboration.



Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. meets with officials from the United Arab Emirates

Building on this foundation, Secretary Coker led a first-of-its-kind Maryland Trade and Investment Mission to the Middle East from December 6 to 13, supported by the OSOS. The Mission validated the strategic alignment between Maryland’s economic priorities and the economic growth agendas of the target countries, which emphasize economic diversification and intensive growth of knowledge-based industries. The Maryland delegation conducted senior-level meetings with key public- and private-sector institutions central to innovation, investment, and national security in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE. Counterparts expressed specific interest in execution-focused partnerships with Maryland across clinical collaboration, AI-enabled diagnostics, translational research, digital health infrastructure, and advanced and dual-use technologies, including cybersecurity, quantum applications, and resilient supply chains.



Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. meets with Riyadh officials in Saudi Arabia

7. Relationship with China

With cross-agency collaboration under the Subcabinet for International Affairs, Maryland continued its longstanding, productive relationships with the People's Republic of China ("China" or "PRC") and Anhui Province, Maryland's oldest Sister State. Many engagements featured the active and well-organized overseas community, experienced business and life sciences professionals, and a reaffirmed commitment to educational initiatives and collaboration.

Throughout 2025, Maryland supported several delegations from China, ranging from commercial seafood buyers, to culinary industry investors, to trade council representatives. The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) connected a U.S. State Department-led delegation of culinary-industry focused investors from China to Maryland-based Atlas Restaurant Group, and connected with former AMCHAM and U.S. Embassy–Beijing officials in attendance. In the summer, the OSOS attended a business delegation reception hosted by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), featuring technology and soybean companies from Hunan, China. Later in October, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) hosted a delegation of 11 seafood buyers from China and Hong Kong in Maryland. During the trade mission, the seafood buyers visited six Maryland seafood producers, which offered a range of products, including blue catfish, oysters, eel, and scallops. Also in October, the Embassy of the PRC, along with CCPIT Washington, toured the Port of Baltimore with the Deputy Executive Director of the Port. Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. and Deputy Secretary Benn attended. In the afternoon, the Chinese delegation visited Maryland's eCommerce capabilities at the Baltimore International Warehousing & Transportation.



Maryland Department of Agriculture International Marketing host a seafood delegation from China and Hong Kong

Maryland’s engagements with Anhui and Xiamen were a cornerstone of educational exchange with the PRC. The OSOS supported the Baltimore-Xiamen Sister City Committee’s Youth Ambassador Student Travel Program, sending Maryland students to the city of Xiamen (with which Baltimore has a 40-year Sister City relationship), Anhui Province (with which Maryland has a 45-year Sister State relationship), and Shanghai. In addition, The Maryland Higher Education Commission and the OSOS met with the PRC Embassy's Education Office to discuss higher education collaboration between China and Maryland. The meeting concluded with a mutual understanding of the immense potential for beneficial partnerships, with both sides expressing commitment to taking tangible steps toward realizing stronger academic and research ties in the near future. The previous events culminated in a delegation from Anhui Province to Annapolis, led by Anhui Vice Governor Ren Qinghua. Their visit commemorated the 45th year of the Maryland–Anhui Sister State Agreement, Maryland’s oldest Sister State relationship, where Maryland State Archives displayed the original Sister State Agreement as signed in 1980. Secretary of State Susan Lee and Vice Governor Ren then signed the Memorandum of Understanding On Strengthening Youth Exchanges Between Maryland and Anhui Province, and exchanged gifts.



Secretary of State Susan Lee and Vice Governor of Anhui Province Ren Qinghua sign the MOU On Strengthening Youth Exchanges Between Maryland and Anhui Province at the Maryland State Archives

8. Relationship with Vietnam

Led by the Subcabinet for International Affairs, Maryland built on its friendly relationship with Vietnam in 2025 through Governor Wes Moore's meeting with a high-ranking Vietnamese government official, follow-up agricultural exports, and Secretary of State meetings with the Ambassador of Vietnam.

As a result of the meeting hosted by Governor Moore and Lt. Governor Aruna Miller in Annapolis in March with Vietnam's National Assembly Vice President Madame Nguyễn Thị Thanh and her delegation, significant agricultural sales took place shortly thereafter with Maryland companies selling their products to Vietnamese counterparts. Vice President Nguyễn had pledged in her remarks to Governor Moore and Lt. Governor Miller at the meeting that Vietnam would buy agricultural products from Maryland and would endeavor to increase educational exchanges.



Secretary of State Susan Lee, Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Atticks, and Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai host a delegation from Vietnam led by Vice President Madame Nguyễn Thị Thanh and Ambassador Nguyễn Quốc Dũng

The meeting in the Governor's Reception Room also included the Ambassador of Vietnam H.E. Nguyễn Quốc Dũng and Embassy staff and for Maryland, Secretary of State Susan Lee, Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Atticks, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai, Deputy Commerce Secretary Ricardo Benn, and other State officials and staff as well as members of the Maryland–Vietnam Sister States Committee. Follow-up meetings then occurred with Vietnamese officials and importers on May 12 and June 6, at which Vietnamese state-owned and private companies agreed to buy poultry products, soybeans, grain, and apples from Maryland producers. The March 12 meeting demonstrated the effectiveness of diplomacy between the leaders of Maryland and Vietnam, which solidified the two regions' relationship and brought about increased trade and additional business to the State's agricultural producers.

A hallmark of the friendly relationship that has been built between Maryland and Vietnam over the past decade and a half is the regular communication between the two regions. In 2025, leaders of Maryland agencies, including Secretary of State Lee, Secretary of Agriculture Atticks, and Higher Education Secretary Dr. Rai, maintained communications on an ongoing basis engaging with representatives of Vietnam. One notable engagement was Secretary Lee's and OSOS International Affairs Director Mendy Nitsch's visit to the Vietnamese Embassy on September 17 to help celebrate the 80th National Day of Vietnam and the 30th Anniversary of U.S.–Vietnam Diplomatic Relations. This celebration afforded the OSOS and Vietnamese Embassy staff an opportunity to discuss the replacement of Maryland's Sister State in Vietnam in light of the merger of our previous Sister State, Ninh Thuận Province, into a neighboring province in 2025. The parties, at the suggestion of OSOS Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, agreed to select a new Vietnamese Sister State and develop a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2026.

9. Relationship with Taiwan

Maryland continued its productive relationship with Taiwan in 2025 through diplomatic and business meetings that focused primarily on the life sciences, advanced technology, and commerce. Many of these engagements grew out of Secretary of State Susan Lee's Mission to Taiwan early in the year.

In March, Secretary Lee embarked on a Trade Mission to Taiwan, anchored by the Smart City Summit & Expo in Taipei. At the Expo, Secretary Lee highlighted Maryland's leadership in key strategic sectors including life sciences and quantum computing, as well as signature programs from the Maryland Department of Commerce and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Secretary Lee engaged Taiwan's Ministry of Science & Technology, the "Silicon Valley" of Taiwan Hsinchu Science Park, and numerous Taiwan-based tech companies interested in expanding to Maryland.



Secretary of State Susan Lee travels to Taiwan to deliver remarks at the Smart City Summit & Expo

Beyond the Mission, Maryland maintained active business and commercial engagements with Taiwan. The OSOS facilitated an introduction between Commerce and a large-scale dry cell battery producer seeking the optimal landing site in the U.S. And in October, Commerce attended the TEDCO Expo, a gathering of economic development organizations (EDOs) and companies within or seeking to join TEDCO's portfolio. During the event, Governor Wes Moore provided remarks and TEDCO signed a Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with \$50 million in international investment funds from Taiwan to expand its funding pool and strengthen Maryland's startup ecosystem.

Diplomatic and community engagements with Taiwan continued throughout the year with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the U.S. (TECRO). Meetings with TECRO officials affirmed that Maryland and Taiwan align on sectors including the life sciences, pharmaceuticals, semiconductor technology, and cybersecurity. The OSOS attended the Taiwanese Heritage Night at Nationals Park at the invitation of TECRO Taiwan Representative to the U.S. Alexander Yui, and participated in the 114th National Day of Taiwan at the Twin Oaks Estate along with Members of Congress and numerous other dignitaries.



Secretary of State Susan Lee and OSOS staff attend the 114th National Day of Taiwan with Taiwanese Representative Alexander Yui

10. Relationship with Africa

Maryland began to refocus its attention in 2025 on countries in Africa with the goal of building sustainable partnerships with the African countries that already have regular diplomatic relations with our State. These countries include South Africa, Liberia, and Nigeria, and it is expected that under the auspices of the Subcabinet for International Affairs, Maryland will have meaningful engagements with these and other African countries in the coming year.

The OSOS also pursued communications with African countries with which our State has regular contact, including Ghana, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and in November, welcomed Dr. Akilah Alleyne, Deputy Director of International Affairs, who will oversee and lead the Office's engagements and partnerships with Africa. With these new developments, Maryland will play increasingly influential roles in global markets, technology adoption, education, tourism, health innovation, and cultural exchange.

Through sustained high-level engagement, the Office has strengthened trust and credibility between Maryland officials, the KwaZulu-Natal officials, the Liberian Embassy, and Nigerian state government officials. The OSOS's 2025 relationships with four African countries are outlined below:

South Africa (KwaZulu-Natal)

Secretary of State Susan Lee highlighted Governor Wes Moore's historic \$400 million equitable housing initiative, an effort that reflects Maryland's commitment to economic justice and community resilience, at the third annual Pan Africa City Symposium and Expo (PACSE) in June. This event was organized by the U.S.–Africa Collaborative, which convenes experts, practitioners, academics, and policy makers to examine the challenges of housing, community development, and human settlements and to share and propose ethical and sustainable solutions. The Secretary's remarks underscored the State's continued investment in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, and civil protection, and shared the background that PASCE grew out of the Maryland–KwaZulu-Natal Sister State partnership.

Efforts are ongoing to renew and solidify the Maryland–KwaZulu-Natal Sister State Cooperative Agreement, which reflects the core priorities of the KwaZulu-Natal staff in the areas of tourism; enhanced economic development through business, trade, and investment; port collaboration and maritime exchange programs; agriculture development and agriculture business programs; and the exchange of heritage and cultural preservation programs.

Liberia

Maryland's positive relationship with Liberia stems from sister jurisdictions, Bong and Maryland Counties, which were formalized through a Sister State Agreement signed in 2007 to foster economic, cultural, and educational ties, building on historical connections, including the Liberian county named after Maryland. This year, the OSOS leadership, including Secretary of State Susan Lee, Deputy Secretary Michael Lore, and Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, met the Ambassador of Liberia and on one occasion, the President of Liberia, during a number of their working meetings in the United States from July through November. H.E. Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh, Liberia's Ambassador to the United States, is not only a seasoned diplomat but also a distinguished academic who previously served as President of the University of Liberia and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.



From left to right: Minister Counselor Charles Allen, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore, Ambassador Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh, Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, and Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Akilah Alleyne meet in Annapolis to discuss a proposed Sister State relationship between Maryland and the country of Liberia

The OSOS presented a draft MOU to Ambassador Conteh, proposing a Sister State relationship between Maryland and the country of Liberia. The Ambassador was receptive to the MOU discussions regarding a revised Sister State relationship with Maryland that will replace the existing inactive Liberian Sister States of Bong and Maryland Counties. The draft MOU specifies the goals of Liberia, including strengthening the rule of law, economic development, and educational exchange, Liberia's participation with the Maryland 250 Commission, and the expressed desire of Liberia to continue work with the State of Maryland.

Nigeria

Through strategic engagement with Nigerian state governments and public stakeholders, Maryland has lowered barriers to cross-border trade and investment. In partnership with the OSOS, the Department of Commerce's Office of International Investment and Trade (OIIT) supported the Nigerian Governor of Niger State's visit to Prince George's County, hosted by Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation, to discuss foreign direct investment (FDI) and export opportunities, particularly in lithium and rare earth minerals, in September 2025.

Healthcare workforce development has also been a focus of diplomatic collaboration between Maryland and Nigeria. The past year, Deputy Secretary Lore welcomed a health delegation from Maryland's Sister State of Ondo State, Nigeria, at the State House. The meeting included several of the Commissioners of the Governor's African Commission, and Brian Castleberry, Department of Commerce Regional Manager for Africa, and focused on connecting the delegation with Maryland businesses that provide nurse training, AI-augmented reality technology, and urine tests for malaria.

Discussions are ongoing with Prince George's County stakeholders and representatives who have expressed interest in joining efforts to translate existing MOUs with Ondo State and Cross River State into tangible commercial outcomes. Action plans include delving into discussions about a scalable policy and program framework from existing MOUs with Nigeria that may also establish structured agreements with traditional kingdoms, demonstrating the potential for a country-wide MOU between Maryland and Nigeria that would include specific Nigerian states.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has also emerged as a strategic pillar of the OSOS's diplomatic engagement with Nigerian stakeholders, advancing shared priorities in innovation, governance, and responsible technology adoption. Through engagement with Deborah Enyone Oni, Esq., Founder of Hilton Top Solicitors and Convener of the Women in Emerging Tech Conference—hosted in November 2025 at the American Corner in Lagos with U.S. Embassy and Consulate support—the Office has supported women's leadership in emerging technologies while advancing dialogue on workforce development, smart-city infrastructure, and future economic and policy partnerships. These engagements have strengthened discussions around AI, innovation, and economic alignment while respecting local priorities and development strategies, and remain a central pillar of Maryland's diplomatic engagement across the globe, especially with Nigeria.

Ghana

Maryland has one of the most vibrant, growing African diaspora populations in the U.S., including a notable Ghanaian community. From an economic development perspective, Ghana is poised to be a key strategic partner in 21st-century diplomacy, trade, and tourism for Maryland, as a growing number of U.S. citizens — particularly African American expatriates and dual citizens — are also obtaining dual-citizenship with Ghana, following cultural and heritage initiatives like the “Year of Return” (2019) and subsequent programs. As a result, economic development, education, workforce development, tourism, and sports diplomacy are key areas of interest for continued partnerships in Maryland.

In December, the Lt. Governor’s Office and the OSOS facilitated high-level engagement between Maryland leadership and the Ghana Football Association (GFA) to explore an international exhibition match featuring the Ghana Black Stars in Maryland. Following formal discussions, a Letter of Interest co-signed by Governor Wes Moore and Lt. Governor Aruna Miller was submitted and acknowledged by the GFA, with Maryland identified as the recommended host site and final agreement negotiations anticipated by January 2026. Discussions around the 2026 FIFA World Cup with the Ghana Football Association also piqued interest in a potential Ghana–Maryland partnership that could provide a foundation for sustained collaboration in education, commerce, and cultural exchange, following a previous Columbia–Tema Sister City relationship that had been established in 2014.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller hosts President Kurt Edwin Simeon-Okraku and the Ghana Football Association in the State House

Democratic Republic of the Congo

In January, the OSOS strengthened global access and diplomatic goodwill through high-level engagement with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), expanding Maryland's visibility while advancing trade and investment dialogue. These engagements included discussions with the DRC Embassy on market-entry incentives for Maryland businesses, as well as follow-up on a proposed Sister State partnership with Mai-Ndombe Province focused on sustainable development, energy, agriculture, education, and cultural exchange.

Conclusion

In 2025, Maryland advanced its economic and commercial engagement with Africa through the Global Gateway Program and related foreign direct investment initiatives. Three African companies, one each from South Africa, Ethiopia, and Mali, were approved to participate in the Program, with additional onboarding of a construction company into the Prince George's County incubator. Site visits to F3Tech in Easton, the Eastern Shore Innovation Center in Cambridge, and Launchport in Baltimore further supported program promotion, partner alignment, and broader foreign direct investment strategy development.

In November and December, the OSOS engaged with a prominent Ghanaian business owner to explore technology-driven workforce and education partnerships that align with Maryland's economic development priorities. These discussions advanced potential collaboration on tailored workforce intelligence and automation solutions to support WIOA-aligned reporting, youth workforce development, and employer–university coordination, with anticipated cross-sector economic benefits for Maryland.

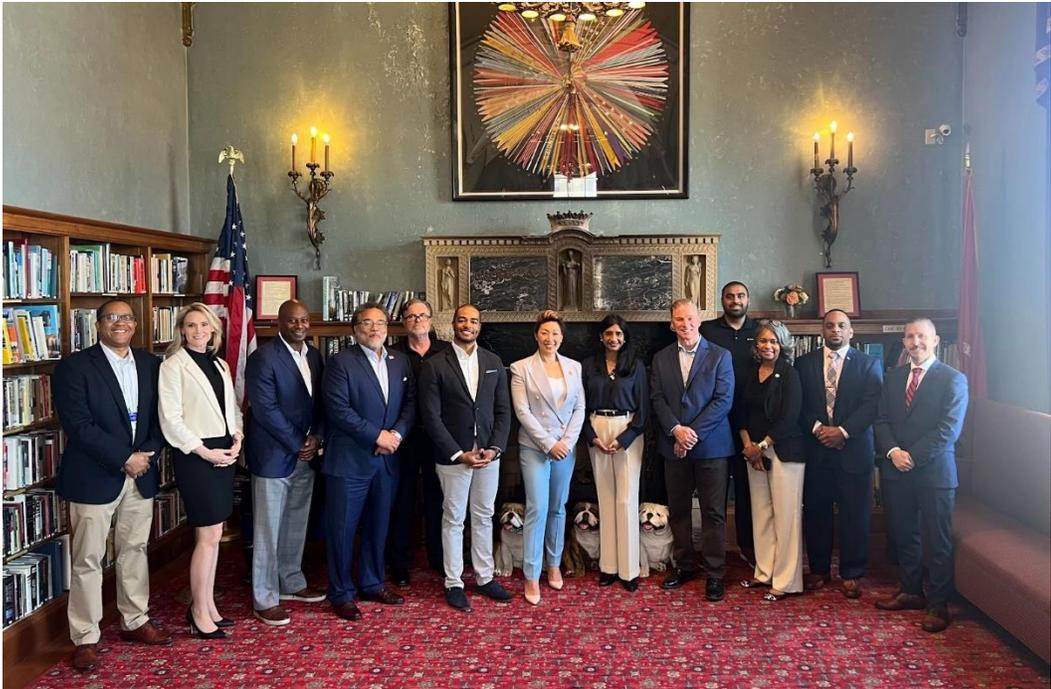
Maryland also strengthened diplomatic and people-to-people ties through engagements with the African diaspora and youth leadership initiatives. A notable highlight was the Mandela Washington Fellowship Closing Ceremony in July hosted by the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) Center for Global Engagement, marking the transition of 22 Fellows from across Sub-Saharan Africa into the global alumni network. The six-week program reinforced leadership development, professional exchange, and long-term relationship-building between Maryland institutions and emerging African leaders.

11. Advancing Cybersecurity, Quantum Computing, and Artificial Intelligence

Guided by the Subcabinet for International Affairs, Maryland advanced its leadership in cybersecurity, quantum technologies, and artificial intelligence through high-level engagements with global technology leaders, academic institutions, and other strategic partners. These efforts reinforced Maryland’s position as a hub for emerging technologies critical to economic competitiveness, national security, and workforce development.

Maryland’s international engagement in innovation-driven sectors expanded through participation in global technology forums, including the Smart City Expo in Taipei. Representing the State, Secretary of State Susan Lee highlighted Maryland’s strengths in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, life sciences, and quantum computing, while advancing relationships with international innovation ecosystems and startup communities.

Senior-level engagement with global industry leaders advanced through Maryland’s participation in the RSA Conference in San Francisco, one of the world’s leading cybersecurity forums. Led by Lt. Governor Aruna Miller and Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr., the Maryland delegation engaged with cybersecurity and technology executives and participated in an executive visit to NVIDIA headquarters, deepening dialogue with one of the world’s foremost artificial intelligence and computing companies.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller and Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai meet global industry leaders at NVIDIA headquarters in San Francisco

Maryland's collaboration with NVIDIA expanded through engagements in both Maryland and Washington, DC. A multi-day visit to Maryland, coordinated by the Maryland Department of Commerce, Maryland Department of Labor, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, brought NVIDIA representatives together with senior leadership at the University of Maryland Baltimore County; Johns Hopkins University; the University of Maryland College Park; and Morgan State University. These engagements provided Maryland's universities an opportunity to showcase research capabilities and workforce talent while advancing discussions on future collaboration in artificial intelligence and quantum computing.

That engagement culminated in Maryland's participation in events associated with the NVIDIA GPU Technology Conference (GTC) in Washington, DC. From October 28 to 29, Lt. Governor Miller participated in high-profile engagements highlighting Maryland's leadership at the intersection of federal innovation and state-level execution, including joining students and leadership from the University of Maryland College Park for the GTC opening keynote delivered by Jensen Huang. Lt. Governor Miller also participated in a panel discussion alongside Representative Sam Liccardo, NVIDIA co-founder Chris Malachowsky, and NVIDIA Vice President Charles Wuischpard examining how federal innovation translates into state-level execution and how Maryland is leading nationally in artificial intelligence and advanced technologies.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller and Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai host NVIDIA at Johns Hopkins University

Following the engagements with NVIDIA and the State’s focus on applied artificial intelligence infrastructure, the Office of Lieutenant Governor organized a multi-agency benchmarking visit to the University of Florida HiPerGator AI Facility in August. In collaboration with the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and the Departments of Commerce, Labor, General Services, and Information Technology (DoIT), the Maryland delegation toured the Facility’s data center and engaged in day-long discussions on governance models, operations, and workforce integration. The visit provided a comparative framework for how Maryland could incorporate strategies employed by Florida in building and operating a large-scale AI facility and further strengthened ties with NVIDIA, which plays an integral role in the HiPerGator platform. Following Lt. Governor Miller’s visit to Florida, she delivered the keynote address in August at the 3rd Annual Cyber Systems and Physical Engineering Demo Day Showcase hosted at the Universities at Shady Grove. The event was a culmination of a five-week “Jumpstart Your Engineering Career” summer program, bringing together 47 students from high schools, community colleges, and universities. Lt. Governor Miller addressed students, their families, coaches, mentors, and Universities at Shady Grove leadership, highlighting Maryland’s commitment to developing the next generation of talent in cybersecurity, engineering, and emerging technologies.

These innovation and infrastructure efforts brought tangible economic outcomes. The Maryland Department of Commerce’s Office of International Investment and Trade (OIIT) advanced foreign direct investment activity in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. Additional soft-landings included the Maryland Innovation Center welcoming companies that established operations at the Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc. OIIT also approved four applications from foreign investors, with agreements currently in process, including an artificial intelligence speech-processing company from Jordan, an Irish firm developing AI-enabled HVAC technologies, a Taiwan-based company specializing in AI-powered semiconductor technologies for satellite applications, and a cybersecurity firm from Spain.

Maryland’s global Trade Missions also generated significant technology-enabled investment outcomes across life sciences, digital manufacturing, and applied information technology. As a direct result of Governor Wes Moore’s international Trade and Investment Mission to Japan and South Korea, Samsung Biologics announced plans to establish its first U.S. manufacturing facility in Rockville, acquiring GSK’s Rockville manufacturing campus for \$280 million and committing to retain more than 500 existing jobs while expanding advanced biomanufacturing capacity. Engagements during the Cabinet Secretaries’ Missions to Québec and the Middle East similarly advanced Maryland’s visibility and partnerships in information technology, digital infrastructure, and innovation-driven manufacturing, reinforcing the role of global engagement in delivering concrete economic and workforce outcomes.

Marking a historic collaboration announced during Governor Moore’s first overseas trade mission, IonQ, a College Park-based quantum computing company, further expanded Maryland’s

international quantum footprint through two strategic Memoranda of Understanding. IonQ entered into an agreement with Japan’s National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) to advance quantum research and innovation. Company leadership signed a second MOU with South Korea’s Intellian Technologies, Inc. to explore applications of secure quantum networking technologies in satellite communications, reinforcing the intersection of quantum innovation, aerospace, and defense.

Maryland advanced transatlantic cooperation in these key areas through senior leadership with Estonia, a Sister State and Military Partner. In October, Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. attended the Tallinn Digital Summit, an exclusive global leadership forum hosted by the Prime Minister of Estonia focused on establishing frameworks for the beneficial, scalable, and interoperable implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) across diverse societies and economies.

For more details, see 2025 Key Collaborative Engagements, sec. 4, p. 18.

Maryland’s quantum leadership reached the global stage in September when Governor Moore delivered a keynote address at the Quantum World Congress. The Department of Commerce also maintained a presence at the Congress with an exhibition booth highlighting the State’s quantum ecosystem and investment opportunities. During the event, Governor Moore outlined Maryland’s vision to become the global capital of quantum and announced a new agreement with Microsoft to anchor the Capital Quantum Benchmarking Hub in College Park. As part of this initiative, Microsoft will establish a Partner Integration Center, an advanced laboratory for collaborative hardware and software development designed to accelerate research, prototyping, and commercialization.



Governor Wes Moore and Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. at the Quantum World Congress

These engagements throughout 2025 strengthened Maryland’s global leadership in cybersecurity, quantum computing, and artificial intelligence, while advancing international, federal, academic, and industry partnerships aligned with the State’s long-term economic development and national security priorities.

12. Pursuing Innovations in the Life Sciences

Maryland, under the Subcabinet for International Affairs, continued to position itself in 2025 as a key leader in the field of life sciences within the United States through proactive engagements in biotechnology, scientific research, and pharmaceuticals. Maryland's leadership is recognized both nationally and internationally due to the pioneering efforts of Governor Wes Moore and the Maryland state agencies in elevating the life sciences as a key strategic sector.

One of the highlights from this year includes the Governor's Trade and Investment Mission to Asia in April that was instrumental in advancing the Moore-Miller Administration's lighthouse sector in the life sciences. Pivotal outcomes of this Trade Mission, particularly in the life sciences, include Samsung Biologics choosing Maryland as the location for their first U.S. manufacturing site and the reinforcement of the 50-year relationship between Shimadzu Scientific Instruments and Maryland. In particular, strategic partnership between the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) and the Department of Commerce in spearheading the life sciences-oriented extension to the Asia Trade Mission contributed to these such deliverables in attracting foreign direct investment and life science partnerships. This integrated approach was led by Secretary of State Susan Lee and Commerce Life Sciences Manager Bradley Gillenwater, who met with government officials and decision makers of Korean-based life sciences firms interested in expanding their operations to Maryland. The OSOS and Commerce also jointly spearheaded the second renewal signing of the life sciences MOU with Kanagawa Prefecture during the Asia Trade Mission, reaffirming the shared commitment to life sciences research and development while opening avenues for the advancement of new opportunities. Following the signing ceremony, Commerce and the Kanagawa government jointly coordinated a Maryland investment seminar focused on life sciences.

The Moore-Miller Administration's lighthouse sector in life sciences was further advanced by the active participation in forums by the Subcabinet for International Affairs throughout the year. Secretary of State Lee presented the Governor's Asian Lunar New Year Proclamation at the Biohealth Hub Artificial Intelligence Forum that addressed the application of artificial intelligence in healthcare and clinical trials, as well as at the Chinese Biopharmaceutical Association 2025 Spring Gala that gathered together industry leaders. Secretary of State Lee also delivered remarks at the Chinese American Health Services Annual Meeting, which State Senator Clarence Lam, Chief OAH Judge Chung Pak, and GOCI Commissioner Ping Lu supported as well. Along with the OSOS, Commerce also facilitated international dialogue in the life sciences through multiple meetings with a life sciences company from India to advance discussions of the establishment of a U.S. manufacturing facility in Maryland with the projected employment potential to scale up to 3,000 employees.



Secretary of State Susan Lee and Embassy of the People's Republic of China Minister Qiu Wenxing and staff at the 30th anniversary of the Chinese Biopharmaceutical Association in the U.S.

Building on these engagements, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore welcomed a visiting health delegation from Ondo, Nigeria and facilitated connections between the delegation and Maryland businesses in biotechnology and augmented reality nurse training technology. Dr. Antwan Brown, Administrative Director for the Governor's African Commission, and Brian Castleberry, Department of Commerce Regional Manager for Africa, were also instrumental in steering the dialogue and engagements at this meeting.

Other initiatives by the OSOS and Commerce reflected the sustained efforts of the Subcabinet to expand Maryland's leadership role in the life sciences. Secretary Lee and her team, along with GOCI Commissioner Dr. Ping Lu, facilitated discussions with the CEO of a Shanghai-based company specializing in DNA amplification technology regarding the potential establishment of a headquarters and distribution facility in Maryland. In September, Commerce participated in the Maryland Tech Council's Bio Innovation Conference assembling the region's top life sciences professionals and global industry leaders, as well as the BioHealth Capital Region Forum on Biopharma attended by government officials and industry executives.

Overall, the collective efforts of the Subcabinet of International Affairs, led by the OSOS and Commerce, have pushed forward Maryland's global and regional life sciences presence through consistent sector dialogue and active participation in industry events. Commerce additionally participated in the MEDICA Trade Show in Düsseldorf, Germany in November.

13. Leading on Climate and Environmental Solutions

The Subcabinet for International Affairs demonstrated a sustained commitment to advancing Maryland’s growing prominence in climate and environmental solutions in 2025, as the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) took the lead in advancing Maryland’s agenda on climate action. A critical highlight was when Secretary of Environment Serena McIlwain represented the State of Maryland at the COP30 Local Leaders Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which marked her third consecutive year of participation in this global gathering of subnational climate leaders. At this forum, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain underscored Maryland’s ambitious climate agenda and outlined examples of state-led implementation at scale, such as the Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, clean energy deployment, and resilience investments. She also highlighted Maryland’s demonstrated power of coordinated state action in showcasing Maryland’s leadership within the U.S. Climate Alliance and Under2Coalition, and emphasized Maryland’s progressive steps with policies that cut emissions, create jobs, and protect frontline communities. Accompanied by Assistant Secretary Dr. Rachel Lamb, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain encouraged the expansion of collaborative efforts on climate finance, methane reduction, and circular economy solutions to subnational leaders and international partners. This proactive engagement at COP30 highlighted Maryland’s leadership in advancing climate solutions on the world stage. Simultaneously, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain established a renewed partnership to advance joint restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and Guanabara Bay. This partnership with the State of Rio de Janeiro, initiated by the new Cooperation Agreement signed by Secretary of the Environment McIlwain and the Environmental Secretary of the State of Rio, provides the opportunity to facilitate technical exchange with support from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.



Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain and Assistant Secretary Dr. Rachel Lamb establish a renewed partnership to advance joint restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and Guanabara Bay with the State of Rio de Janeiro

The European Union Circularity Forum co-hosted by Governor Wes Moore and the European Union Ambassador Jovita Neliupšienė, supported by Secretary of State Susan Lee and led by Secretary of the Environment McIlwain showcased Maryland’s stewardship of accelerating circular solutions and advancing a more sustainable, resilient, and economically competitive circular economy. The Forum brought together leaders and industry partners from the European Union (EU) and across Maryland, positioning the State as a national leader in shifting recycling costs from taxpayers to producers through Maryland’s new extended producer responsibility (EPR) law for packaging and paper products. Secretary of the Environment McIlwain highlighted the potential of EPR law to raise Maryland’s recycling rate above 50%, generate more than \$200 million in material value, and create over 2,000 jobs. Through the Forum, regional and international dialogue on fairness and climate strategies on reducing waste and cutting emissions were progressed, and new collaboration tracks with EU partners were launched with a focus on critical minerals, textiles, packaging, and construction.

Another pivotal moment that advanced Maryland’s climate goals was the cross-agency collaborative official delegation trip to Québec in November, involving the OSOS and Maryland Departments of Commerce and the Environment. Secretary of the Environment McIlwain and Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb joined Secretary of State Lee and Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. and their department staff to advance shared learning ahead of an upcoming Maryland–Québec MOU signing. With respect to environmental outcomes of this Canada Mission, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain toured the Alstom REM rapid rail project and engaged Québec partners on emissions reduction, integrated climate planning, and transportation electrification. The Maryland Department of the Environment was also able to explore approaches to clean power generation, system resilience, and grid modernization through the delegation’s visit to Hydro-Québec’s IREQ Research Institute and the Beauharnois hydroelectric facility.



Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain represents the State of Maryland at the Bonn Climate Convention, the official meeting of the parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and London Climate Week

An additional effort to advance Maryland’s environmental priorities included Secretary of the Environment McIlwain and Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb’s representation of Maryland at the Bonn Climate Convention, New York Climate Week, and London Climate Week. Through participation in the U.S. Climate Alliance, Under2Coalition and America Is All In, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain underscored the significance of subnational leadership in driving climate action amidst shifting federal priorities and matured partnerships aimed towards accelerating climate progress with other public and private sector organizations. In February, senior leadership of the Maryland Department of the Environment met with a technology and climate solutions company from Denmark to discuss the integration of digitization and AI to assist states in accelerating environmental permitting with an inclusive and sustainable approach. The OSOS also coordinated initiatives to foster dialogue in clean energy and environmental solutions where Secretary of State Lee and her staff met with outgoing representatives of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) International Affairs division Mr. Paul Tiao and Ms. Julie Cerqueira to discuss DOE and Maryland opportunities for engagement. Secretary Lee was also connected to Mr. Bob Dixon, the DOE International Affairs division liaison to subnational governments, and Mr. Paul Tumminia, who leads efforts in uniting U.S. and eastern/central European cities through the Partnership on Transatlantic Clean Energy and Climate.

14. Military Partnerships in Europe

2025 was a year marked by sustained operational momentum in international defense engagement for the Subcabinet for International Affairs with the Maryland Military Department (MMD) and the Maryland National Guard (MDNG) acting as the central driver of military partnerships and multinational leadership in security and defense. The robust series of engagements with partner nations Estonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) advanced international collaboration and helped reinforce the State of Maryland's strong defense and cyber partnerships on a national and global stage.

In May, the Maryland Army National Guard (MDARNG) participated in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Immediate Response 25, a major multinational exercise in Croatia, during which MDARNG Soldiers trained alongside the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH). In this month, the Maryland National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP) also enhanced interoperability, multinational readiness, and cyber cooperation through continued engagements with Estonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). These efforts included the participation of MDARNG Soldiers in Exercise Hedgehog 2025 in Estonia, which reinforced total defense and joint maneuver capabilities; the Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) training conducted with the Estonian Defence League, which fostered partner medical readiness; and the support of EUCOM's cyber defense team from Maryland Air National Guard (MDANG) Airmen during NATO's premier cyber exercise Locked Shields 2025. FY25-26 civic-military priorities were aligned during the planning session exercised by the Maryland SPP team in BiH with the Maryland-Bosnia and Herzegovina Exchange Council (MBHEC), while multinational law enforcement operations were underpinned by the deployment of elements of the 115th MP Battalion and 200th MP Company to Croatia for Exercise Immediate Response 25.



Airmen from Maryland Air National Guard participated in Crossed Swords, a comprehensive cyber defense exercise, with their Estonian state partners at the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn, Estonia

Strategic cooperation was reinforced when senior leaders from the Maryland National Guard (MDNG) and Estonian Defense Forces hosted a joint flag team during the Victory Day Parade for the Victory Day Celebrations, advancing cooperation on cyber and emergency management issues. As an additional part of the MDNG's high-impact slate of international engagements under the SPP, 48 Airmen from the 175th Cyberspace Operations Group were deployed to Romania for Exercise Saber Guardian 25 to reinforce multinational resilience in NATO's southeastern flank and conduct live cyber operations. MDARNG also enhanced NATO-standard coordination for future operations through the Joint Fires and Medical Interoperability Exchange with the AFBiH Light Infantry Battalion Group.

Another key highlight was when Lt. Governor Aruna Miller spent a full day at the Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River and Blum Military Reservation with MDNG members, employers and business leaders, and representatives from the MMD. Lt. Governor Miller joined Adjutant General Janeen L. Birkhead for this annual tradition to witness the dedication and preparation of the employees in the workforce. As part of the immersive experience, from helicopter rides to briefings, Lt. Governor Miller sat side by side with the men and women who serve both the State of Maryland and the United States daily.



Lt. Governor Miller, Adjutant General Janeen L. Birkhead, and Secretary of Emergency Management Russell Strickland attend BossLift at Warfield Air National Guard Base and Blum Military Reservation

The MDNG further championed efforts in strengthening enlisted-level ties by Senior Enlisted Leader CSM Harry's attendance at the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF) Change of Responsibility Ceremony, which additionally demonstrated the MDNG's sustained commitment to professional military education and leadership exchange with Estonia. Also reinforcing this commitment was the Adjutant General Birkhead's presentation of the EDF Cyber Command flag on behalf of the MDNG at the Cyber Command's 7th Anniversary and Flag Unfurling, which symbolized continued U.S. support for Estonia's national defense and cyber resilience. Maryland's long-standing partnership with Estonia was strengthened through dialogue centered around the advancement of strategic cooperation and multinational defense readiness between Maryland senior leaders and

the Estonian Division Commander at the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) conference in Washington, DC. The Estonian senior enlisted director observed MDNG operations in July during the NBWX and visited MDANG cyber and wing elements during the EDF CSM Adoson visit as well. Multinational partnership was furthered through the National Guard Best Warrior Competition (NBWC) in Maryland with Estonian and BiH soldiers, and through cyber exercises such as Crossed Swords.



Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Janeen L. Birckhead presents a flag from the Maryland National Guard and the Office of the Defense Attaché of the United States Embassy, in the presence of Permanent Secretary of the Estonian Ministry of Defense Kaimo Kuusk, during the 7th anniversary of the Estonian Cyber Command at the Estonian War Museum

In September, interagency synchronization was bolstered by the participation of Maryland SPP personnel and Bilateral Affairs Officers for both Estonia and BiH in the EUCOM Strategy Implementation Conference (ESIC) held in Germany, which aligned Maryland's SPP activities with EUCOM's theater strategy. Strategic alignment with Estonian defense priorities were reinforced to a greater extent with MMD's delegation to Estonia led by Maryland Army National Guard Commander BG Collins for the Senior Leader Visit and Army-to-Army Bilateral Defense Consultations (SLV/ABCD), which strengthened operational cooperation. The Adjutant General and Senior Enlisted Leader also highlighted the MDNG's contributions to the Armed Forces of

BiH modernization on a senior-level platform at the A5 CHOD Conference in Albania, with an emphasis on cyber, military police, aviation, and health cooperation.

In addition to building interoperability, preparing for upcoming multinational exercises, and advancing strategic relationships (particularly with Estonia and BiH), the MMD facilitated exercises to enhance multinational defense readiness in October, when MDNG soldiers of the 1-175th Infantry Regiment worked alongside their Estonian counterparts in the Train-the-Trainer program's Squad Live Fire Exercise (LFX) conducted by the Estonian Defence League in Estonia. The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) and Department of Commerce also contributed to efforts oriented around Estonian defense in October, when Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore gave remarks at the Estonian Aerospace and Defense Industry Reception hosted by the Washington International Trade Center at BWTech at University of Maryland Baltimore Campus South. The Assistant Secretary of Commerce John Gilstrap delivered opening remarks at this reception, and representatives from the Estonian Aerospace and Defense Industry Association presented on innovation and collaborative opportunities in security, defense technology, and aerospace solutions.

15. Promoting Maryland’s Equine Industry

In 2025, the Subcabinet for International Affairs advanced Maryland’s equine industry by leveraging international diplomacy, trade promotion, and global sporting events to strengthen foreign relationships, promote exports, and position Maryland as a premier hub for equestrian excellence.

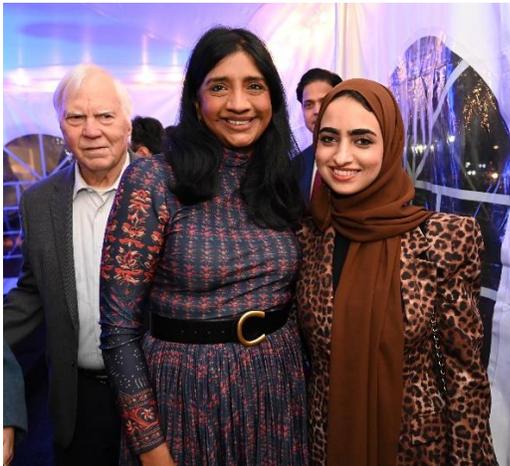
In May, the Subcabinet for International Affairs supported high-profile diplomatic engagement during the Preakness Festival. In coordination with the First Lady’s Office, the Governor’s Office, and the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS), Maryland showcased during the Preakness Festival Opening Reception its renowned equestrian heritage to senior diplomats from key partner countries, including Japan, Mexico, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Jamaica, and the People’s Republic of China. Ambassador of Japan Shigeo Yamada and senior Embassy officials joined Preakness Stakes, further strengthened ties supporting Maryland’s broader trade and investment objectives, while highlighting the State’s globally recognized horse racing and breeding traditions.



From left to right: Secretary of State Susan Lee, Embassy of Japan Economic Minister Kosei Nomura, First Mother Joy Moore, and Embassy of the Republic of Korea Consul General Cho Kijoung at Preakness Opening Reception

International trade promotion efforts continued in August, when the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) participated in Euro Paint in Germany—the largest American Paint Horse show held outside the United States. Maryland promoted its nationally recognized Paint Horse genetics with a delegation of Maryland-based breeders and hosted a seminar on the benefits and process of importing equine genetics from Maryland. Conducted in partnership with U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc., this engagement reinforced Maryland’s reputation as a leader in equine breeding and is expected to support increased exports of equine genetics to European markets.

In October, the Subcabinet for International Affairs played a central role in the success of Embassy Night at the Washington International Horse Show, co-hosted by the OSOS and the Prince George’s County Government. This diplomatic reception brought together Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Secretary of State Susan Lee, County Executive Aisha Braveboy, and more than 300 guests, including Ambassador of Mexico H.E. Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, Ambassador of Singapore H.E. Lui Tuck Yew, 59 foreign diplomats from 26 Embassies, state and local leaders, members of the General Assembly, Maryland business and community leaders, and elite international equestrian athletes. Planned and coordinated by OSOS Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations Alexandria Liu, this unique event provides a platform to deepen diplomatic engagement, promote Maryland’s horse industry to global stakeholders, and reinforce the State’s position as a destination for world-class equestrian competition with significant economic impact.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller and Secretary of State Susan Lee engaged 59 foreign diplomats, including Embassy of the United Arab Emirates Head of Public Diplomacy Maha Al-Hebsi, at the Washington International Horse Show

2025 Strategic Goal Highlights, by Agency

This section highlights, by Member Agency, the progress made on our strategic priorities and the efforts undertaken to foster global partnerships, advance economic growth, and strengthen Maryland's position on the world stage.

Office of the Secretary of State

1. Relationship with Japan

The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) supported the State's longstanding, friendly, and robust relationship with Japan as the relationship accelerated in 2025. One of the key highlights took place in January when Secretary of State Susan Lee accompanied Governor Wes Moore and Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller to Japan-Maryland Night at the Japanese Embassy, which celebrated the regions' friendship and close economic and cultural ties with the Ambassador of Japan, Shigeo Yamada.



Governor Wes Moore, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, and Ambassador of Japan Shigeo Yamada celebrated Japan-Maryland Night at the Ambassador's Residence

In April, the OSOS, in conjunction with the Maryland Department of Commerce, coordinated and helped plan and execute Governor Wes Moore's inaugural Trade and Investment Mission to Asia (i.e., Japan and South Korea). The Mission focused primarily on expanding the lighthouse sectors of life sciences, quantum computing, and aerospace, with its main purpose of attracting foreign direct investment and promoting Maryland exports to Japanese markets in key industry sectors. One notable engagement on this Mission was Governor Moore's signing a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize mutual life sciences objectives with Maryland's long-time Sister State, Kanagawa Prefecture. At a meeting with Governor Moore, Kanagawa Governor Yuji Kuroiwa co-signed the new MOU, which had been principally drafted by OSOS Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt.

In May, the OSOS worked with the Governor's team to help staff Japan's Ambassador Yamada at the Preakness Stakes Festival in Baltimore. Secretary Lee accompanied First Lady Dawn Moore, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, and a number of Maryland dignitaries and high-ranking diplomats from Japan, South Korea, and other countries friendly to Maryland at this signature event.

In June, Secretary Lee, her OSOS team, and a Commerce Department staff member attended the Ambassador of Japan's summer barbecue at the Ambassador's Residence in Washington, DC.

In September, Secretary Lee and her OSOS team met with the new Economics Minister and his staff at the Japanese Embassy in Washington, DC to discuss future collaborations; and later, in November, Secretary Lee and staff attended the Japan–U.S. Tourism Night at the Ambassador's Residence in Washington, DC to continue discussion of future collaborations between Maryland and Japan.



Governor Wes Moore, Secretary of State Susan Lee, and Ambassador of Japan Shigeo Yamada attend Japan Night at the Orioles

In sum, Maryland had a very productive and successful year in its relationship with Japan. The OSOS is proud to have played a key role in furthering our State's friendly ties with Japan in 2025.

2. Relationship with the Republic of Korea

The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) provided important leadership to advancing the State's critical relationship with the Republic of Korea (or "South Korea") in 2025. Kicking off a very productive year of engagement was Korean American Day in January at the State House, featuring remarks by Governor Wes Moore, Governor Aruna Miller, Secretary of State Susan Lee, and the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea. This celebratory event, also attended by Korean War veterans and leaders of Maryland's Korean American community, recognized both our State's historical alliance with South Korea and the essential contributions of Korean Americans to our civic and economic life.

A defining moment in the relationship was Governor Wes Moore's inaugural Trade and Investment Mission to Asia, which was planned and executed by the OSOS and the Maryland Department of Commerce. The South Korea leg of this Mission was highly successful with numerous high-impact engagements with senior government officials, global corporations, investors, and academic leaders. A major outcome of the Mission was the renewal of the Aerospace Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Maryland's Sister State of Gyeongsangnam-do, which reinforced the regions' longstanding cooperation in space science and advanced technologies. Drafted principally by OSOS Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, the new Aerospace MOU was signed by Governor Moore and Sister State Governor Wan-Soo Park in South Korea.



Secretary of State Susan Lee delivers remarks at the 9th KAPAL Annual Conference in Gaithersburg, Maryland

Throughout 2025, Secretary Lee and senior State officials reinforced Maryland's commitment to South Korea through sustained engagement at major business scientific and cultural forums including Korea-U.S. Business Night, the Korean American Professionals Association in Life Sciences Conference, the Medical Korea Symposium, and community celebrations across the State. Secretary Lee, her team, and MDE leaders also hosted the Governor of South Korea's Jeju Self-Governing Province in October to discuss possible future collaborations.



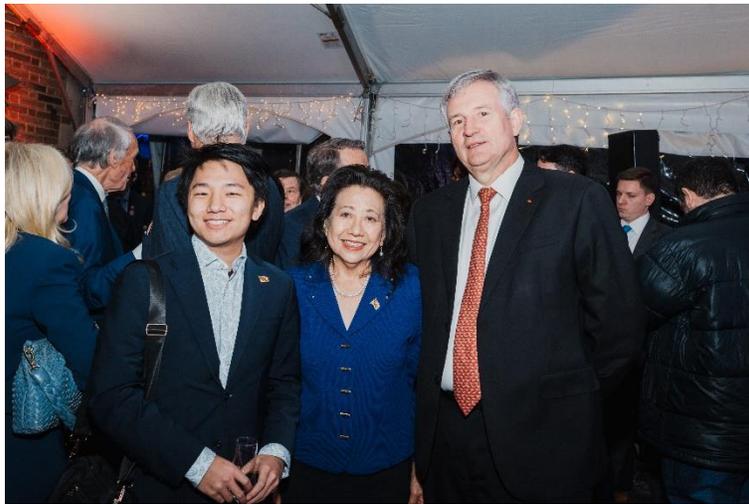
Secretary of State Susan Lee and Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain meet with Governor Oh Young-hun and a delegation from Jeju Special Self-Governing Province in Annapolis, Maryland

In sum, South Korea and Maryland's Korean Americans play an essential role in our State's economy and cultural life. The OSOS is proud to play a leading role in nurturing this important relationship.

3. Relationship with France

The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) played an instrumental role in 2025 in strengthening Maryland's close, historic friendship with France and our Sister State, Hauts-de-France. The OSOS prepared the briefing document for Governor Wes Moore's formal meeting with Ambassador of France Laurent Bili, which was held in the Governor's Office in July. Secretary of State Susan Lee and Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain then accompanied Governor Moore to his meeting with Ambassador Bili and the French Consul General Caroline Monvoisin where geopolitical issues, past collaborations, and future opportunities (especially related to the environment and sustainability) were discussed.

As the year progressed, Secretary Lee and OSOS staff attended a number of diplomatic events at the French Embassy in Washington, DC; these events build up good will for Maryland with France.



Secretary of State Susan Lee and Ambassador of France Laurent Bili at the Holiday Reception celebrating the Comte de Rochambeau and 250 years of French-American Friendship

International Affairs Director Mendy Nitsch also convened regular virtual meetings during the year with her counterparts in the Hauts-de-France (HdF) region, to negotiate a renewal Sister State Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and to plan for HdF Vice President François Decoster's trip to Maryland in October when he and Governor Moore signed the renewal MOU. The MOU, featuring collaboration between Maryland and HdF in the lighthouse sectors, higher education, and the equine industry, had been principally drafted by OSOS Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt and was strongly supported by Patrick Capurro, the Maryland–France Sister State Committee chair.

4. Relationship with Europe

The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) supported numerous successful engagements with the European Union (EU) and European countries in 2025. A key highlight was supporting the meeting in late October between Governor Wes Moore and the EU Ambassador, Jovita Neliupšienė, which Secretary of State Susan Lee attended. Their private meeting occurred just before Governor Moore and Ambassador Neliupšienė both addressed the EU Circularity Forum in Annapolis. The Forum — the first time it was held in the U.S. — had 150 attendees, among them Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore, and other State officials. The main topics of discussion concerned solutions related to the circular economy and sustainability, with the Forum showcasing Maryland's leadership on this important subject at the international and national levels. In addition, during the year, OSOS senior leaders had a number of productive meetings with EU Ambassador Neliupšienė at the Embassy or her Residence. These meetings promoted goodwill between Maryland and the European Union.

The OSOS also maintained close communications with a number of European countries in 2025. Among them were our military partners Estonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (see 2025 Key Collaborative Engagements, sec. 14, p. 49 above); Ireland and Türkiye where our Sister State relationships need to be reinvigorated; Germany with which Maryland is seeking a closer relationship; and Belgium whose Ambassador, Frederic Bernard, met with Governor Moore in Annapolis in June, with support and assistance from Secretary of State Lee and the OSOS staff.

Another notable engagement involved the meeting in October that Secretary of State Lee and Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt had with Mr. Metin Hakverdi, a German Member of Parliament and Transatlantic Coordinator, and Embassy staff. Discussion centered on how to achieve closer relations between Maryland and Germany, and development of a possible Sister State relationship with a state in northern Germany.

Also noteworthy is the OSOS's attendance at the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), through Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore and Deputy International Affairs Director Akilah Alleyne, in November. The Embassy event commemorated the 30th Anniversary of the Signing of the Dayton Accords which ended the Bosnian war. Deputy Secretary Lore and Dr. Alleyne had an opportunity to speak with the Chairman of the Presidency of BiH Željko Komšić concerning Maryland–BiH relations and future activities.

For more details, see 2025 Key Collaborative Engagements, sec. 4, p. 18 above.

5. Relationship with Canada

Throughout the year, the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) supported the efforts of the Maryland Departments of Commerce, the Environment, and Transportation to building a closer relationship with the Province of Québec, Canada. The main subjects of discussion centered on future cooperation between Maryland and Québec in investment, trade, environmental protection, tourism, and transportation.



The OSOS and the Departments of Commerce and the Environment host a delegation from Québec

The OSOS contributed to the State's draft of a new broader Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Québec that would go beyond the commercial relationship and also encompass climate, environmental, and transportation issues. This MOU, with OSOS drafting assistance by Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, is scheduled to be signed in Spring 2026.

The ongoing environmental-related discussions with Québec officials spawned a Maryland Trade Mission to Québec in November that included Secretary of State Susan Lee and Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. and senior OSOS and Commerce staff. Secretary Lee, Secretary Coker, and staff members met with Québec businesses, provincial government officials, and the representative of a Québec government pension fund, which is a significant investor in North America. Stemming from this productive, groundbreaking Trade Mission, collaborative efforts with Canada are expected to continue in 2026.



Secretary of State Susan Lee and Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. visit the MiQro Innovation Collaborative Centre (C2MI) in Parc scientifique de Bromont, Québec

6. Relationship with the Middle East

The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) assisted and supported the Maryland Department of Commerce in its efforts in 2025 establish diplomatic relationships and lay the foundation for long-term economic and Innovation partnerships with key stakeholders in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). As an initial step, Commerce Deputy Secretary Ricardo Benn and OSOS Special Assistant Alexandria Liu met in late 2024 with senior commercial officials at the Embassies of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates to present Maryland's strategic growth plan and lighthouse sector focus. After that meeting, Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. and Secretary of State Susan Lee attended the UAE National Day celebration in Washington, DC.



From left to right: Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ricardo Benn, Office of the Secretary of State Executive Aide Lucas Lin, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore, Secretary of State Susan Lee, and Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates Yusef Al Otaiba celebrate UAE National Day in Washington, DC

Building on this foundation and the friendly relationships that were developed, Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. led a first-of-its-kind Maryland Trade Mission to the Middle East in December. The Mission included Deputy Secretary of Commer Benn, Senior Regional Manager Brian Castleberry, OSOS Deputy Secretary Lore, and Special Assistant Liu and involved senior-level meetings with key public and private sector institutions central to innovation and investment particularly in life sciences and technology in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE. These wealthy Middle East countries desire execution-focused partnerships with Maryland and other U.S. states. Our efforts in 2026 and beyond will focus on making the Middle East a priority region for partnership and growth for Maryland.



From left to right: LaunchPort Partner Robert Storey, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore, Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr., Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ricardo Benn, Special Assistant Alexandria Liu, CEO of Longevity Jesse Christopher, and CEO of Materic Colin Harmer atop the Burj Khalifa in the United Arab Emirates

7. Relationship with China

The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) continued to play an active role in maintaining Maryland's longstanding, productive relationship with the People's Republic of China ("China" or "PRC") and China's Anhui Province, which is Maryland's oldest Sister State.

The most dominant topics of discussion between Maryland and our Chinese counterparts involved commerce and education. In February, the OSOS helped connect a U.S. State Department-led delegation of culinary industry investors from China to Maryland-based Atlas Restaurant Group. Their meeting included as attendees former U.S. Embassy–Beijing and American Chambers of Commerce (ANCHAM) officials. In the summer, the OSOS attended a business delegation reception hosted by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), featuring technology and soybean companies from Hunan, China.

The OSOS supported the Baltimore–Xiamen Sister City Committee's Youth Ambassador Student Travel Program, which in the summer sent Baltimore high school students to the Sister City of Xiamen, Sister State Anhui Province, and Shanghai. After their return from China, the Baltimore students came to the OSOS and made a presentation reporting on their highly informative visit to China. In addition, the OSOS and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) staff met with the PRC Embassy's Education Office in November to discuss the potential for higher education exchanges between China and Maryland. Also, in September, Secretary of State Susan Lee, Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, and other OSOS staff met with a PRC legislative delegation at the Chinese Embassy and mainly discussed the topic of educational exchanges.



Secretary of State Susan Lee discusses educational exchange with a delegation from the National People's Congress at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China

The previous engagements culminated in the November visit to Annapolis of an Anhui Province delegation led by Anhui Vice Governor Ren Qinghua, where the focus remained on education. Secretary Lee and Vice Governor Ren commemorated the 45th year of the Maryland–Anhui Sister State Agreement, which for both states is their oldest Sister State agreement, and they then signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Strengthening Youth Exchanges between Maryland and Anhui Province, after which customary gifts were exchanged.

8. Relationship with Vietnam

The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS), working with the Subcabinet for International Affairs, assisted the Governor's Office in continuing Maryland's positive relationship with Vietnam in 2025. The year's highlights included Governor Wes Moore's meeting with a high-ranking Vietnamese government official, follow-up agricultural exports, and Secretary of State meetings with the Ambassador of Vietnam.

The OSOS helped organize the Governor's meeting with Vietnam's Vice Chairman Madame Nguyễn Thị Thanh, which took place in the Governor's Reception Room in March. The purpose of this meeting was for the Vietnamese Vice Chairman to request to buy agricultural products from Maryland and to increase educational exchanges. Also attending this meeting were Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Secretary of State Susan Lee, Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Atticks, Higher Education Secretary Dr. Sanjay Rai, Commerce Deputy Secretary, several staff members, Ambassador of Vietnam Nguyễn Quốc Dũng, and Embassy staff. The meeting with the Governor and Vice Chairman was followed by visits from Vietnamese officials and importers in May and June, at which Vietnamese state-owned and private companies agreed to buy poultry products, soybeans, grain, and apples from Maryland producers — demonstrating the effectiveness of Maryland's subnational diplomacy with Vietnam.

In September, Secretary Lee, International Affairs Director Mendy Nitsch, and OSOS staff visited the Vietnamese Embassy to celebrate the 80th National Day of Vietnam and the 30th Anniversary of U.S.–Vietnam Diplomatic Relations. This celebration afforded the OSOS and Vietnamese Embassy staff an opportunity to discuss the replacement of Maryland's Sister State in Vietnam in light of the merger in 2025 of our previous Sister State, Ninh Thuận Province, into a neighboring province. At the suggestion of Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, the parties agreed to select a new Maryland–Vietnam Sister State and to develop a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2026.



Secretary of State Susan Lee celebrates the 80th National Day of Vietnam and the 30th Anniversary of U.S.-Vietnam Diplomatic Relations with Ambassador Nguyễn Quốc Dũng and his wife at the Embassy of Vietnam

9. Relationship with Taiwan

The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) took the lead in 2025 in continuing Maryland's productive relationship with Taiwan through diplomatic and business meetings that focused primarily on the life sciences, advanced technology, and commerce. Many of these engagements grew out of Secretary of State Susan Lee's Mission to Taiwan in March, a Mission anchored by the Smart Cities Summit & Expo in Taipei. At the Expo, Secretary Lee highlighted Maryland's leadership in key strategic sectors including life sciences and quantum computing as well as promoting signature programs of the Maryland Departments of Commerce and the Environment. Secretary Lee engaged Taiwan's Ministry of Science and Technology, its "Silicon Valley" (Taiwan Hsinchu Science Park), and numerous Taiwan-based tech companies interested in expanding their operations to Maryland. The OSOS also facilitated an introduction between the Commerce Department and a large-scale dry cell battery producer seeking the optimal landing site in the U.S.

Secretary Lee and the OSOS maintained diplomatic and community engagements with Taiwan and Taiwanese Americans throughout the year, often working with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the U.S. ("TECRO"). Two notable diplomatic engagements included Secretary Lee and her OSOS team attending Taiwanese Heritage Night at Nationals Park at TECRO's invitation and later attending the 114th National Day of Taiwan at Twin Oaks Estate alongside Members of Congress and hundreds of guests.



Secretary of State Susan Lee attends Taiwanese Heritage Night at Nationals Park

10. Relationship with Africa

The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) took the lead in 2025 to reinvigorate Maryland's relationships with a number of African countries. A major step forward was the Office's hiring of Dr. Akilah Alleyne as the new Deputy Director of International Affairs to lead and oversee the Office's engagements and partnerships with Africa. During the year, the Office pursued engagements with our Sister States in Africa as well as with certain African countries with which Maryland has regular contact.

In 2025, the Office worked on developing new Sister State Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) or Cooperative Agreements with KwaZulu-Natal Province in South Africa and with the country of Liberia. By the end of the year, agreement has been reached on these two new MOU's, with the expectation they will be signed in 2026. Also, a meaningful engagement took place with Maryland's Sister State in Nigeria, Ondo State, in the health field, significantly in healthcare workforce development, advanced medical technology, and medical testing.

Other notable OSOS accomplishments with respect to Africa included the following:

- Secretary of State Susan Lee's speech to the third annual Pan Africa City Symposium and Expo (PACSE) in June, emphasizing Governor Wes Moore's historic \$400 million housing initiative, since housing is a subject of keen interest in Africa.
- OSOS's development of a new action plan for future collaborative work to be done between Maryland and KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This is a part of Maryland's new Sister State Cooperative Agreement with KwaZulu-Natal which is nearing final signatures.
- OSOS's establishment of a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Maryland and the Republic of Liberia through direct negotiations with Ambassador Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh. This new MOU will replace Maryland's existing inactive MOU with Bong and Maryland Counties and will emphasize the rule of law, economic development, and educational exchange.
- Dr. Alleyne's meetings with non-government leaders in Nigeria to formulate mutual action plans in the fields of artificial intelligence (AI), advanced technology, workforce development, smart-city infrastructure, and education.
- The OSOS initiative, in conjunction with the Governor's and Lt. Governor's Offices, to attract the Ghana Football Association (GFA) to bring their Black Stars team to play a pre-World Cup soccer exhibition match and to train in Maryland in Spring 2026.
- The ongoing OSOS discussions with diplomats from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to find new pathways for trade and investment and other cooperative efforts between the DRC and Maryland. These efforts have been pursued chiefly by Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore with assistance from Prince George's County Council Member Wala Blegay and African diaspora community members.



Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore hosts Itinerant Ambassador Jean-Charles Okoto Lolakombe, Chargé d'Affaires Michel Shaku, and a delegation from the Democratic Republic of Congo in Annapolis

For more details, see 2025 Key Collaborative Engagements, sec. 10, p. 35 above.

11. Washington International Horse Show

Under the auspices of the Subcabinet for International Affairs, in October the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) provided the leadership for Embassy Night at the Washington International Horse Show, co-hosted with the Prince George's County Government. This diplomatic reception brought together Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Secretary of State Susan Lee, County Executive Aisha Braveboy, and more than 300 guests, including Ambassador of Mexico H.E. Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, Ambassador of Singapore H.E. Lui Tuck Yew, 59 foreign diplomats from 26 Embassies, state and local leaders, members of the General Assembly, Maryland business and community leaders, and elite international equestrian athletes. Planned and coordinated by OSOS Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations Alexandria Liu, this unique event provides a platform to deepen diplomatic engagement, promote Maryland's horse industry to global stakeholders, and reinforce the State's position as a destination for world-class equestrian competition with significant economic impact.



From left to right: Ambassador of Mexico Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, Secretary of State Susan Lee, US Representative Glenn Ivey, Maryland Horse Industry Board Chair Sheila Curry, and son of Ambassador Barragán

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

1. On January 30, Lt. Governor Miller joined Governor Moore and Secretary of State Lee to participate in the Japan-Maryland Night, co-hosted with Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Shigeo Yamada. The event celebrated the longstanding relationship between Japan and Maryland. During the evening, the Lt. Governor met with Japanese companies specializing in transportation that are exploring opportunities to expand in Maryland. The Lt. Governor was joined by various elected officials and cabinet secretaries to demonstrate Maryland's multi-agency and various jurisdictional dedication to maintaining and developing our relationship with Japan.

2. On February 19, Lt. Governor Miller delivered remarks at the Korea-U.S. Business Night, hosted by the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI). This event provided an opportunity to engage with Korea-based conglomerates interested in expanding to Maryland while celebrating and strengthening the economic partnership between South Korea, the United States, and Maryland. Attendees included senior executives from Korea's top 20 conglomerates, who were in the U.S. for a trade mission led by Chey Tae-won, Chairman of KCCI and SK Group. The delegation featured global leaders in strategic industries such as semiconductors, batteries, electric vehicles, shipbuilding, and steel; with key executives from companies including Samsung, Hyundai Motors, LG, and Posco.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller speaks to Korean and American business leaders at Korea-U.S. Business Night

3. On April 10, the Lt. Governor attended the SMARTER Transportation Symposium hosted by Morgan State University. This symposium featured distinguished guests including Secretary Paul Wiedefeld from the Maryland Department of Transportation, Secretary Dr. Sanjay Rai from the Maryland Higher Education Commission, Dr. Firas Ibrahim, Director of the Office of Research, Development, and Technology at the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Dr. Mansoureh Jeihani, Director of the National Transportation Center at Morgan State University. The SMARTER Transportation Symposium provided an opportunity for engineers to demonstrate the latest transportation technology, and the Lt. Governor received a personalized experience by testing systems and interacting with the engineers who brought the technology to life. Her remarks emphasized Maryland's commitment to being an international and nationwide leader for advanced transportation systems and research. The SMARTER Symposium highlighted Morgan State's role as a leader in transportation by bringing engineers, government officials, and university leadership from schools in Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia to the Baltimore campus.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller attends the SMARTER Transportation Symposium with Dr. Mansoureh Jeihani at Morgan State University

4. From April 28 to 30, the Lt. Governor traveled to San Francisco with Secretary of Commerce Coker, other members of the Department of Commerce, and Chief of Staff Geri Byrd to participate in the RSA Conference. The cybersecurity conference included live demonstrations of cybersecurity technology, presentations from cybersecurity experts, and plenty of opportunities for networking with business leaders and software engineers. On April 29, Lt. Governor Miller and Secretary Coker made stops at the tables of multiple international delegations including those of the Netherlands, Spain, and Singapore. Additionally, the Maryland delegation provided an executive tour of the NVIDIA headquarters. Overall, this trip provided the Maryland team with the opportunity to learn more about the state of cybersecurity and AI technologies in order to make more strategic investments here in Maryland.

5. On June 4, the Lt. Governor met with various representatives of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Baltimore to build upon the decades of collaboration between the Netherlands

and Maryland. After meeting privately with Minister Van der Velde, the Lt. Governor addressed the Dutch delegation, representatives from the Maryland Department of Commerce, and 100 additional attendees aboard the “Stad Amsterdam,” a traditional Dutch Clipper ship. The Lt. Governor highlighted the strong economic ties between the Netherlands and the State of Maryland while praising the Netherlands for their global leadership in water management, clean energy, and logistics. This engagement demonstrated the State’s commitment to working with our partners in the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Moore-Miller administration’s commitment to move forward with strategic partnerships.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller speaks to distinguished guests from the Netherlands aboard the “Stad Amsterdam” docked in Baltimore’s Inner Harbor

6. On June 5, Lt. Governor Miller provided keynote remarks at the U.S.–Japan Business Council (USJBC) Member Meeting held in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington, DC. The audience included representatives from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, USJBC, corporations such as Chevron, Sandisk, and Mitsubishi. During her remarks, Lt. Governor Miller applauded the strength and sustainability of the partnership between Japan and Maryland. She noted the success of the sister-state relationship with Kanagawa Prefecture, the importance of the billions of dollars in economic activity between Japan and Maryland, and how the Moore-Miller administration will continue to support the relationship between Maryland and Japanese businesses.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller provides keynote remarks at the U.S.- Japan Business Council in Washington, DC

7. On June 26, Lt. Governor Miller traveled to Washington County to participate in a site visit with representatives and leadership from SJ Group, an Indian-based pharmaceutical manufacturing company. SJ Group recently announced that they will be partnering with the State to develop a 35,000 square foot medical manufacturing facility in Cascade, Maryland, which will create 300 new full-time jobs and generate \$45 million in capital investment. Ultimately, this project has the potential to generate \$265 million in capital investment and create more than 1,150 new jobs if Maryland wins the bid to host the Phase II expansion that SJ Group is planning. By leveraging key partnerships such as these, Lt. Governor Miller is working alongside Commerce to ensure that corporations can see Maryland as a place where they can build, grow, and expand their businesses.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller welcomes leadership from India-based company SJ Group in Washington County, Maryland

8. From June 16 to 18, the Lt. Governor traveled to Boston with several members of Team Maryland including leadership from the Department of Commerce and the Governor’s Office. The Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) International Convention is the world’s largest biotech industry event, organized annually by the BIO. It brings together leaders from across the global biotechnology ecosystem – including biopharma companies, academic institutions, startups, investors, and government officials – to share insights, build partnerships, and showcase innovation. Lt. Governor Miller’s presence at this convention demonstrated Maryland’s commitment to maintaining its status as a national leader in biotechnology and making efforts to make its presence known on an international level.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller and the Department of Commerce attend the BIO Conference in Boston

9. On June 11, the Lt. Governor visited the Baltimore International Academy (BIA) to learn more about the language immersion programs that are offered to its students. After meeting with school administrators and leadership, the Lt. Governor had the opportunity to witness how the language immersion classes are run. Visiting classrooms with BIA leadership, Lt. Governor Miller observed dedicated teachers working with students who were learning Arabic, French, Chinese, Spanish, or Russian. This charter school is a staple in its Baltimore community and provides a unique opportunity for residents to have their children become bilingual and reap the cognitive, social, and academic benefits of language immersion programs. The Lt. Governor presented the Founder and CEO, Dr. Freeman Nepay, with a Governor's citation to recognize the successes of the Baltimore International Academy and the impact that the school has had on its community in the past 18 years.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller presents a Governor's Citation to the faculty and students of the Baltimore International Academy for their leadership in language and cultural immersion in the State.

10. On August 22, Lt. Governor Miller joined Adjutant General Birkhead for BossLift 2025, a full day of spending time with Maryland National Guard members, employers and business leaders, and representatives from the Maryland Military Department (MMD) at Warfield Air National Guard Base and Blum Military Reservation. From helicopter rides to briefings, Lt. Governor Miller sat side by side with the men and women who serve both our State and our Nation every single day. The annual tradition features an immersive experience for the employers of

active-duty National Guard members, including businesses and organizations across the State, to witness the dedication and preparation of the employees in our workforce.

11. On September 8, Lt. Governor Miller and Chief of Staff Byrd attended the Grand Opening for the Hitachi Rail Manufacturing Facility in Hagerstown. Hitachi Ltd. is a multinational conglomerate headquartered in Japan, with diverse operations in information technology, infrastructure, energy, healthcare, and automotive systems. This new manufacturing facility is expected to support 1,300 jobs including 460 newly created positions and will generate a total of approximately \$350 million per year in wages. In addition to the economic impact, this facility will produce the railcars that will eventually replace the MTA's current fleet of aging railcars, making public transportation in Maryland more efficient, high-tech, and enjoyable for the customers who utilize them. The Lt. Governor's remarks at this Grand Opening reinforced the commitment that the Moore-Miller Administration is following through to make transportation more accessible, while continuing to generate economic activity in the State.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller joins Japan, Maryland, and Hitachi leadership for the ribbon cutting of a brand-new manufacturing facility in Hagerstown

12. On October 3, the Lt. Governor provided the keynote remarks at the 12th World Tamils Economic Conference, held in Rockville. Joined by Secretary of State Lee, this event featured some of the most prominent business leaders, international dignitaries, and elected officials. This multi-day conference brought together over 200 members of the Tamil diaspora to celebrate achievement, build connections, and shape a shared vision for the future. The Lt. Governor’s keynote address highlighted Maryland’s commitment to working with businesses and leaders from around the world, including the plethora of Indian-based organizations that operate in and contribute to the economic mobility of the State.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller delivers keynote remarks at the 12th World Tamils Economic Conference in Rockville

13. On October 28 and 29, the Lt. Governor participated in two key events related to the NVIDIA Graphics Processing Unit (GPU) Technology Conference (GTC) in Washington, DC. On October 28, the Lt. Governor joined students and leadership from University of Maryland College Park to watch Jensen Huang, Founder, President, and CEO of NVIDIA deliver the opening remarks at the GTC. On October 29, the Lt. Governor participated in a panel discussion with Rep. Sam Liccardo (CA-16), NVIDIA co-founder Chris Malachowsky, and NVIDIA Vice President Charles Wuischpard to discuss how federal innovation meets state execution and how Maryland is leading the way in AI and emerging technologies.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller joins NVIDIA Co-Founder Chris Malachowsky at the GTC Conference in Washington, DC

14. On November 20, the Lt. Governor joined representatives of a professional women’s basketball league for an official announcement of a new basketball team coming to Baltimore in May 2027. The UpShot League was launched by Andy Kauffman, CEO of Zawyer Sports, in 2019 and is cofounded by the former WNBA President, Donna Orender. The league is set to launch in May 2026 with teams announced in Jacksonville, Florida, Greensboro, North Carolina, Charlotte, North Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. Baltimore joins Nashville, Tennessee, as the newest addition to the league in 2027. The Upshot League is capitalizing on the growth of women’s sports across the country and even internationally. Women’s sports ad revenue is up 139% and is projected to reach 2.3 billion globally in 2025. Basketball is expected to lead at 1.03 billion with WNBA viewership up 131% and the most recent NCAA Women’s Final hitting 18.8 million viewers, more than the men’s final. The Baltimore team will play at the Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) and is expected to draw approximately 5,000 fans per game and will serve as an exciting draw to Maryland for visitors from other states and countries, generating more economic activity in and around Baltimore.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller joins UpShot leadership for the announcement of a professional women’s basketball team coming to Baltimore in 2027

15. On November 20, the Lt. Governor hosted leadership from NatureCell, a South Korean-based company that is bringing a new stem cell manufacturing facility to Baltimore with 500 new jobs, at the State House for a brief meeting ahead of their official announcement of the facility. The Lt. Governor was joined by Deputy Secretary Benn from the Department of Commerce to convey Maryland's appreciation and gratitude to NatureCell for their decision to invest in Maryland and in Baltimore. Lt. Governor Miller had the opportunity to talk extensively with Dr. Jeong-Chan Ra, Chairman of NatureCell, about the journey of his company and the substantial impact that South Korean investments have had on Maryland. Additionally, the Lt. Governor had the opportunity to talk with Jim Chivers, Vice President of Gold & Company LLC., who was responsible for the sale of the 100,000 square-foot mixed-use complex in downtown Baltimore to NatureCell. This investment reflects the Moore-Miller administration's commitment to expanding FDI while uplifting a key strategic industry in biotechnology and stem cell production.



Lt. Governor Miller hosts leadership from South Korean company, NatureCell, at the State House to celebrate the announcement of a new stem-cell manufacturing facility coming to downtown Baltimore

Maryland Department of Agriculture

1. On June 6, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) hosted a delegation of Vietnamese government officials and importers to strengthen agricultural trade ties. Maryland seafood and agriculture companies engaged in targeted business matchmaking with Vietnamese importers. A Maryland-based poultry aggregator signed a sales contract with a Vietnamese buyer during the event, and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Vietnamese government, the Maryland Grain Producers Association, and the Maryland Soybean Board to promote future trade. Initial follow-up has yielded promising results, including a Maryland produce distributor preparing its first apple shipment to Vietnam.



Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Steve Connelly, Assistant Secretary Cassie Shirk, and Director of International Marketing Stone Slade host a poultry delegation from Vietnam

2. From June 9 to 12, Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Atticks participated in the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service agribusiness trade mission to Lima, Peru. Peru is the third-largest market for U.S. agricultural exports in South America. In 2023, the United States was Peru's second-largest agricultural supplier with a 13 percent market share. While on the mission, Secretary of Agriculture Atticks met with industry representatives, attended market briefings by the USDA Agricultural Trade Office, and participated in market tours to identify opportunities. Two product sectors identified for potential growth are distilled spirits and livestock genetics. Follow-up from this mission is ongoing.



Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Atticks and Foreign Agricultural Service Administrator Daniel B. Whitely at the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service Trade Mission to Peru

3. On July 7 to 9, MDA hosted a delegation of U.K. and Australian dairy genetics buyers who toured Maryland herds at Maple Dell Farm, Vales-Pride Farm, Trans Ova Genetics, and Kueffner Holsteins and Jerseys. This inbound mission was a joint project between MDA and the U.S. Ayrshire Breeders Association and was funded through the United States Livestock Genetics Export, Inc. Sales of Maryland dairy genetics are anticipated.



Assistant Secretary Cassie Shirk and Director of International Marketing Stone Slade host a delegation of U.K. and Australian dairy genetics buyers

4. From August 23 to 28, MDA exhibited at Euro Paint in Kreuth, Germany. This event is the largest American Paint Horse show outside of the United States. At the show, MDA promoted Maryland's Paint Horse genetics, along with breeders from the state. Additionally, the delegation hosted a seminar on the process and benefits of importing equine genetics from Maryland. Many of the show participants were already familiar with Paint Horses from Maryland, and MDA is optimistic that this exposure will lead to increased exports of equine genetics to Europe. This promotion was in partnership with the United States Livestock Genetics Export, Inc.



Director of International Marketing Stone Slade promotes Maryland Paint Horse genetics at Euro Paint in Kreuth, Germany

5. From September 10 to 12, MDA launched a two-year promotion of blue catfish in Singapore in partnership with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Southern United States Trade Association. The launch of the promotion included new blue catfish marketing materials and signage, as well as exhibiting at Seafood Expo Asia and a special promotion at Jurong Fishery Port. During these promotions, MDA collaborated with chefs to sample blue catfish and established connections with Southeast Asian seafood importers. At the expo, MDA attracted 500 visitors to the blue catfish booth and generated over a dozen promising export sales leads. The promotion at the Jurong Fishery Port reached 350 seafood traders, including wholesalers, retailers, and foodservice buyers. The first exports of blue catfish to the region are forthcoming.



Director of International Marketing Stone Slade holds a Chesapeake Blue Catfish promotion at Jurong Fishery Port with in-country consultants and chefs in Singapore

6. From October 15 to 17, MDA hosted a delegation of 11 seafood buyers from China and Hong Kong in Maryland. This project was in partnership with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Southern United States Trade Association. During the trade mission, the seafood buyers visited six Maryland seafood producers, which offered a range of products, including blue catfish, oysters, eel, and scallops. The trade mission not only facilitated potential business deals, but also promoted Maryland's seafood industry and its diverse products, enhancing the state's reputation in the global market. The participating companies are currently working on follow-up to the mission, and seafood exports are anticipated as a result.

7. On December 9 and 10, MDA representatives attended the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA) Winter meeting in Durham, North Carolina. Attendees for this meeting included state departments of agriculture from the Southern region, SUSTA staff, and foreign in-country marketing consultants. Discussions and presentations at the meeting covered a review of past export activity performance, new opportunities in global markets, and collaboration and plans

for 2026 export activities. At this conference, MDA received the 2024 SUSTA Global Event Award for having the highest number of companies participating in global activities in 2024.



Director of International Marketing Stone Slade attends the SUSTA Gulfood Trade Show in the UAE and receives the 2024 SUSTA Global Event Award on behalf of Maryland at the SUSTA Winter Meeting in North Carolina

Maryland Department of Commerce

In 2025, the Maryland Department of Commerce executed Governor Moore's first major international trade and investment mission, to Japan and South Korea. The Office of International Investment and Trade (OIIT) completed five international trade shows to the Avalon Air Show (Melbourne, Australia), InfoSecurity Europe (London, United Kingdom), Japan Health (Osaka, Japan), IndoPacific Maritime Exhibition (Sydney, Australia), and MEDICA Trade Fair (Düsseldorf, Germany), serving 47 companies.



Assistant Secretary of Commerce John Gilstrap and OIIT led a delegation of companies to the Avalon tradeshow, a leading airshow in Australia

The OIIT also led the State's participation at the annual SelectUSA Summit, expanding Team Maryland to 8 co-exhibiting local economic development organizations, and coordinating a two-day spinoff event with 27 prospective investors and partners. The OIIT closed out the year with two Secretary-led missions to Canada (Québec and Toronto) and the Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE).



Governor Wes Moore and Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. participate in the annual SelectUSA Summit

Over the course of these major activities, OIIT was able to lead the state to renew its international agreement in Ontario, and expanded agreements are anticipated in 2026 in Québec and the Netherlands, building upon Commerce's successful past agreements. OIIT also announced export grants issued to 99 small businesses, allowing Maryland businesses to expand and succeed overseas combined, the Maryland Department of Commerce's export programs recorded a 2,309.57% return on investment, based on export sales verified by export clients. In the area of business attraction, the Maryland Department of Commerce saw major international investment project announcements in 2025, including SJ Corporation (India), Syngene (India), NewCold (Netherlands), and NatureCell (Korea). Additionally, OIIT continued to attract innovative companies to the State through the Global Gateway Program, with 37 companies passing through the program in FY25. Between both major projects and Global Gateway, Maryland has recorded at least 17 confirmed FDI wins in calendar year 2025.



Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. engages with Mubadala in the United Arab Emirates

Maryland Department of the Environment

In 2025, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) strengthened Maryland’s role as a leading subnational actor in international climate engagement, advancing the State’s priorities on decarbonization, resilience, and environmental justice through sustained global and bilateral partnerships. MDE leadership led state representation at major international forums, including the UN Bonn Climate Conference, the COP30 Local Leaders Forum in Rio de Janeiro, New York Climate Week, and London Climate Week, reinforcing that subnational leadership remains essential to delivering the Paris Climate Agreement through practical, community-centered action.



Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain discusses subnational climate leadership at the COP30 Local Leaders Forum in Brazil

During COP30, MDE signed a new five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State of Rio de Janeiro to advance joint work on estuarine restoration, climate resilience, and environmental innovation, building on more than a decade of partnership.



Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain and Rio de Janeiro Secretary of the Environment Bernardo Rossi sign a new joint MOU focused on technical exchange in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and Guanabara Bay

MDE also deepened its bilateral partnership with Québec through ministerial-level engagement, a delegation trip to Montréal, a forthcoming MOU, and planning for a joint Smart and Sustainable EV Showcase in Baltimore. MDE expanded engagement with France through high-level diplomatic meetings, preparation for a new sister-state MOU with Hauts-de-France, and a keynote address at a French Embassy event underscoring Maryland’s implementation-focused leadership on the Paris Agreement.



From left to right: Head of Global Issues and Innovation Javier Sancho Velázquez, Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain, and Deputy Head of Global Issues and Innovation Manuel Carmona Yebra meet at the Maryland–EU Circular Economy Forum in Annapolis

Maryland Higher Education Commission

1. On January 24, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) sustained its diplomatic engagement through participation in the Chinese Embassy’s Lunar New Year and Panda Diplomacy event, commemorating over five decades of U.S.–China relations. Representing the agency, Executive Director of External Relations Derrick Coley and Director of Communications Kristin Clarkson engaged embassy officials and international stakeholders to reinforce Maryland’s commitment to educational exchange, cultural diplomacy, and international student mobility. This engagement reflected MHEC’s consistent role in maintaining global academic relationships that support Maryland’s institutions and students.



Secretary of State Susan Lee and Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai host the Seiko Gakuin student group from Kanagawa Prefecture

2. Secretary of State Susan Lee, Assistant International Affairs Director Rosanna Mantova, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai and Chief of Staff Tiffany Majors hosted the Seiko Gakuin student group from Kanagawa Prefecture, further strengthening the ties between Maryland and Kanagawa through meaningful engagement and exchange. The students heavily engaged in dialogue with the secretary on AI, Quantum, Cyber Security and their favorite sports in which the exchange became very energetic, competitive and exciting.

3. MHEC played a substantive role in aligning higher education priorities with the Administration’s international economic strategy. In close coordination with the Office of the Secretary of State, MHEC supported the advancement of four active Memoranda of Understanding between Maryland institutions and universities in South Korea, focused on life sciences, quantum computing, computer science, and business innovation.

While not all engagements occurred overseas, MHEC ensured continuity, execution, and follow-through, translating high-level diplomatic activity into actionable academic partnerships. Secretary Dr. Rai’s direct engagement helped advance institutional collaborations, most notably strengthening the partnership between the University of Maryland, Baltimore and Chosun University, demonstrating MHEC’s enthusiasm and commitment to deliver measurable outcomes behind the scenes without international traveling participation.

4. On April 1, Secretary Dr. Rai supported Secretary Lee in hosting visiting students from Japan in the University of Maryland Life international student exchange student program.
5. On April 12, Secretary Dr. Rai participated in a fireside chat titled “Bridging Innovation and Education” at the University of Maryland Technology Startup Bazaar, highlighting Maryland’s statewide approach to AI literacy, innovation ecosystems, and workforce alignment across higher education institutions.
6. On April 10, Secretary Dr. Rai joined Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller and Cabinet colleagues at the Maryland Asian American Business Conference, serving on a panel focused on Leveraging Technology for Growth. The event underscored the intersection of international entrepreneurship, education, and economic mobility, positioning MHEC as a connector between global innovation and Maryland’s talent pipeline.



Lt. Governor Aruna Miller and Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai attend the Maryland Asian American Business Conference

7. In April, Secretary Dr. Rai delivered the keynote address at the Maryland International Education Consortium (MIEC) event hosted at Coppin State University, commemorating Maryland International Education Day. Joined by OSOS Assistant International Affairs Director Mantova, Secretary Dr. Rai presented the Governor’s proclamation designating April 26 as Maryland International Education Day. The event reinforced MHEC’s leadership in expanding international access and promoting Maryland as a welcoming destination for global learners, particularly students from underrepresented communities.



Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai and OSOS Assistant International Affairs Director Rosanna Mantova present a Governor’s Proclamation designating April 26 as Maryland International Education Day at Coppin State University

8. On April 28, Secretary Dr. Rai accompanied by Chief of Staff Majors participated in the Baisakhi celebration hosted by Carroll Community College. Secretary Dr. Rai delivered remarks at a Baisakhi celebration hosted by the Governor’s Office of South Asian American Affairs at Carroll Community College, emphasizing shared values, cultural unity, and the role of education in strengthening international and diaspora communities across Maryland.



Secretary Dr. Rai and Chief of Staff Tiffany Majors attended the Baisakhi celebration at Carroll Community College

9. On May 3, MHEC continued diplomatic engagement through participation in a Chinese Embassy reception, reinforcing ongoing educational and cultural exchange relationships.
10. On May 5, Secretary Dr. Rai joined Lt. Governor Aruna Miller at the grand opening of AstraZeneca’s Cell Therapy facility in Gaithersburg, highlighting the alignment between global life sciences investment and Maryland’s higher education and workforce development strategies. Building on this engagement, MHEC supported follow-up conversations tied to the Governor’s Feds to Eds initiative, reinforcing pathways for talent transition into education and training fields.
11. On May 20, MHEC participated in a meeting welcoming Ambassador Erasmus of Aruba and members of Aruba’s National Assembly. Discussions explored collaboration in cybersecurity, clean water, port cooperation, sustainable tourism, and higher education, including potential renewal of the Maryland–Aruba MOU originally established in 2013. MHEC’s participation reinforced higher education as a foundational pillar of Maryland’s international engagement strategy.



Secretary of State Susan Lee and MHEC hosted Ambassador Erasmus of Aruba and members of the Aruba Parliament

12. On September 5, Secretary Dr. Rai delivered greetings at the 14th Annual DC South Asian Film Festival, emphasizing the importance of global storytelling, cultural exchange, and democratic values. Dr. Rai was instrumental in the acknowledgment and execution of the film festival for Maryland. He considered the event a powerful gathering that offered stories reflective of our global society. His participation extended Maryland’s international visibility through coverage in regional media outlets.



Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai delivers greetings at the 14th Annual DC South Asian Film Festival

13. On September 13, Secretary Dr. Rai delivered a keynote address at the National Council of Asian Indian Associations’ celebration of India’s 79th Independence Day, highlighting the Indian-American community’s contributions to Maryland’s economy, education, medicine, and technology. When unable to attend select cultural events in person, MHEC ensured continued engagement through formal correspondence and agency representation, maintaining strong community relationships.



Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai delivers a keynote address at the National Council of Asian Indian Associations’ celebration of India’s 79th Independence Day

14. On September 24, Secretary Dr. Rai was honored with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award at the U.S.–India SME Council’s Incredible Inc. Awards Gala, recognizing his distinguished service and leadership in education, equity, and community engagement. The award recognizes Dr. Rai for more than 30 years of outstanding leadership embodying and advancing the timeless principles of the civil rights leader. According to the organization, Dr. Rai’s work “reflects the enduring power of education to break down barriers, uplift communities, and build a more just and inclusive society.” Chief of Staff Tiffany Majors attended, reinforcing MHEC’s executive-level representation and values-driven international leadership interest emphasized by the Governor’s Subcabinet for International Affairs.



Secretary Dr. Rai is honored with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award at the U.S.–India SME Council’s Incredible Inc. Awards Gala

15. On September 29, MHEC Director of Communications Kristin Clarkson attended the Chinese Embassy’s National Day Reception, commemorating both China’s founding and shared U.S.–China historical alliances, reinforcing the importance of cultural diplomacy and educational exchange.

16. MHEC attended Excelencia’s invitational Fall Convening. This prestigious event served as a platform for the Celebración de Excelencia and the highly anticipated national announcement of the Seal of Excelencia. This significant certification is awarded to colleges and universities demonstrating an exceptional commitment to Latino student success.

17. MHEC's representative actively participated in a series of engaging and insightful sessions throughout the convening. These sessions were strategically designed to delve into critical strategies aimed at fostering student success across all demographics and, more specifically,

to cultivate diverse talent essential for America's future workforce and civic leadership. Discussions focused on innovative approaches to academic support, financial aid access, and culturally responsive learning environments, all geared towards ensuring that a broader range of students can achieve their educational and career aspirations. The event provided valuable opportunities for networking and collaboration with other leaders in higher education, further enhancing MHEC's ability to advocate for and implement best practices within Maryland's educational landscape.

18. On October 5th, Secretary Dr. Rai delivered opening and closing remarks and participated in a dynamic panel discussion at the 12th World Tamils Economic Conference. His address focused on the crucial and expanding collaborations between the United States and India, drawing on his extensive experience as a higher education administrator. He particularly emphasized the future trajectory of both nations in the vital areas of research and development, highlighting the potential for groundbreaking advancements through joint efforts.

Lt. Governor Miller provided welcoming remarks as this is the first time this conference was in the United States. The subsequent panel session offered a comprehensive comparative analysis of higher education systems in the United States and India. Panelists, comprised of leading experts from both countries, shared invaluable insights, compelling success stories, emerging opportunities, and persistent challenges within their respective educational landscapes. This rich exchange fostered a profound reflection on the unique strengths and inherent capabilities of both nations. The conversation vividly underscored the immense potential for cross-border collaboration in higher education and research, envisioning a future where such partnerships can significantly benefit the global community by addressing shared challenges and fostering innovation on an international scale.



Secretary of Higher Education Sanjay Rai participated in a panel session analyzing higher education systems in the United States and India at the 12th World Tamils Economic Conference

19. On October 20, MHEC Chief of Staff Tiffany Majors worked collaboratively with the administration of Prince George’s Community College (PGCC) and the Secretary of State’s Office to plan and participate in the visit of the Hauts-de-France delegation hosted by Prince George’s Community College’s the Center for Advanced Technology. The event showcased PGCC’s leading workforce development programs supporting key sectors such as allied health, cybersecurity, transportation, and strategic apprenticeship partnerships. Delegates received briefings on program innovation and toured hands-on learning environments including the Security Operations Center Lab and Cyber Workforce Accelerator Lab. The convening concluded with a discussion focused on international collaboration, student mobility, and opportunities to strengthen workforce pipelines between Maryland and the Hauts-de-France region. The visit was supported by the Chief of Staff and Executive Director of External Affairs, Meghan Music.



Chief of Staff Tiffany Majors and OSOS Director of International Affairs Mendy Nitsch hosted Vice President of HdF François Decoster at Prince George’s Community College’s the Center for Advanced Technology

20. On October 23, Governor Wes Moore and Lt. Governor Miller hosted the annual Diwali celebration at the Governor’s Mansion in Annapolis. The celebration served as a powerful gesture of inclusion and renewal, bringing together leaders from Maryland’s growing South Asian community. The event honored the state’s diverse faiths and cultures while underscoring Diwali’s central message of light prevailing over darkness. Throughout the evening, speakers linked the festival's theme to contemporary challenges, with Governor Moore praising the

South Asian community for embodying "the spirit of light over darkness" and affirming the necessity of hope during uncertain times.

The Lt. Governor, the nation's first Indian American in statewide office in Maryland, delivered a deeply personal address, using a childhood memory to affirm that the community "belongs here" and highlighting the role of professionals like teachers and physicians who "light the lamps within us." Governor Moore, in turn, called Lt. Governor Miller "a human Diwali" and linked the festival's message to the state's political agenda of moving forward with clarity. The ceremony culminated with the Governor presenting an official Diwali Proclamation, formally recognizing the Indian American community's significant civic, cultural, and economic contributions to Maryland.



Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai attended the annual Diwali celebration hosted by Governor Wes Moore and Lt. Governor Aruna Miller in Annapolis

21. On November 10, the New India Abroad conducted an in-depth profile of Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai, further elevating Maryland's national and international profile in higher education leadership. The piece, complementary in tone and scope to a previously published profile in the "South Asian Herald", highlighted Dr. Rai's historic role as the "first immigrant and first South Asian to lead the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)" and traced his academic and professional journey from India through Canada to the United States.

The profile underscored Maryland's strength as a global education destination, noting that the state enrolls more than 22,000 international students, representing approximately 7% of total

enrollment and ranking 16th nationally. Dr. Rai emphasized that Maryland’s institutions offer world-class academic programs in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, cybersecurity, and advanced research, uniquely complemented by experiential learning opportunities enabled by proximity to federal agencies such as NIH and FDA and a robust private-sector innovation ecosystem. The article also highlighted the nearly \$930 million economic contribution of international students to Maryland in 2023 and discussed broader global trends, including India surpassing China as the leading country of origin for international students in the United States. Collectively, the profile reinforced MHEC’s commitment to advancing international education, student mobility, and the role of global talent in Maryland’s long-term economic vitality.

22. On November 10, MHEC staff, in collaboration with the Maryland Office of the Secretary of State, met with senior officials from the Education Office of the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to advance dialogue on higher education collaboration between China and Maryland. The meeting was convened to exchange updates on recent developments within China’s higher education sector and to explore concrete mechanisms for strengthening institutional partnerships, academic exchange, and research collaboration. The PRC delegation was led by Minister Counselor Shen Xuesong, joined by Counselor Zhang Yun and Third Secretary Shu Dangyi. Maryland was represented by Dr. Sanjay Rai, Secretary of Higher Education Commission; Tiffany Majors, Chief of Staff of the Higher Education Commission; and Mary E. (Mendy) Nitsch, International Affairs Director, and Dr. Akilah Alleyene, Deputy International Affairs Director, from the Office of the Secretary of State. Discussions focused on shared interests in STEM education, research collaboration, and student exchange opportunities. The meeting concluded with a shared recognition of the significant potential for mutually beneficial partnerships and a commitment to take tangible next steps toward strengthening academic and research ties, including the distribution of a curated list of Maryland institutions interested in STEM-focused exchanges.



Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai discusses educational exchange with Minister Counselor Shen Xuesong and a delegation from the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China

23. On November 12, MHEC hosted a policy-focused exchange with an international cohort of 14 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Program Administrators from higher education institutions across the globe. The session was sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and implemented locally by the World Trade Center Institute (WTCI), continuing MHEC's long-standing partnership with WTCI's international exchange programs.

The discussion centered on MHEC's statutory role and policy leadership, with a particular focus on two priority areas: Student Success Policies, including how Maryland ensures accountability and equitable outcomes across its higher education system; and the ESOL Teacher Pipeline, highlighting statewide strategies to address shortages of trained and credentialed educators serving English Language Learners. The exchange positioned Maryland as a national and international model for aligning higher education policy with workforce and equity goals, while fostering cross-border learning among global education leaders.



Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai hosts a policy-focused exchange with an international cohort of 14 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Program Administrators

Collectively, these engagements strengthened Maryland's ability to attract international students, global research partnerships, and foreign investment aligned with the State's workforce and innovation priorities. Through deliberate coordination by the Secretary of State Susan Lee, Secretary Dr. Rai and Chief of Staff Majors, MHEC aligned agency-level actions with broader international and economic development strategies, ensuring higher education remains a central lever in Maryland's global competitiveness.

Maryland Department of Transportation

1. On January 23, the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) hosted transportation attachés from ten DC Embassies for a behind-the-scenes tour of BWI Marshall Airport.



MAA hosts transportation attachés from ten DC embassies for a behind-the-scenes tour of BWI Marshall airport

2. On January 31, MAA attended Icelandair's Mid-Atlantic Trade Show in Reykjavik to promote the new agreement between Icelandair and Southwest, which began on February 13. MAA also met with PLAY Airlines while in Reykjavik.
3. In mid-February, MAA sent a consultant to Routes Americas, the premier air service development conference for the Western Hemisphere, where the consultant met with 14 airlines about existing and potential international air service.
4. This past spring, MAA connected Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (VAAAC) with British Airways to support VAAAC's strategic efforts to drive international business and leisure travel. The \$50,000 commitment includes marketing and advertising support for British Airways' nonstop London-Heathrow-BWI service.
5. On June 17, MPA hosted embassy representatives from the Belmont Shipping Club, a group of 18 countries in Europe, Asia, and Canada that share values supporting open and unimpeded access to international maritime markets.
6. In mid-June, MAA attended the Airports Council-North America JumpStart air service development conference and met with nine international airlines about existing and potential service to BWI Marshall Airport.
7. On June 26, BermudAir announced new seasonal nonstop service from BWI Marshall Airport to Anguilla beginning in December, including the launch of a new sub-brand, AnguillAir.
8. In the summer, MAA successfully worked with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection to extend operating hours at BWI Marshall Airport from 2:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.–

midnight, effective in October. This extension enables the addition of a second daily Icelandair frequency in summer 2026.

9. At the end of September, MAA sent a consultant to Hong Kong to attend World Routes, the premier global air service development event, where the consultant met with eleven global airlines despite disruptions caused by a typhoon.
10. On September 11, the Maryland Port Administration (MPA) hosted a delegation from multiple countries through the U.S. State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), including representatives from Egypt, Thailand, Nepal, Croatia, India, Haiti, Brazil, Italy, Vietnam, North Macedonia, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Jordan, and Malaysia.
11. On October 14, In collaboration with the Maryland Department of Commerce, the Embassy of Australia visited to strengthen business relationships and discuss new opportunities for collaboration in port and infrastructure sectors. The visit included Senator Glen Sterle and the Honorable Garth Hamilton MP.
12. On November 4, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Commerce, MPA hosted representatives from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China to strengthen business relationships and discuss new opportunities for collaboration.
13. On November 5, port commissioners and staff from the Busan Port Authority (South Korea) visited the MPA to discuss best practices and opportunities for new business relationships between the Port of Baltimore and Busan.
14. On November 13, MPA hosted Amazon's international trade legal team for a port overview and a discussion on tariff impacts and trade.
15. In late November, MAA began a marketing campaign to support BermudAir's new flights to Anguilla, which launched on December 19.
16. On December 4, MPA hosted a delegation from Thailand for a discussion on agricultural trade and customs processes for import and export.



MPA host a delegation from Thailand for a discussion on customs processes for import and export

17. On December 19, BermudAir launched a new seasonal nonstop service from BWI Marshall Airport to Anguilla.

Maryland Military Department

The Maryland National Guard continued to deliver strategic value through the National Guard State Partnership Program, strengthening longstanding relationships with Estonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina while supporting U.S. European Command and NATO objectives. Through sustained engagement, Maryland reinforced interoperability, enhanced partner capacity, and advanced shared readiness across multiple domains.

Across both Partnerships, Maryland executed a broad portfolio of activities including logistics planning, cyber defense cooperation, military police operations, medical readiness, and senior leader engagements. These efforts emphasized practical outcomes, operational relevance, and long-term institutional development.

Key highlights included a major joint logistics engagement with Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Maryland's participation in multinational exercises such as Immediate Response 25 and Crossed Swords, and continued integration with Estonian forces during large-scale national and NATO training events. Domestically, partner participation in the Maryland National Guard Best Warrior Competition reinforced the strength of these relationships and demonstrated the value of sustained professional exchanges.

The Maryland State Partnership Program remains a force multiplier, strengthening allied capabilities overseas while enhancing the readiness and professionalism of Maryland Soldiers and Airmen. Through consistent engagement and trusted partnerships, the Program continues to support regional stability, collective defense, and Maryland's role as a reliable partner at home and abroad.

1. The Maryland National Guard, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), welcomed an emergency management delegation from Turkey as part of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation, January 16, 2025.

The IVLP delegation, which included five senior officials from the Istanbul City Fire Department and AKOM (Istanbul Disaster Coordination Center), engaged with Maryland's emergency management professionals to exchange knowledge and best practices in disaster preparedness and response. This initiative aimed to strengthen international collaboration and enhance interoperability in addressing large-scale emergencies, such as earthquakes or mass casualty events.

2. The Adjutant General Janeen L. Birkhead and a delegation from the Maryland National Guard met with Bosnia and Herzegovina Minister of Defense Zukan Helez and the leadership of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina from February 9 to 13. The bilateral visit focused

on the continued support of civilian and military cooperation to promote regional cooperation and stability through the National Guard's State Partnership Program, which began in 2003.



Adjutant General Janeen L. Birckhead and a delegation from the Maryland National Guard met with Bosnia and Herzegovina Minister of Defense Zukan Helez and the leadership of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Kimberley Glazier)

3. Senior leaders of the Army National Guard and members of the Estonian Defense League and the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina pose for a photo during the opening ceremony for the Army National Guard's 2025 Best Warrior Competition on July 12, at Under Armour Headquarters in Baltimore, Maryland. The Army National Guard's 2025 National Best Warrior Competition, hosted by the Maryland National Guard, is an annual event that unites Soldiers and Noncommissioned Officers from seven regions across the United States. Competitors face a demanding series of physical and mental challenges designed to test their military expertise, resilience, and dedication to the Warrior Ethos for the opportunity to advance to Best Squad Competition.



Adj. General Janeen Birkhead and MDARNG pose for the 2025 Best Warrior Competition in Baltimore (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Airman 1st Class Sarah Hoover)

4. Soldiers of the Maryland Army National Guard's 115th Military Police Battalion, and leadership of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina Light Infantry Battlegroup, pose for a group photo with the Maryland flag during Immediate Response–DEFENDER 25, at the Red Land Training Area, Knin, Croatia, June 6. Immediate Response 25 is a U.S. Army large-scale exercise enhancing NATO integration through state partnership readiness programs, such as between the Maryland National Guard and Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to further equip NATO’s regional plans and uphold U.S. commitments to the Alliance.



MDARNG

pose during

the Immediate Response–DEFENDER 25 exercise

5. Maryland Air National Guard Senior Airman Amil Williams, traffic management specialist with the 175th Logistics Operation Squadron, demonstrates cargo loading preparation to Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina Lt. Col. Emir Hadžikadunić, commander of the 5th Logistics Support Battalion, in Dubrave, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on April 2. The Maryland National Guard and the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH) held a joint logistics, vehicle maintenance, and public affairs exchange — the largest BiH event for the Maryland State Partnership Program — to help prepare AFBiH for Immediate Response–DEFENDER 25.



MDARNG Senior Airman Amil Williams demonstrates cargo loading preparation to Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina Lt. Col. Emir Hadžikadunić (Photo by Chazz Kibler)

6. Barbara Taylor, museum director, discusses the legacy of the mannequin she's standing to the right of, Capt. John Price, a member of the 1st Company Maryland Militia, to Lt. Gen. Gojko Knezevic, Chief of Defense of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, left, and his translator, Zlata Veselinovic, with the same organization, while others listen on, during a guided tour through the Maryland Museum of Military History at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore, on July 16. The overall purpose of the visit was to observe AFBiH service members staff lanes in the National Best Warrior Competition as part of the Maryland



National Guard's State Partnership Program. The visit strengthens military-to-military ties and highlights ongoing cooperation in training, readiness, and interoperability.

Maryland Museum of Military History Director Barbara Taylor discusses the legacy of Capt. John Price, a member of the 1st Company Maryland Militia, to Lt. Gen. Gojko Knezevic, Chief of Defense of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina

7. Maryland Air National Guard Tech. Sgt. LaBreumie Swangain, a material management specialist with the 175th Logistics Readiness Squadron, helps a member of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina lift a Humvee tire after a simulated flat inject during a convoy operation from Zenica to Visoko, in Lašva, Bosnia and Herzegovina, April 7, 2025. The Maryland National Guard and the AFBiH held a joint logistics, vehicle maintenance, and public affairs exchange — Maryland's largest State Partnership Program event in BiH — to help prepare AFBiH for Immediate Response–DEFENDER 25. (U.S. Air National Guard Photo by Airman 1st Class Sarah Hoover)



MDARNG Tech. Sgt. LaBreumie Swangain helps a member of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina lift a Humvee tire

8. On March 26, Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional Lt. Gen. Norberto Cortés Rodríguez, commander of the Mexican Army, speaks with cadets at the Freestate Challenge Academy (FCA), as part of a visit during the the Fifth Army Inter-American Relations Program (FIARP). The FCA is a part of the Maryland National Guards Youth Challenge program which provides a pathway for at-risk teenagers to earn their GED certificate or high school diploma while also learning life and coping skills. FIARP is a week-long event where Soldiers from U.S. Army North and the Mexican Army enhance relations and exchange ideas on operational compatibility and technology. The annual event facilitates discussions between U.S. and Mexican military leaders to cooperate on issues both countries encounter.



Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional Lt. Gen. Norberto Cortés Rodríguez, commander of the Mexican Army, speaks with cadets at the Freestate Challenge Academy (FCA), as part of a visit during the the Fifth Army Inter-American Relations Program (FIARP) in Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD

9. A delegation of the Ministry of Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina visited the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, the 175th Cyber Operations Group, and the 175th Logistics Readiness

Squadron on April 23. The visit sought to enhance the longstanding relationship as part of the State Partnership Program.



The 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, the 175th Cyber Operations Group, and the 175th Logistics Readiness Squadron hosted a delegation of the Ministry of Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina

10. Estonian Maj. Gen. Ilmar Tamm, commander of the Estonian Defence League, and Estonian Col. Tõnu Miil, Chief G5, visited the Maryland Army National Guard's 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, 110th Information Operations Battalion, and 175th Wing's Cyberspace Operations Group. As part of the ongoing State Partnership Program between Maryland and Estonia, the leaders toured aviation facilities and took a flight aboard a UH-60 Black Hawk.



MDARNG's 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, 110th Information Operations Battalion, and 175th Wing's Cyberspace Operations Group welcome Estonian Maj. Gen. Ilmar Tamm, commander of the Estonian Defence League, and Estonian Col. Tõnu Miil, Chief G5

11. Maryland Army National Guard Lt. Col. Marlin Jenkins graduated from the U.S. Army War College along with Armed Forces of Bosnia & Herzegovina (AFBiH) Lt. Col Hamdija Elezovic and Estonian Defense Force (EDF) Lt. Col. Teet Laeks on June 6 at the U.S. Army War College (AWC) Graduation with AFBiH and EDF representatives. Their successful completion of this senior service college milestone highlights the enduring impact of professional military education in advancing NATO interoperability and strategic leadership.



Maryland Army National Guard Lt. Col. Marlin Jenkins graduated from the U.S. Army War College along with Armed Forces of Bosnia & Herzegovina (AFBiH) Lt. Col Hamdija Elezovic and Estonian Defense Force (EDF) Lt. Col. Teet Laeks

12. Maryland Air National Guard Airmen engage in a cultural exchange with Romanian Cyber Command counterparts by discussing the local area to strengthen mutual understanding of the region during the Saber Guardian 25 cyber exercise as part of DEFENDER 25 on June 11 in Bucharest, Romania. Maryland partnered with Romania during Saber Guardian to conduct a

range emulating cyber threats and multinational Defensive Cyber Operations (DCO) to protect U.S. and partner operations.



Maryland Air National Guard Airmen engage in a cultural exchange with Romanian Cyber Command counterparts by discussing the local area to strengthen mutual understanding of the region during the Saber Guardian 25 cyber exercise as part of DEFENDER 25 in Bucharest, Romania

For more details, see 2025 Key Collaborative Engagements, sec. 14, p. 49 above.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Led by Governor Wes Moore and Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller, Maryland continues to gain international respect for our lighthouse industries and is recognized by countries and regions around the world as a reliable and trusted international partner. Looking ahead to 2026, the Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs will build on its sterling reputation as it confronts ongoing geopolitical and economic challenges, and remains committed to advancing strategic global engagement that strengthens Maryland's competitiveness and delivers tangible benefits for our community.

Building on the strong foundation established under the Moore-Miller Administration, the goals outlined in this section reflect a shared focus on resilience and adaptability. As we confront ongoing geopolitical, economic, and operational challenges, the Subcabinet will continue to coordinate across agencies, deepen international partnerships, and pursue forward-looking priorities that enable our State to navigate uncertainty and seize new opportunities in the year ahead.

AGENCY GOALS FOR 2026

Office of the Secretary of State

Looking ahead to 2026, the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) will prioritize sustained engagement with strategic international stakeholders, with an emphasis on those aligned with the Moore-Miller Administration's values and economic development goals. Building on the momentum generated by Maryland's 2025 trade missions, the OSOS will work with Subcabinet partners to follow up with entities from regions engaged by Governor Moore's trade mission to Japan and the Republic of Korea, as well as the Secretary-led trade missions to Canada and the Middle East, with the goal of deepening relationships, advancing shared priorities, and translating initial commitments into long-term outcomes for Maryland with a Whole-of-Government approach.

In parallel, the OSOS will take a proactive approach to deepen relationships in France, Ireland, Estonia, Germany, Türkiye, and institutions of the European Union. In Africa, the Office will prioritize proactive engagements with Liberia, South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana, and explore opportunities to strengthen ties with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other African countries. The Secretary of State's engagements will leverage diplomacy, education, innovation, and cultural exchange to continue positioning the State as a gateway for international commerce and collaboration. Through sustained partnerships across government at all levels as well as academia, the private sector, and diaspora communities, under Subcabinet and OSOS leadership, Maryland will continue to advance shared economic growth, human capital development, and

global goodwill rooted in mutual opportunity and long-term cooperation. Through consistent, strategic outreach, the Secretary of State will reinforce Maryland's reputation as a reliable international partner and ensure that the State remains resilient and competitive amid evolving global challenges.

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Looking ahead to 2026, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor has the following goals for the coming year.

In 2025, Maryland earned international recognition for its commitment to subnational diplomacy. Lt. Governor Aruna Miller attended a number of events at various Embassies, met with world leaders at the State House, and engaged with international delegations around the State. In 2026, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor will work closely with the Subcabinet for International Affairs and the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) to take steps to increase Maryland's status as a leader in subnational diplomacy and conduct strategic meetings with leaders from across the world. As Maryland looks to increase its engagement across targeted regions of the world, the Lt. Governor looks forward to being a champion for Maryland on the international stage to highlight what the State is capable of and how the State is looking to innovate in the future.

In 2026, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor is aiming to develop a relationship with the Ghana Football Association (GFA) to make Maryland the base camp and the site for an exhibition match for the Ghana Black Stars prior to the 2026 FIFA World Cup. After productive meetings at the end of 2025, the Lt. Governor wants to build upon the momentum and increase Maryland's sports diplomacy profile by bringing the GFA to Maryland. This engagement will not only generate significant economic activity in the State but will also contribute to this strategic relationship which can lay the foundation for further international engagements with Ghana.

In 2026, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor will continue to partner with the Maryland Department of Commerce to encourage international businesses to establish roots in Maryland. 2025 was an incredibly productive year as the Office of the Lieutenant Governor and Commerce met with businesses from India, South Korea, Japan, which eventually announced plans to build in Maryland. The Lt. Governor aims to continue to capitalize on the relationships between these countries and to increase the scope to attract more countries to invest in Maryland.

In 2026, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor will continue to advocate for Maryland's lighthouse sectors and solidify the State as an international leader in those sectors. Maryland has made tremendous progress with initiatives such as the Capital of Quantum, investments in biotechnology, and bringing significant investments to the State from companies such as AstraZeneca, Samsung Biologics, and Hitachi Ltd. The Lt. Governor will continue her work with

the Subcabinet for International Affairs, the OSOS, and Commerce in promoting the lighthouse sectors to global partners, elevating Maryland's platform in the strategic industries.

Maryland Department of Agriculture

Looking ahead to 2026, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has the following goals for the coming year.

Goal 1: Increase the number of Maryland companies participating in agriculture export trade associations. These key trade organizations offer federal funding, export assistance, cost-subsidized trade missions, and trade shows for qualified Maryland agricultural companies.

- Increase the number of members utilizing the Market Access Program and CostShare Program through the Southern United States Trade Association (SUSTA).
- Increase the number of livestock operations utilizing the Market Access Program and CostShare Program through the United States Livestock Genetics Export, Inc.

Goal 2: Continue developing international projects to increase market access for key agricultural sectors.

- Utilize federal grant funding available through the United States Department of Agriculture to develop markets in countries where Maryland companies have strategic advantages.
- Increase market access for key sectors, including, but not limited to, processed foods, distilled spirits, seafood, and dairy and equine genetics.

Maryland Department of Commerce

Looking ahead to 2026, the Maryland Department of Commerce has the following goals for the coming year.

Goal 1: Attract foreign businesses to expand or relocate into Maryland.

- Increase awareness of Maryland as a place for foreign companies to expand in the U.S., especially in our strategic industries.
 - Work with the Commerce Marketing team to develop & implement an overseas marketing strategy to target specific sub-sectors in specific markets per OIIT's FDI strategy (such as search engine optimization, international industry publication ad campaign, etc.).
 - Work with the industry teams to identify and target FDI target sub-sectors that fit within Maryland's economic development strategy (such as the Lighthouse

- sectors, and any other sectors that the data show could increase both inclusivity and economic growth).
- Develop, strengthen, and maintain 10+ international partnerships with a commerce focus, and encourage in-depth knowledge of Maryland’s strengths in key clusters around the world.
 - Utilize foreign offices and partners to help raise the profile of Maryland by providing them with specific marketing material and strategies to focus on.
 - Manage lead generation services covering all five of the State’s top five FDI target markets, as well as lead generation services in secondary markets, as funding allows.
 - Work with partners to maintain, expand, and market new programs that can attract attention to Maryland as an innovative place to do business such as the Maryland Innovation Lab (WTCI and LMarks) and the Global Gateway Soft Landing Program (15+ Maryland incubators and accelerators).
 - Keep foreign offices up to date on latest happenings in Commerce/Maryland including having them travel to Maryland periodically and arranging export meetings/events for Maryland companies around those visits, when possible; these may be virtual meetings if more prudent.
 - Maximize direct outreach to targeted prospective investors from overseas.
 - Manage pipeline of potential leads from databases, foreign offices, and marketing efforts to effectively channel vetted leads within Commerce.
 - Maximize outreach at each trade show and event attended by the OIIT team and our partners.
 - Attend relevant events organized by embassies, industry associations, local jurisdictions and others where there is a high international attendance expected. This may include virtual and in-person events. Secure speaking roles when possible, to improve Maryland’s visibility.
 - Encourage and support visiting delegations of foreign companies from overseas to make a visit to Maryland. Capitalize on events that are occurring in Washington, DC to the extent possible.
 - Identify and attend FDI trade show and mission opportunities when budget allows, coordinating a Commerce team to execute in the most effective manner. In particular, work with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to target food and agricultural prospects at shows where MDA already has a presence, to minimize financial resource requirements.
 - Ensure Maryland’s FDI lead generation contracts provide the required reporting and meet targets outlined in their agreements.
 - Develop and implement a strategy to promote awareness of Maryland among key investment groups for larger projects, such as sovereign wealth funds.
 - Provide customized assistance to identified prospects to win identified opportunities.

- Keep up to date on new opportunities, locations, incentives and programs in the State of Maryland to provide effective programs and proposals for potential investors.
- Build and maintain relationships with local jurisdictions, industry partners, and service providers to ensure quick and relevant responses to investor requests.
- Build and maintain relationships with existing foreign investors, to maintain positive relationships, retain a high level of foreign investors in the state, and develop a network of companies that can serve as references to new investors.
- Coordinate with the Office of Business Development for larger projects to allow bandwidth and customized focus for smaller and medium sized investors, and to provide targeted support where needed on the larger projects.
- Encourage the team to stay abreast of key political, economic, and cultural trends in their regions to appeal to their country-specific concerns and interests.
- Support network of 15+ Maryland business incubators and accelerators with funding, technical assistance, and marketing to build out their international attraction programs through the Global Gateway Soft Landing Program.
- Provide direct support services (matchmaking, introductions) to foreign companies participating in the Global Gateway Soft Landing Program.

Goal 2: Increase exports from the State of Maryland into foreign markets around the world.

- Expand opportunities for Maryland companies to do business overseas.
 - Apply for the Small Business Administration’s (SBA) State Trade and Export Promotion (STEP) grant to provide additional funding to allow more companies to participate in international trade shows, carry out export marketing plans, and utilize the U.S. Department of Commerce’s export services.
 - Organize and execute five to eight international trade shows and missions with delegations of six or more companies (depending upon SBA funding).
 - Coordinate with the Office of Strategic Industries and Entrepreneurship (OSIE) at the Maryland Department of Commerce to support additional major trade shows held in the U.S. to support Maryland companies seeking international business.
 - Manage the current network of 19 foreign offices to provide free consulting support for Maryland companies including identification of new opportunities.
 - Promote the reciprocal soft landing exchange program in foreign countries to allow Maryland companies to explore new markets while receiving free office space and local support from partners.
 - Engage local partners such as embassies, industry associations, and foreign business development agencies to be aware of incoming delegations and events that may present opportunities for Maryland companies. Distribute information about these events to potentially interested companies whenever feasible.

- Bring in foreign delegations to be hosted by Commerce and organize B2B meetings and/or networking receptions whenever possible to allow Maryland companies to engage directly with foreign buyers/partners at minimal cost to them.
- Provide direct funding to companies to offset the costs of expanding into international markets through the ExportMD program.
- Work with the Maryland Office of Tourism and the World Trade Center Institute (an OIIT grant recipient) to support tourism from foreign countries.
- Address barriers to export for Maryland companies.
 - Work with companies on a one-on-one basis to address export challenges through assistance from Baltimore-based and/or foreign offices.
 - Maintain relationships with federal agencies and/or relevant service providers to address challenges and provide a quick and efficient response to companies more easily.
 - Recommend and implement advocacy and actions concerning federal or international policy issues that negatively affect Maryland trade, such as the development of a tariffs resource page.
 - Assist companies who are not yet export-ready to access the necessary resources to be prepared for OIIT services by making referrals to the SDBC and others who offer this type of counseling.
- Promote the benefits of international trade to increase engagement in international export opportunities.
 - Promote exporting success stories and interesting articles on addressing export challenges to encourage businesses to consider exporting.
 - Carry out a series of informational sessions on export programs available to companies around the state, in partnerships with local jurisdictions and industry associations.
 - Work with local partners to develop topical information sessions (e.g., distinguished speakers' series with the University of Maryland (UMD), Export Controls with U.S. Export Assistance Centers (USEAC), and opportunities in select countries with embassy participation).
 - Focus on opportunities to promote export opportunities to new communities, such as rural areas, disadvantaged groups, or previously overlooked industry sectors to engage more new-to-export companies.
 - Ensure other staff at the Division of Industry, International, and Innovation at Commerce are kept up to date on OIIT's export offerings to allow them to include this information in their meetings and outreach to companies.
- Assess state policies and incentives that impact international trade and make recommendations for legislation or executive action when needed.

- Provide feedback through appropriate channels when companies (foreign or local) run into barriers that could be addressed by the State.
- Keep abreast of best practices used by other states and nations to support international investment and trade.
- Work with our partners to identify recommendations for new policies or incentives for consideration by Commerce for legislative or executive action.
- Provide input to the Office of Policy, Research, and Government Affairs (OPRGA) and the Office of the Governor on federal and international policies that affect international trade.

Goal 3: Market Maryland internationally.

- Promote Maryland to foreign companies and organizations through the Commerce website, blog, print collateral, social media, and newsletters.
 - Identify opportunities to promote foreign investment in Maryland and work with the marketing team to highlight positive stories.
 - Work with the marketing team to ensure the “Why Maryland” message translates well overseas, focusing particularly on comparison to top U.S. competitor markets and the “Gateway to U.S. Market” message.
 - Ensure international content on the website and other outreach materials remains up to date and relevant.
 - Identify new resources for promoting Maryland’s message overseas, particularly in the State’s five FDI target markets, such as international print and online publications, and exploring search engine optimization (SEO) in overseas markets.
 - Engage consultants, foreign offices and international partners to promote Maryland’s marketing messages.
- Promote Maryland through direct engagement at events with high international attendance.
 - Attend several major international trade shows in the U.S. and abroad to meet with international companies and deliver the Maryland message. OIIT aims to outreach to approximately 30 prospects per major international show.
 - Maximize Commerce presence for minimum cost by engaging foreign offices, contractors and partners to deliver the Maryland message on OIIT’s behalf, at select shows within targeted industry sectors.
 - Lead Maryland’s participation at SelectUSA, the United States Government’s premier international event for foreign direct investment, including the development of a 2-day Spin-Off event to attract 50+ foreign companies to tour Maryland’s top assets.
 - Attend local events with high potential to meet foreign prospects and/or existing foreign investors and deliver the Maryland message, such as local or federal

government events, Embassy events, industry association events and delegation visits arranged by third parties.

- Support International Business and Economic Development Activities led by the Governor, Lt. Governor, and other State Agencies
 - Provide recommendations for trade and investment meetings and events, as well as related deliverables, that are appropriate for the Governor and Lt. Governor.
 - Provide information, briefings, and staff support upon request for trade and investment meetings and events led by the Governor or Lt. Governor.
 - Provide background information on the State's international relationships to feed into other offices' briefing materials.
 - Establish relationships between embassies, diplomatic officials, and State officials as needed to fulfill the State's trade and investment needs and maintain Maryland's visibility in the international arena.
 - Support requests made by the Secretary of State's Office to support Sister-State programs and other meetings and events that require trade and investment expertise and/or support, including participation in the International Sub-Cabinet.

Maryland Department of the Environment

Looking ahead to 2026, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has the following goals for the coming year.

In 2026, Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain and MDE will continue to elevate Maryland's role in international climate leadership. Main actions will be to engage high-level global forums such as London Climate Week, New York Climate Week, and the 31st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP31).

Building on strong diplomatic relationships, MDE will advance and mature action plans tied to environmental priorities within Maryland's recent Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Hauts-de-France and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; finalize a new MOU and accompanying implementation plan with Québec; and deepen collaboration with the European Union (EU) delegation through a shared work plan focused on circular economy innovation.

Through Maryland's active participation in coalitions such as the Under2 Coalition, the U.S. Climate Alliance, the Subnational Methane Action Coalition, and other global accelerators, MDE will continue to cultivate strategic partnerships that accelerate clean-energy deployment, strengthen climate resilience, and expand economic opportunity.

Maryland Higher Education Commission

Looking ahead to 2026, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) has the following goals for the coming year:

Goal 1: Institutionalize a Statewide Global Partnership Strategy to Expand Maryland’s Higher Education Reach

MHEC will formalize and scale Maryland’s international higher education partnerships by building a structured global engagement strategy that strengthens diplomatic relationships and expands academic collaboration, student mobility, and research exchange opportunities.

Key 2026 Outcomes:

- Establish an International Engagement Framework for Maryland Higher Education (including partnership criteria, roles, and workflow coordination).
- Convert ongoing diplomatic engagement into formal education-focused agreements that expand academic pathways and joint initiatives with key partners (including China and France).
- Continue to support Maryland institutions in developing partnership-ready models (MOUs, exchange templates, visiting scholar pipelines, and institutional collaboration standards).

These efforts will strengthen Maryland’s global competitiveness by positioning higher education as a key tool for innovation, diplomacy, workforce advancement, and long-term international collaboration.

Goal 2: Launch a “Maryland Global Exchange & Convening Platform” to Strengthen Cross-Border Collaboration and Economic Opportunity

MHEC will expand Maryland’s global leadership by creating an international exchange and convening platform that will build on Baltimore’s World Trade Center Institute cohort model, strengthens international relationships, and connects global partners to Maryland’s institutions and talent pipeline.

Key 2026 Outcomes:

- Host at least one signature annual international convening centered on higher education collaboration, innovation, and shared workforce priorities when the WTCI convenes their annual cohort.
- Develop a consistent pipeline for international visitors and delegations that aligns with Maryland’s statewide education priorities, institutional capacity, and economic development goals.

- Strengthen partnerships that lead to tangible outcomes such as faculty and institutional exchanges, joint research initiatives, innovation partnerships, recruitment pipelines for global learners and professionals.

These efforts will position Maryland as a destination for global education partnership-building, strengthen international goodwill, and support the state’s broader goals around economic competitiveness and talent development.

Maryland Department of Transportation

Looking ahead to 2026, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has the following goals for the coming year.

Goal 1: Maryland Port Administration (MPA)

- Strengthen the MPA’s relationships with existing ports and evaluate future opportunities for new sister port agreements.
- Cultivate relationships with the Embassies in Washington, DC and strengthen connections with key ports across the globe to promote Maryland's Port to trading partners and their associated ports and customers.
- Leverage these existing relationships as an opportunity to trade best practices, share ideas, and establish an invaluable network of individuals to market the Port of Baltimore and the State.

Goal 2: Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA)

- The MAA will continue to explore opportunities to expand international passenger and cargo air service at BWI in 2026. MAA will attend air service development conferences to meet many passenger airlines in a short time to discuss new services. MAA also will visit airline headquarters to speak with a wider group of decision makers.
- MAA will coordinate with the Maryland Aviation Commission, the Maryland Department of Commerce, and local economic development entities to gather intelligence to host airline meetings, especially with respect to international cargo opportunities.
- MAA endeavors to organize the Maryland community to provide data and potentially funding to attract new passenger air service.
- MAA is expanding its outreach for Martin State Airport (MTN) to include international flight departments and private operators, emphasizing its strategic location near the Baltimore–Washington corridor and its on-site customs services. The goal is to attract more global GA traffic, strengthen economic connections, and further elevate Maryland’s position as an international aviation hub.
- To support MTN’s international business goals, MDOT has increased international marketing efforts, in print and digital for MTN’s Fixed Base Operation, and MAA plans to attend two National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) conferences in 2026.

Maryland Military Department

Looking ahead to 2026, the Maryland Military Department has the following goals for the coming year:

Goal 1: Continuing collaboration with Estonia

1. Collaborate with Estonia to develop and document Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (cUAS) Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures, encompassing essential equipment and software, to directly support the Maryland cUAS Council initiatives and enhance the safety and security of BWI and overall air transportation across Maryland.

Goal 2: Joint training with Estonia

2. Engage in joint training with Estonia's Cyber Protection Teams to develop expertise in cyber hardening and defensive strategies for operational technology supporting critical infrastructure sectors, specifically energy, water, and transportation.

Goal 3: Joint training with Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

3. Participate in joint training with BiH on emergency management best practices and the planning of multi-agency exercises with an emphasis on whole of government approach.

Conclusion

2025 was a year of significant achievement for Maryland in its international affairs work. Led by the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) during its first two years, the Moore-Miller Administration steadily built the structure, communication channels, and coordination mechanisms of the Subcabinet for International Affairs.

The fruits of this labor then were seen in 2025 through the many notable successes described in this Annual Report. Highlighting these successes were the Governor's first overseas Trade Mission to Japan and South Korea; the many meetings the Governor, Lt. Governor, and Secretary of State had with Ambassadors and other foreign leaders; the Cabinet Secretaries' missions to Europe, Canada, the Middle East, and Brazil; the new Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) signed with five of Maryland's Sister States; and the very well attended diplomatic receptions at the Preakness and the Washington International Horse Show.

The initiative, diligence, and energy that the Governor and Maryland's leaders have devoted to international affairs not only increases our State's respect and visibility across the globe, but brings significant investments from foreign countries into Maryland, as occurred with Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan in 2025. A huge factor in Maryland's international achievements, along with effective leadership from the top, is the cross-agency collaboration and communication regularly employed by the Subcabinet for International Affairs and its member agencies. As Maryland's place on the international stage is being secured by effective leadership at the top and cross-agency collaboration, our State's future prospects in the global arena are bright indeed.

Appendix

Comprehensive Strategic Goal Activities in 2025

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the actions and achievements that have shaped Maryland's international engagement in 2025, organized under the goals set forth in the *2023-2027 Moore-Miller Administration Strategic Plan for International Affairs*.

Strategic Goal 1:

Maximize the Subcabinet for International Affairs to Increase Cross-Agency Collaboration and Promote the Policies of the Moore-Miller Administration Across the Globe

With regular meeting cadence and communication tools established in 2023, the Subcabinet achieved a high level of participation and communication in 2025. The Subcabinet convened in January, May, July, and October of 2025, and the Staff Working Group met monthly. The Subcabinet achieved 100% participation in its meetings, and most of the Staff Working Group members achieved over 90% participation in their meetings, demonstrating the strong commitment of the participants at all levels.

Strategic Goal 2:

Strengthen Maryland's Economy by Supporting the Transportation Sector, Private Sector Investment in Strategic Industries, Inbound and Outbound Trade, and Access to New Markets Internationally

Office of the Secretary of State

1. On January 24, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore hosted a delegation from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), led by Mr. Michel Shaku Yumi, Chargé d'Affaires (Acting Ambassador) from the DRC Embassy in Washington, DC, along with representatives from the National Agency for the Promotion of Exports (ANAPEX). During the meeting, Deputy Secretary Lore provided an overview of the Department of Commerce's Global Gateway Program, while the DRC delegation highlighted their trade and investment opportunities. Maryland representatives in attendance included Special Secretary of Small, Minority, & Women Business Affairs Y. Maria Martinez; Rev. Lawrence E. Walker, Sr., Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives; Dr. Antwan Brown, Administrative Director of the Governor's Commission on African Affairs, Governor's Office of Community Initiatives; members of the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland, including Delegate and Chair of the Caucus Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins; Councilwoman Wala Blegay of the Prince George's County Council; and the meeting organizers from the OSOS, Director of International Affairs Mary E. (Mendy) Nitsch and Assistant Director of International Affairs Rosanna Mantova.

2. Secretary of State Susan Lee and Executive Assistant Cathy Bauer attended a welcoming reception for Commissioner Jack Chao of Taipei City, Taiwan, on January 31. Topics of discussion included business opportunities that could benefit both Maryland and Taiwan as well as Secretary of State Lee's potential attendance and speaking role in the 2025 Smart City Summit and Expo in March.

3. On February 4, Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations Alexandria Liu joined venture capitalist and chair of the Governor's Apprenticeship 2030 Commission Jake Hsu, CEO, in a dinner with friend and Taiwan-based business partner Phil Chen, also a CEO, who met earlier that day with Commerce leadership, as facilitated previously by Special Assistant Liu. Mr. Chen's company is a spinoff of a Taiwan-based conglomerate with a \$27B market cap, an early investor in companies such as TSMC and Nvidia, and a majority landowner in New Taipei City. Mr. Chen has met with Economic Development Offices in several other U.S. jurisdictions and remarked they are all the same and he is not swayed in any direction yet. He is seeking an anchor project for his large-scale dry cell batteries as the first step in deciding where to locate his production facility. Jake plans to introduce Mr. Chen to the CEO of BGE on his next trip to the U.S. (which could not be done during this trip due to short notice to BGE and security issues stemming from Mr. Chen being from a foreign country) and believes that personal connections would be a key differentiator in Mr. Chen's decision. Mr. Chen also owns a basketball team in Taiwan, on which Jeremy Lin, former U.S. basketball star, plays and invited Special Assistant Liu to a game and to meet with other contacts if she or the Secretary of State travels to Taiwan in the future.

4. Secretary of State Lee, Special Assistant Liu, and Executive Assistant Bauer supported Lt. Governor Aruna Miller at the Korea - U.S. Business Reception hosted by the Chairman of the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, on February 19. KCCI is one of the leading business organizations globally, and its chairman also leads the Korea-based conglomerate SK Corporation, which has significant investments in Maryland. Special Assistant Liu also invited Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ricardo Benn and Hui-Min Tzeng, Senior Regional Manager for East Asia, to assist at the event, particularly to engage with stakeholders who may support the Governor's deliverables during his trade mission to Korea. Key conversations included an invitation from the SK Chairman to meet with company leadership in Korea, an invitation from Samsung Electronics to meet with company leadership in Korea, discussions with SK America on Maryland's big bet on quantum computing, conversations with Maryland-based company, which supports NASA imaging and analytics, a representative from a Saudi Arabian Family Office who is exploring public-private-partnership investment opportunities in infrastructure and other developments.

5. Secretary of State Lee attended and gave remarks at the 2025 Spring Festival Reception and Entrepreneurship Club Launch Ceremony held by the U.S. - Sino Innovation Alliance (USIA), Chinese Association for Science and Technology - Washington DC Chapter (CAST - DC), Chinese American United Chamber of Commerce (CAUCC), Sino-American Pharmaceutical Professionals Association-Washington DC/Baltimore (SAPA - DC), and Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce (APACC). Secretary of State Lee and scientists discussed collaborations and exchanges that would benefit Maryland.

6. On February 21, Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations Alexandria Liu delivered remarks on behalf of the Maryland Government to the U.S. State Department-led delegation of culinary-industry focused investors from China at the Harvard Club in New York. Special Assistant Liu connected Maryland-based restaurant group with suppliers in the delegation and connected with former AMCHAM and U.S. Embassy - Beijing officials in attendance. She also discussed Baltimore's Chinatown with the Director of New York China Town.

7. On February 25, Director of International Affairs Nitsch met with Ambassador of Aruba Zulema Erasmus. Aruba elected a new government late last year. Ambassador Erasmus will travel to Aruba in March to discuss with the new government her role and proposals for future bilateral engagement, including more subnational engagement. Sectors of exchange and mutual benefit that she suggests including sports diplomacy, nature conservancy, and education.

Ambassador Erasmus plans to visit the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) in Edgewater, to inquire if there might be opportunities for collaboration. Director Nitsch shared with the Ambassador the Governor's list of "lighthouse industries," especially with regards to FDI: cybersecurity and IT, quantum computing, life sciences and biotechnology, AI, clean energy, and aerospace and defense, and provided copies of the Subcabinet's Strategic Plan and 2023 Annual Report to share with the new ministers. Director Nitsch will continue to reach out to the Ambassador in the month of March to follow up on this meeting and perhaps capture the Ambassador in real time at her meetings in Aruba.

8. Governor Wes Moore and Lt. Governor Miller hosted the Vice President of Vietnam, H.E. Madame Nguyen Thi Thanh, in the Governor's Reception Room on March 12. The Vietnamese Vice President highlighted women's leadership and empowerment; and she emphasized improving the lives of the rural

poor and made recommendations of increased educational exchange and agricultural trade between Vietnam and Maryland. Represented by Secretary of State Lee and her team at this meeting, the OSOS will plan follow-up actions with the Embassy of Vietnam on the subjects discussed.

9. On March 21, Deputy Secretary Lore and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova attended A Conversation with Jovita Neliupšienė, Ambassador from the EU to the United States, hosted by the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. Ambassador Neliupšienė discussed the state of EU-U.S. relations under the Trump administration, with a focus on trade and emerging opportunities for collaboration in technology and education. She noted that as European tech companies advance their quantum research, the EU will need to look to the U.S. as a key partner in this field. Deputy Secretary Lore and Assistant Director Mantova also spoke with Ambassador Neliupšienė after the event. Ambassador Neliupšienė is interested to meet with Governor Moore to continue subnational efforts.

10. Secretary of State Lee represented the State of Maryland at global engagements in Taiwan during March 18 to 22, anchored by the Smart City Expo in Taipei. The Expo was organized by the Taipei Computer Association (TCA). TCA is the largest industrial association in Taiwan, with over 4,000 corporate members generating 80% of the total production value of Taiwan's IT industry, founded in 1974. The Smart City Expo is known as the premier venue for showcasing groundbreaking innovations and fostering collaboration across various sectors, particularly AI, cybersecurity, transportation, sustainability, and startup communities.

At the Expo and other side events, Secretary of State Lee highlighted Maryland's leadership in our key strategic sectors, which include life sciences and quantum computing, and attract FDI into Maryland. Side events included: a meeting with the Minister along with the Department of International Cooperation of Taiwan's Ministry Science & Technology; a Startup Roundtable featuring Taiwan-based tech companies interested in expanding to Maryland; a meeting with the Director of Hsinchu Science Park, known as the "Silicon Valley" of Taiwan; and follow up meetings with a mid-stage industrial energy storage company assessing its U.S. expansion strategy with interest in Maryland. As part of the Moore-Miller Administration's commitment to cross-agency collaboration, Secretary of State Lee collaborated with the Department of Commerce and Department of Environment to uplift signature programs from those Offices during her engagements in Taiwan.

11. The OSOS, in collaboration with the Maryland Department of Commerce, coordinated and executed Governor Wes Moore's inaugural trade mission, the 2025 Asia Trade and Investment Mission to Japan and Korea, in April. During Q1 of 2025, the Planning Team worked to identify key deliverables, design the itinerary, develop the logistics plan, and liaise with in-country counterparts and the Office of the Governor to coordinate and execute the 2025 Asia Trade & Investment Mission through 35 high-impact engagements taking place over 6 working days.

The purpose of the 2025 Asia Trade & Investment Mission to Japan and Korea was to stimulate economic growth in Maryland by attracting foreign direct investment and promoting exports in the Japanese and Korean markets in key industry sectors. By engaging business, intergovernmental, and diplomatic stakeholders in Japan and Korea on the lighthouse sectors of life sciences, quantum computing and aerospace, the 2025 Asia Trade & Investment Mission planning team ensured strategic alignment with the Moore-Miller Administration's broader economic and policy agenda.

Through high-level government meetings, business development forums, and collaborative engagements in Japan and Korea, Governor Moore was able to position Maryland as a premier location for foreign investment in aerospace, quantum technologies, and life sciences, deepen ties with governmental and private-sector stakeholders in the target markets, and facilitate partnerships between Maryland-based companies and universities and their foreign counterparts. Governor Moore and his counterparts in our Sister States of Kanagawa and Gyeongsangnam signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to formalize the new efforts that were discussed.

The OSOS also supported a meeting of Korean officials hosted by the Department of Commerce, including protocol support and Secretary of State Lee's welcome remarks.

12. On May 11, Secretary of State Lee and Executive Aide Lucas Lin attended a business delegation reception hosted by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), hosting a business delegation from Hunan, China, specializing in technology and soybean industries. Also in attendance was U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce Mayank Kapur.

13. Secretary of State Lee and Executive Assistant Bauer joined Ambassador Yamada at the Ambassador's residence for Japan's SelectUSA event, attended by seven U.S. Governors from Delaware, North Carolina, Mississippi, Illinois, Alaska, Michigan, and New Mexico. Secretary of State Lee took this opportunity to not only interact with business leaders but also thank the Embassy for their support for Governor Moore's successful trade mission to Japan.

14. On May 11, Deputy Secretary Lore attended Taiwan's reception for SelectUSA and interacted with several business leaders and leaders in Government. He interacted with several individuals whom he met when he was in Taiwan last August and has maintained strong relationships with both the private and public sectors for the interest of Maryland's potential for FDI, new business, and educational opportunities.

15. On May 12, Director of International Affairs Nitsch represented the OSOS at an information session and networking reception in Washington, DC, a SelectUSA spin-off event organized by both the U.S. and Vietnamese embassies. Among other dignitaries, Vietnamese Ambassador to the U.S. Nguyen Quoc Dzung and U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Mark Knapper made remarks, as did Diane Ferrell, U.S. Deputy Under Secretary for International Trade. This was the third-largest delegation Vietnam has sent to SelectUSA. Vietnam has the 33rd largest economy in the world and aims for 8% economic growth in the near term. The Vietnamese delegation members were from both state- and privately-owned companies, including sectors such as high-tech, energy, agriculture, and educational training. Stone Slade, International Marketing Director for the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), was also in attendance.

16. On May 12, Deputy Secretary Lore attended a SelectUSA event hosted by the Embassy of Israel. During the event, he met with representatives from a tech firm specializing in AI-driven workforce development solutions. The company is seeking opportunities to market and sell their product to both government and private sector clients across the United States.

17. On May 13, Secretary of State Lee spoke at the Taiwan American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Washington Annual Dinner. She was joined by State Senator Clarence Lam, Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) Chief Judge Chung Pak, Terry Lierman (representing Comptroller Brooke Lierman),

North America Taiwan American Chamber of Commerce President Dr. Eugenia Henry, and Taiwan Representative Office Minister Andrea Yang. Several hundred Taiwan American business and community leaders were also in attendance.

18. On May 16, Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Lore, Special Assistant Liu, Executive Assistant Bauer, and Executive Aide Lin attended the Preakness Festival Opening Reception at the Government House. In close coordination with the First Lady's Office, our Office secured the participation and engagement of diplomats from several embassies strategic to Maryland's interests: the Deputy Chief of Mission of Mexico, the Consul General of the Embassy of Korea (who played a key role in securing top meetings for Governor Moore's Asia Trade Mission), the Economic Minister of the Embassy of Japan (who played a key role in securing top meetings for Governor Moore's Asia Trade Mission), the Head of the Political Section and also the Public Diplomacy Director of the United Arab Emirates, the Economic Minister of the Embassy of Jamaica, the Congressional and Subnational Minister of the People's Republic of China, and others. Special Assistant Liu worked closely with the First Lady's Office to secure these invitations and the OSOS attendees spent the evening staffing these high-level Embassy representatives and introducing them to First Lady Dawn Moore, Lt. Governor Miller, Cabinet Secretaries, members of the Moore-Miller Administration, and other attendees.

19. On May 17, Secretary of State Lee, Special Assistant Liu, and Executive Assistant Bauer attended the Preakness Stakes and worked with Deputy Chief of Staff Manny Welsh and Policy Advisor Walter Donoughue to staff the Ambassador of Japan to the U.S. Shigeo Yamada. This attendance was made possible because of the hard work and coordination from Special Assistant Liu.

20. On May 20, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova attended an online workshop hosted by the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University. The workshop discussed subnational perspectives on transatlantic trade policy, with panel discussions covering topics including: the role of international law and trade policy from the World Trade Organization's viewpoint; European and Canadian subnational approaches to transatlantic and North American trade, including potential scenarios, impacts, and policy responses; and the national security implications of a weakening international trade regime.

Keynote remarks were delivered by Ambassador Nina Hachigian, former U.S. Special Representative for City and State Diplomacy at the Department of State, and Ambassador Jovita Neliupšienė of the European Union Delegation to the United States.

21. On May 27, Secretary of State Lee joined Governor Wes Moore and Ambassador Yamada at the Japan Heritage Night at Oriole Park. Also in attendance were Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Special Assistant Liu, Executive Assistant Bauer, Executive Aide Lin, Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr., Deputy Secretary Benn, and Regional Manager for East Asia Hui-Min Tzeng, who all played a key role in networking with embassy officials as well as key business leaders from Japan, many of whom have relocated to Maryland.

22. On June 11, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Assistant Bauer, and Executive Aide Naomi Kim had a virtual meeting with Director Mun Chang Sook, Marketing Manager Eric Lee, and Administrative Manager Justin Cha from the

Jeollanam-do USA Office. Jeollanam-do has been a Maryland Sister State since 2017. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss opportunities for future collaboration in celebration of the upcoming 10th anniversary of the Sister State relationship. The Jeollanam-do representatives proposed developing joint projects leading up to the anniversary, with a focus on aerospace, defense, and biotechnology to highlight Maryland's strengths in aerospace and life sciences, and Jeollanam-do's space launch center and growing bioindustry sector. The discussion also explored potential partnerships in higher education, including university exchanges and international student programs. Additionally, the Jeollanam-do representatives expressed interest in participating in Maryland's Korean Festival in September 2025 and proposed hosting a "Jeollanam-do Day" in Maryland to promote its agricultural products and tourism. Maryland was also invited to attend the 2026 Yeosu International Island Expo.

23. On June 24, Secretary of State Lee, Director of International Affairs Nitsch and Governor's Summer Internship Program (GSIP) Fellow Megane Mbapte Tchinda attended the Pan-African City Symposium and Expo (PACSE), where Secretary of State Lee made remarks at the opening ceremony. A dynamic platform dedicated to fostering dialogue, innovation and collaboration between African nations and global partners on issues of urban development, technology, and sustainable growth was presented. Secretary of State Lee delivered opening remarks, emphasizing the significance of gatherings like PACSE in strengthening subnational diplomacy and international cooperation. She underscored Maryland's leadership in promoting inclusive, forward-looking policy amidst an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape. Secretary of State Lee highlighted the State's continued investment in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and civil protections. She also shared details about Governor Moore's historic \$400 million equitable housing initiative, an effort that reflects Maryland's commitment to economic justice and community resilience. This is the third year that the OSOS has joined with the Department of Housing and Community Development to support this initiative that originated from Maryland's Sister State partnership in South Africa, KwaZulu Natal.

24. On June 25, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, and GSIP Intern Mbapte Tchinda met virtually with Hauts-de-France Regional Government counterparts, Director of International Relations Juliette Delbe and Project Manager Virginie Anger, to discuss the current draft of the Maryland-Hauts-de-France MOU renewal, as well as the proposed itinerary for Vice President of Hauts-de-France François Decoster and his delegation's visit on October 20 and 21.

25. On June 25, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova facilitated an introduction between Virginie Anger of the Hauts-de-France Regional Government and Maryland transportation officials to explore potential collaboration. Ms. Anger, Project Manager for International Relations, was introduced to Lyn Farrow, Director of External Affairs at the Maryland Department of Transportation, and Jennifer Guthrie, Director of Government Relations and External Affairs at the Maryland Port Administration (MPA). The discussion centered on the Sister State relationship between Maryland and the Hauts-de-France Region, with a focus on port cooperation. Ports in Dunkirk, Boulogne-sur-Mer, and Calais have expressed interest in engaging with the Port of Baltimore. A 2013 MOU between Calais and the MPA was shared for context.

26. On June 25, Secretary of State Lee, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Assistant Bauer, and Executive Aide Kim met with Director Mun Chang Sook, Marketing Manager Eric

Lee, and Administrative Manager Justin Cha of the Jeollanam-do USA Office, along with Su Ahn, President of the Korea Society of Maryland. The meeting focused on Jeollanam-do's potential participation in the Korean community festival on September 13 in Howard County, which this year will emphasize Korean history education for first through third-generation Korean Americans. While the event will be smaller in scale, Ms. Ahn welcomed Jeollanam-do's involvement and agreed to provide a booth to promote the province's agricultural products and tourism. Both sides also discussed future collaboration in areas such as biotechnology, aerospace, and student exchange programs, and plan to follow up after the Korea Society's Vice President returns from Korea in July.

27. On June 26, Director of International Affairs Nitsch and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova introduced representatives from the World Trade Center Institute (WTCI), Jeremy Rosendale, Vice President of Membership and Business Development, and Alicia Sanchez Loya, Senior Manager of Business Development & Membership, to Hauts-de-France Regional Government representatives, Director Delbe and Project Manager Anger. The purpose of the meeting was to begin planning WTCI's Taste of France event, which will showcase Hauts-de-France and include the participation of Vice President François Decoster and his delegation during their two-day visit to Maryland in October. The event will celebrate the region's culinary and cultural heritage and serve as a platform to strengthen economic and cultural ties between Maryland and Hauts-de-France. The event was held on October 20.

28. On June 26, Governor Wes Moore and Secretary of State Lee met with Ambassador of Belgium Frédéric Bernard. The OSOS supported preparations for the meeting by coordinating with the Governor's Office and Maryland Department of Commerce to compile briefing materials and ensure a productive discussion. Discussion topics included: increasing international trade investment and exchanges in life sciences, pharmaceuticals, and other areas that will benefit both regions.

29. On June 26, Secretary of State Lee, joined by members of the Executive Team and the International Affairs Division, met with Minister Qiu Wenxing and three staff members at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Washington, DC. The discussion centered around the upcoming Baltimore-Xiamen Sister City Committee Youth Ambassadors' trip to China, including planned visits to Xiamen, Anhui Province, and Shanghai, as well as opportunities to expand educational and business exchanges between Maryland and China.

30. On June 27, Secretary of State Lee and Deputy Secretary Benn met with a team representing a South Korean highway construction company, including two senior managers. The company is currently seeking potential local partners to carry out small-scale pilot projects over the next 2 to 3 years, with the aim of assessing local business conditions prior to full market entry and considering a total investment of up to \$70 million, with an annual investment of up to USD 20 million. Also in attendance was OAH Chief Judge Chung Pak, who interpreted the meeting.

31. On June 30, Special Assistant Liu coordinated a meeting with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and the Maryland Military Department and Sail250 Festival and Airshow organizers to discuss inviting a South Korean aerial team to perform aerial demonstrations at Sail250 next summer. This would serve as an anchor for an inbound Korean trade delegation.

32. On July 1, Governor Moore, Secretary of State Lee, and Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain met with Ambassador of France Laurent Bili. The OSOS supported preparations for the meeting by coordinating with the Governor's Office, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and Commerce to compile briefing materials and ensure a productive discussion. Topics included recent domestic political developments, the historic collaboration between France and Maryland, joint environmental initiatives such as engagement around UNOC3, and broader geopolitical issues. Prior to the meeting, Deputy Secretary Lore provided a brief tour of the Maryland State House to Ambassador Bili and Consul General Caroline Monvoisin. As part of his visit to Maryland, Ambassador Bili also toured the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis earlier in the day and visited the SERC following the meeting.

33. Deputy Secretary Lore joined a meeting hosted by the Maryland - Ireland Trade Commission on July 8. The discussion centered on the recent Commerce trade mission to Ireland and included other topics.

34. Deputy Secretary Lore had a conversation with President of Liberia Joseph Nyuma Boakai at a meeting with local diaspora as a part of the President's working visit to the U.S. on July 10.

35. Deputy Secretary Lore attended a reception at the Residence of the Irish Ambassador on July 10 for diplomats returning to Ireland, where he discussed the Maryland - Ireland Trade Commission work with economic and cultural representatives of Ireland.

36. Secretary of State Lee provided remarks and presented a Proclamation at the 2025 International Leadership Foundation (ILF) Scholarship and Awards Gala on July 24 in Washington, DC. The annual event featured AAPI fellows selected by ILF, as well as national AAPI public figures and public servants. Secretary of State Lee presented the ILF Business Leadership Award to Enterprise Solutions, Inc. CEO Roberto Ilames and New Empire Group Chairman and CEO Bentley Zhao. Also in attendance were former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao, Deputy Assistant to the President and Senior Policy Strategist May Mailman, former Governor of Maryland Larry Hogan, former First Lady of Maryland Yumi Hogan, Chief OAH Judge Chung Pak, Executive Aide Lin, GOCI Administrative Director Christina Poy, and Dr. Eugenia Henry.

37. On July 28, Secretary of State Lee, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain, and Maryland Energy Administration Program Manager Garry Aime met with Dr. Sheng Liu, Chairman of Hope Chinese School and brother of the Chairman of Wanhao Energy Company, to discuss Wanhao Energy Company, a carbon-capture and energy management company based in Anhui, China, and its desire for potential investment in Maryland. Also in attendance were Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Executive Aide Lin, Assistant Secretary of the Environment Dr. Rachel Lamb, and GOCI Commissioner Dr. Ping Lu. This was the fifth meeting between Maryland Officials and representatives of Wanhao Energy.

38. At the request of Prince George's County Councilwoman Wala Blegay and President of the DMV Congolese Diaspora Dady Djamba, the OSOS representatives met with the Special Advisor to the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Jean-Charles Okoto Lolakombe and Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the DRC in the U.S. Michel Shaku on August 1. Topics of discussion included understanding the request for a meeting with Governor Moore, and the mutual deliverables for this proposed meeting. Ideas included a potential Sister State relationship between Maryland and the Kasai region of the DRC, agricultural exchange programs, mineral trade, and cybersecurity. Representing the State of Maryland were

Deputy Secretary Lore, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Aide Lin, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Steve Connelly, MDA Director of International Marketing Stone Slade, and Commerce Regional Manager Brian Castleberry (virtual). Congolese community members in Maryland included Staffer to Councilwoman Blegay Khadija Diallo, representative of Kimvuka Connect LLC Niwa Kapumbu, Africa Futures Forum Economist & Policy Analyst Francis Shako, and members of Congolese Diaspora USA Fortunat Ndaw Mwana, Denis Mulunda, and Isaac Kabengele.

39. Secretary of State Lee, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, and Executive Aide Lin met with the newly appointed Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) Consular Division Deputy Director Edward Shen on August 19. TECRO is interested in facilitating a meeting between the Governor and Representative of Taiwan to the U.S., Alexander Yui, with TECRO officials, in the hopes of a future Governor visit to Taiwan. Other topics of discussion included: an invitation for the OSOS to attend a conference in Taiwan, Maryland-Taiwan economic interests, specific business deliverables that Taiwan can offer to Maryland, potential MOUs on strategic industries, and follow-up on connecting TECRO with the Maryland Department of Emergency Management.

40. The OSOS and Commerce met on August 21 with the U.S. - ASEAN Business Council (USABC) to explore opportunities for collaboration on expanding Maryland's trade and economic engagement with the ten nations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). USABC is the leading voice of the American private sector in Southeast Asia and the only U.S.-based organization formally recognized in the ASEAN Charter. They represent the interests of over 180 member companies in the ASEAN market, including Maryland-headquartered Fortune 500 firms such as Marriott International and Lockheed Martin, which collectively generate more than \$7 trillion in revenue and employ over 13 million people globally. They also propose to discuss the potential for Governor Moore to lead a trade and investment mission to Southeast Asia in 2026 to help Maryland companies reach these markets, attract investment, and further position Maryland as a competitive global hub.

41. At the request of Prince George's County Council member Wala Blegay, Deputy Secretary Lore attended the Invest Guinea event on August 30 to understand investment initiatives and opportunities of Guinea. Attendees included the Special Advisor to the President Dr. Ali Mohammed Al Khouri, Ambassador of Guinea Fatoumata Kaba, and members of the Guinea Chamber of Commerce.

42. On September 5, the OSOS, Commerce, and MDE hosted counterparts from Quebec in Baltimore to align the logistics and deliverables for the State Trade Mission to Canada. Following this meeting, the counterparts joined the MDE and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to continue discussions on sustainable transportation collaboration.

43. The OSOS secured the participation of Okazaki Yasayuki, the new Economic Minister at the Embassy of Japan, for the September 7 Orioles - Dodgers game, where Governor Moore hosted Hitachi leadership, including Director and Executive Chairman Toshiaki Higashihara. The event recognized Hitachi's significant investment and expansion in Hagerstown. Deputy Secretary Lore was also in attendance. Minister Okazaki's participation emphasized the Moore-Miller Administration's strong international connections and continued commitment to advancing foreign direct investment.

44. Secretary of State Lee recorded remarks for the opening ceremony of the China Provinces - U.S. States Economic and Trade Cooperation Seminar to take place on September 8 in Xiamen, Baltimore's Sister City.

45. Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, and Executive Aide Lin met with Economic Minister Yasuyuki Okazaki at the Embassy of Japan on September 17. Other staff of the Embassy of Japan in attendance were Counsellor Nakagawa and Second Secretary Yamazaki. Topics of discussion included: strengthening Maryland-Japan relations, follow-up from Governor Moore's Asia Trade Mission, annual student exchanges from our Sister State Kanagawa, the successful Hitachi expansion in Hagerstown, and the Moore-Miller Administration's modernization efforts of thoroughbred racing and competition, in which Japan excels.

46. Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, and Executive Aide Lin attended the 80th National Day of Vietnam and 30th Anniversary of U.S. - Vietnam Diplomatic Relations Celebration at the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on September 17. Secretary of State Lee and Senior Advisor Gebhardt met with an aide to Ambassador of Vietnam Nguyễn Quốc Dũng to discuss next steps regarding the Sister State Agreement with the former province of Ninh Thuận, which has since merged with a neighboring province. Also in attendance were former Secretary of Commerce Kevin Anderson, GOCI Administrative Director Christina Poy, GOCI Commissioner Thai Nguyen, the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of Singapore, Embassy of the PRC Minister Qiu, Embassy of Japan Counsellor Nakagawa, and other U.S. and foreign diplomats.

47. Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, and Executive Aide Lin met with a delegation of Deputies from the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) of the People's Republic of China at the Embassy of the P.R.C. on September 17. The delegation was led by Deputy of the NPC and member of the NPC Foreign Affairs Committee Jiang Chenghua. Topics of discussion included: strengthening Maryland - China and U.S. - China relations, the importance of people-to-people exchanges, Maryland's oldest Sister State relationship with Anhui Province, and the delegation's earlier meeting with U.S. Representatives and Senators.

48. Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, and Executive Aide Lin met with the Ambassador of Liberia to the U.S. Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh at the Embassy of Liberia on September 17. Other staff of the Embassy of Liberia in attendance were Minister Counselor for Political and Diaspora Affairs Charles H.V. Allen, Minister Counselor for International Cooperation & Development Yaba Freeman-Thompson. Topics of discussion included: strengthening Maryland-Liberia relations, a proposal to elevate Maryland's existing Sister State relationships with Bong County and Maryland County to the level of the country of Liberia, opportunities of exchange in agriculture and minerals, upcoming participation at the United Nations World Economic Forum from September 26 to 28 from Liberia, and a potential visit to Annapolis from the President of Liberia Joseph Boakai.

49. Secretary of State Lee and Executive Aide Lin attended the 2025 International Tour of Taiwan Gourmet Cuisine hosted by the Global Federation of Chinese Business Women on September 21. Also in attendance

were State Senator Clarence Lam, Chief Administrative Law Judge Chung Pak, and representatives of the Taiwanese community in Maryland.

50. Deputy Secretary Lore hosted a business delegation from North Chungcheong Province, South Korea, in Annapolis on September 26. Topics of discussion included: information on Maryland's industrial development strategies and policy directions, Maryland's lighthouse sectors, and a potential economic cooperation agreement between Maryland and North Chungcheong Province. Following the discussion, Deputy Secretary Lore provided the delegation with a tour of the State House. Also in attendance was OSOS Intern Justin Carlson.

51. Deputy Secretary Lore presented a Governor's Proclamation and provided remarks at the African Diaspora Business Expo at Montgomery College on September 27. His remarks followed a recorded video from the Governor, and highlighted our Office's engagement with African governments and the importance of the diaspora community in Maryland.

52. Secretary of State Lee provided remarks and presented a Governor's Citation at the 12th World Tamils Economic Conference on October 3. Also in attendance were Lt. Governor Miller, former Deputy Secretary of State Dr. Rajan Natarajan, Executive Aide Lin, and President and Chief Executive Officer for U.S. India SME Council, Inc. Elisha Pulivarti.

53. On October 7, Director of International Affairs Nitsch provided remarks at the send-off event for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (BSO). The BSO will perform at the U.S. - China Sister Cities Conference and at a Maryland Business concert attended by companies from Maryland with a presence in China, and Chinese companies with a presence in Maryland. Also in attendance were Special Assistant Liu, representatives of the Baltimore Mayor and City Council President, and AAPI advisory council members.

54. On October 20, Secretary of State Lee met with Vice President Decoster and the Hauts-de-France delegation at the Taste of Business Reception at the World Trade Center Institute (WTCI). Deputy Secretary of Commerce Stephen Rice gave remarks and introduced Vice President Decoster to the reception. Also in attendance were Embassy of France Consul General Caroline Monvoisin, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain, Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Special Assistant Liu, Executive Aide Lin, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, and Board members and contributors to the WTCI.

55. On October 21, with support and planning from the OSOS, Governor Moore hosted Vice President Decoster and the Hauts-de-France delegation in the Governor's Reception for an MOU signing to renew the Maryland - Hauts-de-France Sister State agreement in the fields of quantum, life sciences, education, and the equine industry. Secretary of State Lee gave remarks introducing the Governor, and introduced Pasteur Institute of Lille teacher Luc Peyraud and Saint Vincent de Paul High School English Teacher Claudine Ledoux for a presentation of French student projects about Maryland. Also in attendance were Embassy of France Consul General Monvoisin, Embassy of France Education Attaché Xavier Moquet, Secretary of Commerce Coker and staff of Commerce, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain and staff of the MDE, Secretary Kurtz and staff of DNR, members of the Hauts-de-France delegation, MD250 Director Michele Johnson, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor

Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Aide Lin, Executive Aide Kim, and OSOS Intern Carlson.

56. On October 24, Secretary of State Lee provided remarks at the 9th Korean American Professionals Association in Life Sciences (KAPAL) Annual Conference at the Gaithersburg Washingtonian Marriott. The invitation was extended as a connection from Commerce Business and Innovation Development Manager Bradley Gillenwater with KAPAL President Dr. Jihoon (Jay) Park, who contributed to business meetings and discussion on the 2025 Asia Mission. In her remarks, Secretary of State Lee highlighted the follow-up to the Asia Mission to Korea and Japan, such as ongoing meetings with Korean companies, and affirmed Maryland's desire to engage Korean businesses and life sciences professionals. Also in attendance were Executive Aide Lin and Chief OAH Judge Chung Pak.

57. The OSOS co-hosted Embassy Night at the Washington International Horse Show (WIHS) with the Prince George's County Government on October 25 at the Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro. Attended by over 300 guests secured by our Office, this event featured speeches by LG Miller, Secretary of State Lee, U.S. Congressman Glenn Ivey (MD-4), Prince George's County Executive Aisha Braveboy, and Chair of the Maryland Horse Industry Board Sheila Curry.

Prominent diplomats in attendance included the Ambassador of Mexico Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, Ambassador of Singapore LUI Tuck Yew, and 59 foreign diplomats from 26 Embassies. Representatives of the State of Maryland included Higher Education Secretary Dr. Rai, Department of Service and Civic Innovation Secretary Paul Monteiro, Acting Secretary Biddle, Acting Secretary Suzanne Dorsey, and Acting Secretary Tolentino.

The OSOS was represented by Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Special Assistant Liu, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, AAG Josaphine Yuzuik, Finance Director Ian Fitzpatrick, Executive Assistant Lin, Executive Aide Naomi Kim, OSOS Intern Carlson, OSOS Intern Isaac Hawkins, former Executive Assistant Cathy Bauer, and former OSOS Intern Anna Wang. Representing other Maryland State agencies were Director Allisa Mason, Chief Counsel Amanda LaForge, Director of Executive Services Shameka Littles, Hui Min Li (Commerce), Dr. Rachel Lamb (MDE), Lyn Farrow (MDOT), and Dr. Tony Campbell (MMD). GOCI representatives included Executive Director Rev. Larry Walker, Administrative Director Dr. Anton Brown, Administrative Director Christina Poy, and GOCI Commissioners Thai Nguyen and Dr. Yang Yu, alongside 15 members of the Maryland General Assembly, and numerous community and business leaders of Maryland. Also in attendance was Former Ambassador of France to UNESCO and Atlantic Council Africa Center Director Rama Yade. Some of the world's top equestrian athletes and members of the Olympic Equestrian Team joined the reception prior to taking their place in the arena to compete for the coveted Longines FEI World Cup later in the evening, an FEI 5-Star (CCI5*) rated competition.

The WIHS Diplomatic Reception provided excellent networking opportunities for the 300+ people in attendance who are active in the international affairs and diplomatic spheres, achieving the goals our Office set for this event. Diplomats expressed their gratitude for the invitations and commended Secretary of State Lee and Prince George's County for the event. Some international follow-up in progress includes: the Ambassador of Singapore expressing support of Maryland's blue catfish export in his country, the Ambassador of Mexico connecting with state and local leaders, members of the EU wanting to deepen

engagement with Maryland's horse industry, FDI prospecting, and local/domestic partnerships. Our Office executed a world-class reception showcasing the significance and vibrancy of our Office's International Affairs portfolio; strengthening international relationships across the Administration, demonstrating Maryland as a premier destination for high-level equestrian competition to global stakeholders, and encouraging show organizers to continue hosting this event with a \$100m economic impact in Maryland across its contract period in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

58. In a meeting facilitated by Secretary of State Lee, Governor Wes Moore had a productive, wide-ranging discussion with European Union (EU) Ambassador Jovita Neliupšienė on October 29 in his office. Governor Moore and the EU Ambassador discussed their shared goals and priorities of investment, trade, and exchange in clean, sustainable energy and the environment, the life sciences, cybersecurity, AI, quantum computing, and other areas to benefit the people of Maryland and the EU countries. They were joined in this meeting by Deputy Secretary Benn, Senior Advisor & Director of Federal Relations Matt Verghese, Deputy Chief of Staff Adam Flasch, and EU Global Issues and Innovation Head-Javier Sancho Velázquez. OSOS Special Assistant Liu facilitated this meeting.

After the morning meeting, Governor Moore, EU Ambassador Neliupšienė, and Maryland Senate President Pro Tempore Malcom Augustine addressed the inaugural U.S. - EU Circular Economy Forum co-hosted by the State of Maryland and the European Union Delegation in the United States. This important forum, led by Secretary of the Environment McIlwain, in collaboration with the OSOS, convened approximately 150 leading policy experts, businesses, financial institutions, legislators, and government officials to explore opportunities for advancing circular economy partnerships across the Atlantic and highlighting Maryland's national and international leadership in building a more sustainable, competitive, and resilient economy.

59. On November 3, Director of International Affairs Nitsch met at Morgan State University (MSU) with representatives from the Quebec government (NYC offices), MDOT, and MSU to discuss initial plans for the Sustainable Mobility Showcase on Monday, May 18, 2026. The discussion focused on MSU potentially hosting the Showcase, with confirmation anticipated by the end of this week.

The MSU Center for the Built Environment and Infrastructure (CBEIS), along with its engineering and architecture departments, would be responsible for planning the program on behalf of the University. The MDE is also a key state agency in planning the event.

Other discussion topics included:

Identifying key stakeholders (public and private sector, academia, non-profit)

- Logistics
- Audience
- Event agenda
- Media and marketing

An important marketing message will highlight Baltimore/Maryland as the newest stakeholder in the Showcase, which has been held for several years in Philadelphia, Newark, NJ, Queens, NYC, and Quebec.

There is also a possibility of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Quebec officials. The MDOT has requested the Governor or Lt. Governor's participation.

60. On November 10, Director of International Affairs Nitsch participated in the 4th Bi-Annual International Business Conference 2025 Out of (and Into) Africa Conference, organized by Morgan State University. Director Nitsch presented the responsibilities of the International Division and its work with Africa and the African diaspora in Maryland. On the panel with Director Nitsch were Director of FDI at Commerce Aisha Booker, and Constituency for Africa Founder and Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) Panelist Melvin Foote. Also in attendance was Deputy Director Dr. Akilah Alleyne.

61. On November 12, Secretary of State Lee met with Korea Overseas Infrastructure and Urban Development Corporation (KIND) Director of Investment Policy Mu-Hyuck (Badger) Lee and a delegation from Prince George's County in the Wineland Building. Director Lee was accompanied by Councilwoman Jolene Ivey, Chief of Staff Amy Chung-Fry, Interim CEO and President of Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation Ebony Stocks, CEO of VSJ&Co. Veronica Jeon, and COS of VSJ&Co. Maryangel Rodriguez, who had provided Director Lee various site tours around Prince George's County. KIND, founded by the government of South Korea, operates \$200 million in equity for infrastructure projects in the U.S. in energy, urban rejuvenation, tech, industrial parks, transportation, and quantum initiatives. Director Lee sought projects to present to the KIND board upon his return to South Korea. Secretary of State Lee provided an overview of the commercial landscape of Maryland, its strong relationship with South Korea, and the interest in finding opportunities for investment. Also in attendance were Special Assistant Liu, Executive Aide Lin, Executive Aide Kim, and Interns Carlson and Isaac Hawkins.

62. Secretary of State Lee and Chief OAH Judge Pak provided remarks at the M&T Bank Korea Business Client Connector on November 12, at the invitation of M&T Bank Vice President and Business Banking Relationship Manager Kristie Chung. Also in attendance was Executive Aide Lin and Korea Society of Maryland President AHN Suah.

63. The OSOS and Commerce completed travel to Montreal, Quebec, Canada for the Canada Mission from November 16 to 18. Internal delegation members included Secretary of State Lee, Secretary of Commerce Coker, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, Executive Aide Lin, Assistant Secretary of Commerce Gilstrap, Foreign Direct Investment Director Booker, Commerce Regional Manager of the Americas Rivera, and representatives from the Canada FDI Program (Canadien Investissement Dirèct Étrange Prospection, CIDEP) office. External delegation members included former U.S. Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro, U.S. Consulate in Montreal Senior Advisor Connie Irrera, UMD Terrapin Development Corporation CDO and former Howard County Executive Ken Ulman, CEO of Sonavi Labs and Life Sciences Board member Ellington West, and CEOs of OneSource Consulting Vernae Jones-Seals and Ayanna Seals. The Montreal, Quebec itinerary was supported by the Quebec Government Office in New York and Mid-Atlantic Delegate General David Brulotte.

64. On November 19, Deputy Secretary Lore and Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Alleyne attended an event in Prince George's County centered around Liberian Investment with the Ambassador of Liberia Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh. Topics of discussion included target countries for community-led exchanges such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Liberia.

65. Secretary of State Lee and Executive Aide Lin attended the Japan - U.S. Tourism Night at the Ambassador of Japan's Residence on November 19. Secretary of State Lee met with the Ambassador of Japan YAMADA Shigeo, who provided remarks on the importance of U.S.-Japan relations and continued cultural exchange. Secretary of State Lee then discussed future collaboration between the Embassy and the State of Maryland, including finalizing a date for Japan - Maryland Night in January 2026 around the Governor's schedule, with Minister of Economy Okazaki and Counselor Nakagawa. Also in attendance were Deputy Secretary Benn and Senior Director Jessica Reynolds.

66. On November 23, Maryland leaders hosted representatives from the Embassy of Japan at the Ravens vs. Jets game at M&T Bank Stadium as part of ongoing sports diplomacy efforts. Participants included Lt. Governor Miller, Secretary of Commerce Coker, Deputy Secretary Benn, senior officials from the OSOS and Embassy of Japan officials, Economic Minister Okazaki, Counselor Nakagawa, and Mr. Takahashi. The event provided an informal setting to strengthen ties and continue engagement with Japanese partners.

67. A virtual meeting was held on December 3 to coordinate plans for an upcoming visit from a Tipperary, Ireland, delegation expected in mid-March. Attendees included Anthony Fitzgerald, Head of Enterprise & Economic Development, Local Enterprise Office in Tipperary and Maryland representatives Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, and Assistant Director Mantova. The delegation, that will be led by Mr. John Carroll, Chairman of the Tipperary County Council, intends to engage Maryland during the semi quincentennial celebrations, with activities emphasizing shared cultural and historical ties. The group also briefly discussed a potential second visit in 2026 focused on trade, investment, biopharma, agriculture, and possible collaboration with Johns Hopkins University.

Baltimore was recommended as the primary location for the visit. Deputy Secretary Lore highlighted historic sites such as Fort McHenry. Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova also suggested highlighting Fells Point and Highlandtown. In discussing higher education, Assistant Director Mantova recommended expanding engagement beyond Johns Hopkins to include the University of Maryland, noting its strong agriculture program. Senior Advisor Gebhardt also provided an overview of Maryland's Sister States program, and participants expressed interest in exploring a future partnership with the Republic of Ireland.

68. The OSOS continues to engage in follow-up activities related to the 2025 Secretary-Led Trade Mission to Canada.

On December 5, Director of Administration and Finance Ian Fitzpatrick spoke with BWI Air Service Director Jordan Kayloe to discuss efforts to establish direct air service between BWI and Toronto and Montreal. This conversation follows the recent expression of interest in resuming flights after the Maryland Trade Mission to Quebec and Ontario, during which the OSOS spoke with Quebec officials interested in the resumption of air service to Montreal. Director Kayloe indicated that BWI has had recent discussions with Air Canada regarding the resumption of regional jet or mainline service to both cities. Currently, BWI is losing approximately 130,000 passengers annually to IAD and DCA due to the absence of direct service to Canada.

69. On December 7, Secretary of State Lee provided remarks at the TopOne Mortgage, Inc. 20 Year Celebration in Gaithersburg. Delegate Lily Qi presented a General Assembly Citation to the organization.

Also in attendance were Coordination Council of Chinese American Associations (CCCAA) President Jiang Xu and Sister States of Maryland, Inc. Anhui Chair Mark Xu.

70. Deputy Secretary Lore and Special Assistant Liu completed travel to the United Arab Emirates from December 8 to 13 for the 2025 Maryland Mission to the Middle East, at the request of the Department of Commerce.

The 2025 Maryland Reconnaissance Mission to the UAE led by Secretary of Commerce Coker showed that the strategic alignment exists between Maryland’s economic priorities and UAE’s Vision 2030. The Office of the Secretary of State’s support role—operationally and diplomatically—was integral to Mission effectiveness, with Deputy Secretary Lore providing diplomatic reinforcement in this protocol-driven region, and continuous, nimble on-the-ground protocol and logistics support by Special Assistant Liu. The Mission positioned the State for near-term, actionable partnerships with high-impact UAE institutions; the Office of the Secretary of State will coordinate with Commerce and other stakeholders for structured follow-up to convert these well-received initial discussions into tangible outcomes.

The Maryland delegation conducted senior-level meetings with leading UAE public- and private- sector entities central to the country’s innovation, investment, and national security ecosystem. Across engagements, UAE counterparts consistently referenced Vision 2030, their national economic diversification and modernization strategy aimed at reducing reliance on oil & gas production while positioning the UAE as a global hub for innovation, advanced technology, and knowledge-based industries. UAE’s Vision 2030 showed strong alignment with Maryland’s lighthouse sector priorities and an interest in execution-oriented partnerships. UAE stakeholders expressed strong interests in clinical collaboration, AI-enabled diagnostics, translational research, digital health infrastructure, and an appetite for collaboration in dual-use technologies, cybersecurity, quantum applications, and resilient supply chains.

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

1. On January 30, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller participated in Japan - Maryland Night, co-hosted with Japanese Ambassador Shigeo Yamada and Maryland officials. The event celebrated the longstanding relationship between Japan and Maryland. During the evening, she met with Japanese companies specializing in transportation that are exploring opportunities to expand in Maryland.

2. On February 19, Lt. Governor Miller delivered remarks at the Korea - U.S. Business Night, hosted by the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI). The event provided an opportunity to engage with Korea-based conglomerates interested in expanding to Maryland while celebrating and strengthening the economic partnership between South Korea, the United States, and Maryland.

Attendees included senior executives from Korea’s top 20 conglomerates, who were in the U.S. for a trade mission led by Chey Tae-won, Chairman of KCCI and SK Group. The delegation featured global leaders in strategic industries such as semiconductors, batteries, electric vehicles, shipbuilding, and steel, with key executives from companies including Samsung, Hyundai Motors, LG, and Posco.

3. Governor Wes Moore and Lt. Governor Miller hosted the Vice President of the Vietnam National Assembly, H.E. Madame Nguyen Thi Thanh, in the Governor's Reception Room on March 12. The Vietnamese Vice President highlighted women's leadership and empowerment; and she emphasized improving the lives of the rural poor and made recommendations of increased educational exchange and agricultural trade between Vietnam and Maryland. Represented by Secretary of State Susan Lee and her team at this meeting, the OSOS will plan follow-up actions with the Embassy of Vietnam on the subjects discussed.

4. On April 10, Lt. Governor Miller attended the SMARTER Transportation Symposium hosted by Morgan State University. This symposium featured distinguished guests including Secretary Paul Wiedefeld from the Maryland Department of Transportation, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai from the Maryland Higher Education Commission, Dr. Firas Ibrahim, Director of the Office of Research, Development, and Technology at the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Dr. Mansoureh Jeihani, Director of the National Transportation Center at Morgan State University. Thero SMARTER Transportation Symposium provided an opportunity for engineers to demonstrate the latest transportation technology, and the Lt. Governor received a personalized experience by testing systems and interacting with the engineers who brought the technology to life. Her remarks emphasized Maryland's commitment to being a nationwide leader for advanced transportation systems and research. The SMARTER Symposium highlighted Morgan State's role as a leader in transportation by bringing engineers, government officials, and university leadership from schools in Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia to the Baltimore campus.

5. On April 10, Lt. Governor Miller attended the 2025 Maryland Asian American Business Conference, which was hosted by the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives and led by members of the Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs and the Governor's Commission on South Asian American Affairs. The conference theme was "Connect. Empower. Excel. Bringing entrepreneurial vision to reality in Maryland." The Lt. Governor's presence at this event emphasized Maryland's commitment to support Asian owned businesses.

6. On June 4, Lt. Governor Miller met with various representatives of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Baltimore to build upon the decades of collaboration between the Netherlands and Maryland. After meeting privately with Minister Van der Velde, the Lt. Governor addressed the Dutch delegation, representatives from the Maryland Department of Commerce, and 100 additional attendees aboard the "Stad Amsterdam," a traditional Dutch Clipper ship. The Lt. Governor highlighted the strong economic ties between the Netherlands and the State of Maryland while praising the Netherlands for their global leadership in water management, clean energy, and logistics. This engagement demonstrated the State's commitment to working with our partners in the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Moore-Miller administration's commitment to move forward with strategic partnerships.

7. On June 5, Lt. Governor Miller provided keynote remarks at the U.S. - Japan Business Council (USJBC) Member Meeting held in the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Washington DC. The audience included representatives from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, USJBC, corporations such as Chevron, Sandisk, and Mitsubishi. During her remarks, Lt. Governor Miller applauded the strength and sustainability of the partnership between Japan and Maryland. She noted the success of the sister-state relationship with Kanagawa Prefecture, the importance of the billions of dollars in economic activity between Japan and

Maryland, and how the Moore-Miller administration will continue to support the relationship between Maryland and Japanese businesses.

8. On June 5, Lt. Governor Miller attended the 50th anniversary celebration of Shimadzu Scientific Instruments (SSI), which has been headquartered in Maryland since it was established in 1975. This celebration was held at the Maryland Science Center with attendees including the Global President and CEO of Shimadzu Corporation, Yasunori Yamamoto, President of SSI, Patrick Fromal, Minister Kosei from the Embassy of Japan, and Howard County Executive Calvin Ball. Lt. Governor Miller recognized the work ethic and shared values of the people responsible for 50 years of partnership between Maryland and the Shimadzu Corporation. The Lt. Governor delivered formal remarks and presented a Governor's Citation to the Shimadzu Corporation leadership to recognize their efforts in elevating scientific research and development within the State of Maryland and across the world.

9. On June 26, Lt. Governor Miller traveled to Washington County to participate in a site visit with representatives and leadership from SJ Group, an Indian-based pharmaceutical manufacturing company. SJ Group recently announced that they will be partnering with the State to develop a 35,000 square foot medical manufacturing facility in Cascade, Maryland, which will create 300 new full-time jobs and generate \$45 million in capital investment. Ultimately, this project has the potential to generate \$265 million in capital investment and create more than 1,150 new jobs if Maryland wins the bid to host the Phase II expansion that SJ Group is planning. By leveraging key partnerships such as these, Lt. Governor Miller is working alongside Commerce to ensure that corporations can see Maryland as a place where they can build, grow, and expand their businesses.

10. On September 8, Lt. Governor Miller and Chief of Staff Byrd attended the Grand Opening for the Hitachi Rail Manufacturing Facility in Hagerstown. Hitachi Ltd. is a multinational conglomerate headquartered in Japan, with diverse operations in information technology, infrastructure, energy, healthcare, and automotive systems. This new manufacturing facility is expected to support 1,300 jobs including 460 newly created positions and will generate a total of approximately \$350 million per year in wages. In addition to the economic impact, this facility will produce the railcars that will eventually replace the MTA's current fleet of aging railcars, making public transportation in Maryland more efficient, high-tech, and enjoyable for the customers who utilize them. Lt. Governor Miller's remarks at the grand opening reinforced the commitment that the Moore-Miller Administration is following through on to make transportation more accessible, while continuing to generate economic activity in the State.

11. On October 3, Lt. Governor Miller provided keynote remarks at the 12th World Tamils Economic Conference, held in Rockville. Joined by Secretary of State Lee, this event featured some of the most prominent business leaders, international dignitaries, and elected officials. This multi-day conference brought together over 200 members of the Tamil diaspora to celebrate achievement, build connections, and shape a shared vision for the future. Lt. Governor Miller's keynote address highlighted Maryland's commitment to working with businesses and leaders from around the world, including the plethora of Indian-based organizations that operate in and contribute to the economic mobility of the State.

12. On October 3, Lt. Governor Miller was given an exclusive tour of the Key Bridge Rebuild Project by the Maryland Department of Transportation Authority (MDTA). With MDTA Executive Director Bruce Gartner, Lt. Governor Miller met with specialized police units, structural engineers, and other MDTA

officials to learn more about the progress of the Key Bridge Rebuild Project. Lt. Governor Miller thanked the men and women who are working around the clock to keep the Key Bridge Rebuild Project on time and on budget.

13. On November 20, Lt. Governor Miller joined representatives of a professional women's basketball league for an official announcement of a new basketball team coming to Baltimore in May 2027. The UpShot League was launched by Andy Kauffman, CEO of Zawyer Sports, in 2019 and is cofounded by the former WNBA President, Donna Orender. The league is set to launch in May 2026 with teams announced in Jacksonville, Florida, Greensboro, North Carolina, Charlotte, North Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. Baltimore joins Nashville, TN as the newest additions to the league in 2027. The Upshot League is capitalizing on the growth of women's sports across the country and even internationally. Women's sports ad revenue is up 139% and is projected to reach 2.3 billion globally in 2025. Basketball is expected to lead at 1.03 billion with WNBA viewership up 131% and the most recent NCAA Women's Final hitting 18.8 million viewers, more than the men's final. The Baltimore team will play at UMBC's Chesapeake Employers Insurance Arena and is expected to draw approximately 5,000 fans per game and will serve as an exciting draw to Maryland for visitors from other states and countries, generating more economic activity in and around Baltimore.

14. On December 9, the Lt. Governor welcomed members of the Ghana Football Association, the Office of the Secretary of State, and other notable attendees to her office at the State House for an initial discussion on the potential for Maryland to host the Ghanaian Black Stars as they compete in the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the United States. The Lt. Governor noted Maryland's significant Ghanaian population, which is the largest percentage in the country and the State's numerous high quality practice facilities, making Maryland the perfect place for the Ghanaian national team to select as their base camp. This selection would generate significant economic activity as proud Ghanaian from around the world would travel to and through Maryland in order to celebrate their team. This meeting highlights Maryland's dedication to sports diplomacy, especially during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, and sets Maryland up for future engagements with Ghana.

Maryland Department of Agriculture

1. On May 20, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) met with one of the largest grain exporters in Asia. This company is interested in establishing a transload facility at the Port of Baltimore and forming business partnerships with Maryland grain producers and grain elevator operations. A potential facility has been identified, and we are working with the Port of Baltimore and Commerce.

2. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #38.

Maryland Department of Commerce

1. In February, Commerce met multiple times with a life sciences company from India to set up a US manufacturing plant, consisting of 10 to 12 acres, four buildings, each 50 to 75K square feet, plus 100K square footage warehouse. 850 employees to start, up to 3,000. Maryland is currently shortlisted with two other states.

2. On February 19, the Office of International Investment and Trade (OIIT) participated in the Korea-US Business Night hosted by KCCI. Maryland was well represented at this networking event in advance of the Governor's mission to this market.
3. On February 24, OIIT conducted a site visit with Irish company and Global Gateway candidate, which verbally indicated its decision to locate in Maryland at Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc (FITCI) following their site visit. This company visited Maryland because of OIIT's Ireland activities.
4. On February 27, OIIT conducted a site visit with German company, which verbally indicated its decision to locate in Maryland at FITCI following their site visit.
5. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #11.
6. Maryland participated in the SelectUSA Summit on May 11 to 14, and also hosted its own two-day spinoff event. The SelectUSA Summit saw significant participation from Maryland, including Governor Wes Moore and 10 counties, including one county executive, as well as the Greater Baltimore Committee. Maryland's booth was one of the largest on the show floor, and co-hosted eight local economic development organizations for the first time. Commerce held over 70 individual meetings at the Summit, including two private one-on-one meetings by Governor Moore and five private one-on-one meetings by Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. Commerce staff also attended 10 side events with foreign delegations from key markets and supporting our county partners: PGEDC (featuring Mexico delegation; Deputy Secretary of Commerce Stephen Rice was a speaker), Canada, Japan, UK, EU, Netherlands, Singapore, Israel, Korea, and China. Maryland's spinoff event, focused on life sciences, cyber & tech, and logistics, and hosted over 35 foreign investors representing 17 individual companies, and visited six Maryland jurisdictions. Commerce's effort results in three verbal commitments for the Global Gateway Program at the end of the Summit.
7. From June 3 to 5, Commerce attended InfoSecurity Europe in London, England, with a delegation of companies from Maryland to promote Maryland cyber products and services, as well as to promote Maryland as a place for investment. The State had a booth at this event. Secretary of Commerce Coker attended and visited Ireland and Scotland to promote trade and investment in Maryland.
8. From June 16 to 19, Commerce attended the BIO International Convention in Boston and promoted the state's lighthouse sector with a major presence at this event, led by the Lt. Governor. The State had a booth at this event.
9. Commerce attended Japan Health in Osaka with a delegation of companies from Maryland to promote Maryland life science products and services, as well as to promote Maryland as a place for investment. The State had a booth at this event. Commerce staff also ensured exposure for Maryland at the World Expo, which aligned with this event, and also coordinated FDI meetings and other exposure for Maryland in the Japanese market. This was also an opportunity to follow up with some meetings from the Governor's Mission in April.
10. The OIIT visited Vancouver, Canada, in June for targeted FDI meetings organized by the Department of Commerce's FDI Canadian office.

11. Several new FDI projects were announced by Commerce in June, including SJ Corporation (India), NewCold (Netherlands), and several Global Gateway companies.

12. Throughout August, Commerce hosted multiple foreign direct investment engagements showcasing strong international business interest in the state. As the FDI attraction lead, Commerce, in partnership with the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC), welcomed Mexican transformer manufacturer Grupo IG Irapuato Transformers, which is considering expanding its manufacturing facilities in Prince George's County, an investment projected to create up to 175 jobs and generate \$7 million in capital expenditures for machinery. The Commerce team also met with BOTH Engineering Technology, a leading module laboratory and factory manufacturer from Wuxi, China, which is exploring U.S. expansion opportunities and warehouse space in collaboration with the Howard County EDA and the eCommerce Logistics Hub. Additionally, Commerce hosted a two-day FDI site visit for Israel-based company 4Cast, featuring tours of key Maryland assets such as TEDCO and federal research facilities, as well as site visits in Frederick County; Secretary of Commerce Coker personally welcomed the company, which could bring 61 jobs to the state. Under the Global Gateway Program, Evisa Construction Company Limited from Kenya was approved to join the soft-landing program, Radahaim from Israel completed its first visit and toured three Maryland incubators, and Industrial Coatings from Ghana officially launched its participation at the PGCEDC's Innovation Station Business Incubator.

13. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #38.

14. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #40.

15. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #42.

16. On September 15, the OIIT supported the Nigerian Governor of Niger State's visit to Prince George's County hosted by Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation to discuss FDI and export opportunities, particularly in lithium & rare earth minerals.

17. On September 15, the OIIT hosted prospective investor from Ningpo, China. This investor is a computer steel closet manufacturer. The president attended SelectUSA in May, during which he was initially interested in Illinois. OIIT hosted their site visit to Maryland for their potential HQ project.

18. On September 16, Commerce hosted the new Commercial and Economic Counsellor from the Embassy of China for a meeting with Secretary of Commerce Coker.

19. From September 16 to 18, the OIIT hosted an inbound, FDI-focused life sciences delegation from the Association of British HealthTech Industries (ABHI), a well-respected U.K. business association.

20. From September 22 to 26, the OIIT hosted an inbound, FDI-focused life sciences delegation from the Baltic Sea Region, including representatives from Sweden, Finland, and Estonia.

21. On September 23, the OIIT hosted South Australia's Minister of Investment and Trade as part of Commerce's ongoing MOU with the region, focused on the aerospace and defense sectors.

22. On September 25, the OIIT hosted a U.K.-based cyber company, an FDI prospect, for a site visit. The company plans to create 70 jobs over the next three years.

23. From September 21 to 29, Prince George's County led a trade mission to South Korea. The OIIT supported the mission through our Maryland State Korea Office, which offered one-on-one business meeting support to Prince George's County delegates in Seoul.
24. During the week of September 22, the OIIT submitted speaker recommendations and a reimagined Maryland Spinoff event proposal for the 2026 SelectUSA Investment Summit. The proposed speakers highlight Maryland's top officials and key areas of competitive strength. The redesigned spinoff event, approved on September 30, will feature a two-day, deal-driven program tailored for foreign investors seeking high-impact opportunities with investment-ready projects and soft-landing options in Maryland's lighthouse sectors: life sciences, aerospace, and IT/cybersecurity/quantum/AI.
25. On September 30, the OIIT hosted an export seminar focused on Ireland as part of the Maryland - Ireland Trade Commission and efforts to increase trade and investment between Maryland and Ireland.
26. The OIIT conducted export outreach presentations in partnership with the Anne Arundel County Economic Development Corporation on October 1 and the Small Business Association of International Companies on October 7. The purpose of these events is to encourage more Maryland companies to export and provide them with resources to support their expansion efforts.
27. On October 3, a Bangladesh-based company, Opus, landed at FITCI to begin six months in Maryland as part of the Global Gateway Program. Later in the month, it was announced that Global Gateway graduated and confirmed a Japanese FDI win, which secured a \$14 million Series A investment to advance its nanofiber-cavity QED interconnect technology.
28. On October 3, the OIIT met with counterparts from South Australia to connect UMD's Marine-Estuarine Environmental Sciences program at the University of Adelaide. This partnership may provide a deliverable covered under our joint MOU.
29. On October 5, the OIIT represented the State at an annual event of the members of the Chinese Biopharmaceuticals Association to promote Commerce's services.
30. On October 7, the OIIT met with an India-based FDI prospect to discuss why Maryland would be an ideal location for their U.S. headquarters, highlighting the state's assets, innovation ecosystem, and the Global Gateway Program.
31. On October 8, the OIIT met with the Embassies of El Salvador and Guatemala to encourage them to bring trade and investment delegations to Maryland, consider hosting embassy events in the state, and explore opportunities for collaboration in international business.
32. On October 9, the OIIT supported a delegation of eight led by Minister of Economics Lyu Jiang and Zhao Jianying, Chief Representative of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) Washington Office, during their daylong visit to Howard County.
33. On October 14, representatives of the Embassy of Australia visited Maryland with two Australian Parliamentarians to tour both the Port of Baltimore and TradePoint Atlantic. as well as to visit the World Trade Center Institute to discuss how Maryland can further collaborate with Australia in trade and investment. During this meeting with high-level Australian officials, discussions were held regarding

Australia's super funds (pension funds). The representatives of these funds, which are larger than those of Singapore and the Middle East combined, have offered to facilitate an introduction and a potential meeting during OIIT's visit to Sydney, Australia, in November 2025.

34. On October 14, the OIIT presented export resources for start-ups during a session titled "Meet the Maryland Tech Ecosystem" at the Maryland Energy Innovation Accelerator Climate Tech Exchange.

35. See Goal 2, MDOT, Item #5.

36. On October 20, the OIIT participated in the grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for a Global Gateway soft-landing graduate and Ghanaian professional services firm, at the Prince George's County Innovation Station Business Incubator. Prince George's County presented an Economic Development Week certificate to recognize the firm's growth and expansion. The Ghanaian company has established a 16,000 sq. ft. warehouse in the County, creating 20 new jobs.

37. OIIT approved four new applications from foreign investors, with agreements currently in process:

1. AI speech processing company from Jordan
2. Irish company offering an AI plug-in device for HVAC systems
3. Taiwan-based firm developing AI-powered semiconductors for satellites
4. Cybersecurity company from Spain

38. On October 20 and 21, Commerce participated in a series of events held in conjunction with the visit of Vice President Decoster of Hauts-de-France, as part of the Sister State renewal activities. Deputy Secretary Stephen Rice delivered remarks at the WTCI Taste of France event, where discussions also took place regarding potential FDI opportunities.

A one-on-one meeting between Secretary of Commerce Coker and Vice President Decoster provided an opportunity to explore several areas of collaboration. OIIT is currently working with its Hauts-de-France counterparts to develop an action plan based on these discussions. In addition, Secretary of Commerce Coker and OIIT staff attended the Sister State MOU signing ceremony to reaffirm the partnership between Maryland and Hauts-de-France.

39. On October 21, Commerce attended the TEDCO Expo, a gathering of economic development organizations (EDOs) and companies within or seeking to join TEDCO's portfolio. During the event, TEDCO signed four Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with international investment funds to expand its funding pool and strengthen Maryland's startup ecosystem. The agreements included one with Taiwan (\$50 million), two with Korea, and one with Jordan, all outcomes of international engagement efforts supported by OIIT over the past year. Governor Wes Moore and Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ricardo Benn delivered remarks at the event.

40. On October 23, the OIIT met with the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) to discuss Maryland's key cyber and emerging technology assets, as well as our global gateway and soft-landing exchange program.

41. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #56.

42. The OIIT supported the Montgomery County Executive for a trade mission to China and Japan to attract FDI from October 21 to November 1. The OIIT introduced the County to new contacts in Japan and engaged with our foreign offices in Japan and China to identify viable opportunities for Montgomery County.
43. On October 24, the OIIT met with the Embassy of Mexico to discuss potential areas of partnership, including trade missions, investment opportunities, and future Embassy-hosted events in Maryland.
44. From October 27 to 28, the OIIT hosted an FDI prospect visit from South Korea. This company plans to begin with a two- or three-people office, then grow to 20 to 25 within three to five years with manufacturing.
45. On October 29, the OIIT hosted a representative from Jiangsu Province during a visit to Maryland. The agenda included visits to Maryland companies exporting to the China International Import Expo, as well as other partners investing in the Chinese market.
46. On October 30, the OIIT and Commerce's Life Sciences Office met with JETRO New York's new Executive Director, the designated liaison for Maryland. JETRO plans to organize a life sciences delegation to Maryland in the first quarter of 2026, ideally coinciding with the MedTech Summit during the week of March 23.
47. In November, three companies were approved to participate in the Global Gateway Program: (1) an distribution, warehousing, & logistics company (2) a medical devices company, and (3) a cybersecurity firm. This month Commerce also welcomed a construction company to the Prince George's County incubator to begin this program for the next six months. A visit was made to F3Tech in Easton, the Eastern Shore Innovation Center in Cambridge, and Launchport in Baltimore, our program partners, to discuss FDI strategy and program promotion.
48. On November 4, the Economic Section and the Customs Section of the Chinese Embassy, along with CCPIT Washington, toured the Port of Baltimore with the Deputy Executive Director of the Port. Secretary of Commerce Coker and Deputy Secretary Benn attended. In the afternoon, the Chinese delegation visited Maryland's eCommerce capabilities at the Baltimore International Warehousing & Transportation. The discussion focused on collaborative opportunities on the heels of successful U.S. - China trade talks in early November, centered around auto assembly and eCommerce.
49. Commerce representatives met with the Embassy of Colombia on November 5, the Embassy of Belize on November 13, and the Embassy of Argentina on November 17 to express Maryland's interest to support incoming trade and investment delegations and explore other ways to expand mutual business opportunities.
50. On November 7, the OIIT held a meet and greet call with the Maryland - Estonia Exchange Council. Topics of discussion included quantum and AI and cyber. Deputy Secretary Benn and Assistant Secretary Gilstrap led the call.
51. In November, speaker recommendations for the SelectUSA Summit and spin-off events for the foreign delegations were approved. The website for the spinoff registration was made live allowing for recruitment to this major investment attraction event to get underway.

52. From November 16 to 18, Secretary of Commerce Coker led a Trade and Investment Mission to Quebec and Ontario, Canada. During this mission, the team met with existing and potential investors, hosted roundtables on the topics of life science and quantum, toured key sites for research and innovation, and signed a renewed MOU with Ontario for ongoing collaboration, in addition to advancing our existing MOU with Quebec with an eye towards renewing that MOU in 2026.
53. On November 18 and November 21, the OIIT held export outreach events with the Cybersecurity Association of Maryland and the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, respectively.
54. On November 19, Commerce's Tourism and International offices participated in the Japan - U.S. Tourism Reception at the Japanese Ambassador's residence, celebrating tourism ties between Japan and the U.S.
55. On November 19, OIIT connected the Department of Aerospace Engineering and the Applied Research Lab for Intelligence & Security (ARLIS) at the University of Maryland with Adelaide University to share best practices as they start to develop their workforce pipeline, as part of our ongoing MOU with South Australia.
56. On December 3, several OIIT staff attended the World Trade Center Institute's (WTICI) State of the Ports annual international business networking event, including setting up and staffing a sponsor table on behalf of Commerce.
57. On December 5, the registration website for the SelectUSA Summit Spinoff Tour was launched: <https://business.maryland.gov/maryland-selectusa-2026-spinoff-tour/>.
58. On December 7 to 12, Secretary of Commerce Coker led a mission to the Middle East. This mission represented a strategically significant initiative by the State of Maryland to establish parameters for deepened, long-term economic partnerships with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) (a first for the State of Maryland), the State of Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The mission advanced Maryland's foreign direct investment (FDI), trade expansion, and innovation-led growth objectives through engagement with senior government officials, sovereign wealth funds, national champions, private-sector conglomerates, and innovation ecosystem leaders across the Gulf region. The mission was supported by key staff from Commerce and the Office of the Secretary of State, as well as select private-sector partners and diplomatic counterparts, and included more than 30 engagements over a one-week period.
59. On December 11, the Maryland Innovation Lab hosted the demo day for the second cohort of the program. The cohort focused on affordability in decarbonization, with sponsor companies including BGE, Pompeiiian, and Capital Logistics. The demo day showcased innovations developed through the lab; notably, Maiven Energy presented its BGE pilot project aimed at improving customer affordability. This event marked the completion of Cohort 2.
60. On December 17, Deputy Secretary Benn and Mia Romeo, Senior Regional Manager for India, Southeast Asia, & Australia, attended the ST Engineering tour with Governor Moore. The visit highlighted ST Engineering's long legacy in Middle River, demonstrated its latest activities and technologies, and included discussions on short-term needs, particularly related to workforce support.

61. On December 18, Secretary of Commerce Coker held a formal introductory meeting with the Economic Minister from the Embassy of Japan, during which ongoing and potential new areas of collaboration were discussed.

Maryland Department of the Environment

1. On July 1, Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain joined Governor Wes Moore and Secretary of State Susan Lee in a meeting with Ambassador of France Laurent Bili. Secretary of the Environment McIlwain and Assistant Secretary of the Environment Dr. Rachel Lamb also joined the Ambassador on his visit to the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) to highlight the benefits of existing partnerships between the State and world-leading research institutions like SERC and University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES).

The Secretary was also able to join the Ambassador at his residence for the French National Holiday reception and further mature the relationship between Maryland and France.

2. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #42.

Maryland Higher Education Commission

1. In April, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) partnered with the OSOS to facilitate meetings with institutions of higher learning in Maryland and South Korea establishing four robust MOUs of partnership and expect to expand further partnerships in this area.

Through high-level government meetings, business development forums, and collaborative engagements in Japan and Korea, Governor Wes Moore was able to position Maryland as a premier location for foreign investment in aerospace, quantum technologies, and life sciences, deepen ties with governmental and private-sector stakeholders in the target markets, and facilitate partnerships between Maryland-based companies and universities and their foreign counterparts.

2. On September 24, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai and Chief of Staff Tiffany Majors attended the Incredible 50 Awards. The Secretary received the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award during the US India SME Council's Incredible Inc. Awards Gala. The award recognizes him for his outstanding leadership, educational contributions, and community involvement.

The award ceremony celebrated individuals who embody the spirit and principles of Dr. King, highlighting Secretary Dr. Rai's commitment to these ideals through his impactful work. His unwavering efforts in fostering educational advancements and his active participation in various community initiatives have demonstrably made a positive difference, making him a truly deserving recipient of this distinguished honor. The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award specifically acknowledges those who have shown exceptional dedication to social justice, equality, and community upliftment, values that Secretary Dr. Rai has consistently championed throughout his career.

3. On October 3, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai delivered opening and closing remarks and participated in a dynamic panel discussion at the 12th World Tamils Economic Conference. His address

focused on the crucial and expanding collaborations between the United States and India, drawing on his extensive experience as a higher education administrator. He particularly emphasized the future trajectory of both nations in the vital areas of research and development, highlighting the potential for groundbreaking advancements through joint efforts. Lt. Governor Miller provided welcoming remarks as this is the first time this conference was in the United States. The subsequent panel session offered a comprehensive comparative analysis of higher education systems in the United States and India.

4. On November 10, Lalit Jha of New India Abroad conducted a profile piece on Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai, which will be similar in format and tone to the previously published profile in the South Asian Herald. The previous article, "South Asian Trailblazer Leads Maryland's Higher Education: A Journey from India to Impact," highlighted Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai's background as the first immigrant and first South Asian to lead the MHEC, tracing his academic path from India through Canada to the U.S. Key themes of the prior piece included discussing Maryland's robust higher education landscape, the State's significant $\approx 7\%$ share of international students (ranking 16th nationally with over 22,000 students), and the importance of a global perspective for students given the world's growing interdependence. Dr. Rai emphasized that Maryland institutions offer world-class programs (e.g., AI, biotech, cybersecurity) coupled with opportunities for experiential learning due to the presence of federal agencies (NIH, FDA) and private industry and noted the economic contribution of international students (nearly \$930 million in 2023). The profile also touched on India surpassing China as the top origin country for international students in the U.S. and discussed the broader contributions of the South Asian diaspora to Maryland's economy and community advancement, confirming MHEC's ongoing commitment to promoting international study and exchange programs.

Maryland Department of Transportation

1. The Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) connected Visit Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (VAAAC) with British Airways to support VAAAC's strategic efforts to drive international business and leisure travel. The \$50,000 commitment from VAAAC will include marketing and advertising support for British Airways' nonstop service between London-Heathrow and BWI Marshall to drive travel intent to Maryland's State Capital and Anne Arundel County as a key international gateway.

2. On April 1, Maryland representatives from the Office of the Governor, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Maryland Port Administration (MPA) visited the Subaru headquarters in Tokyo to meet with the Subaru External Relations team. The meeting highlighted Maryland's appreciation for the business relationship between Subaru and the Port of Baltimore. The Port of Baltimore imports Subaru automobiles from Nagoya, Japan. Additionally, the Port of Baltimore exports a smaller volume of Subaru automobiles from Baltimore to South America from their factory in Lafayette, IN. Subaru Annual Volumes (import and export) through the Port of Baltimore in 2024: 51,106 units.

3. On April 15, the Governor and Team Maryland toured portions of the Port of Yokohama and met with City of Yokohama officials and the Wallenius Wilhelmsen team. Founded in 1849, the Port of Yokohama is operated by the Port and Harbor Bureau of the City of Yokohama. Yokohama Port has ten major piers, with several piers undergoing major redevelopment to modernize. Wallenius Wilhelmsen is one of the

largest RoRo carriers in the world calling on ports around the globe, including both the Port of Baltimore and the Port of Yokohama. As a long-term lessee at the MPA's Dundalk Marine Terminal, Wallenius Wilhelmsen is a crucial partner for the State of Maryland. Wallenius Wilhelmsen is also a key sub-recipient of MPA's \$147 million EPA Clean Ports Program grant.

4. On April 16, Maryland representatives from the Office of the Governor, MDOT, and MPA visited the C. Steinweg headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, to meet with Rachael Kim, the CEO of Asia logistics. The meeting highlighted Maryland's appreciation for the business relationship between C. Steinweg and the Port of Baltimore and how to collaborate further. C. Steinweg Group provides storage, handling, forwarding, chartering and other logistics services throughout the world. With offices, warehouses and terminals at strategic locations in 55 countries across the globe, Steinweg is a renowned and respected logistics partner for the global commodity trade. In the Port of Baltimore, Steinweg owns and operates a private terminal handling block, ferro alloys, forest products, and paper and pulp.

5. On May 6, the MPA hosted a Ukrainian delegation through the U.S. State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program to discuss resilience planning and public-private partnerships.

6. In September, the MPA and CSX Transportation celebrated the reopening of the CSX Howard Street Tunnel for single stack operations. The tunnel had been closed since February 2025 to expedite the completion of the full Howard Street Tunnel Double-Stack Project. The full project includes expanding the tunnel and making clearance improvements at 21 other locations between Baltimore and Philadelphia that will allow for double-stacked containers to be transported on rail to and from the Port of Baltimore.

7. The MPA attended the Breakbulk Americas 2025 in Houston, Texas, from September 30 to October 2 to meet breakbulk importers and exporters to strengthen current business relationships and bring new business to the Port of Baltimore.

8. In September, the MAA sent a consultant to Hong Kong to attend World Routes, the premier global event for air service development, where the MAA meets with international airlines to attract more air service to BWI Marshall Airport. The MAA personnel were unable to attend due to limitations on international travel. The consultant met with 11 global airlines at the event, a number that was slightly lower than planned, as the event was partially disrupted by a typhoon that hit the region.

9. The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany staff visited the Port of Baltimore to meet with the MPA on October 2 to discuss best practices and opportunities for new business relationships between the Port and Germany.

10. In collaboration with the Department of Commerce, the Embassy of Australia visited the Port of Baltimore on October 14 to strengthen business relationships and discuss new opportunities for collaboration in the port and infrastructure sectors for rail, road, warehousing, and logistics. The visit included two Australian Parliamentarians, Senator Glen Sterle and the Honorable Garth Hamilton MP.

11. In collaboration with Commerce, the Maryland Port Administration (MPA) hosted representatives from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China on November 4 to strengthen business relationships and discuss new opportunities for collaboration.

12. On November 5, the Busan Port Authority (South Korea) port commissioners and staff visited the MPA to discuss best practices and opportunities for new business relationships between the Port of Baltimore and Busan.

13. On November 13, the MPA hosted Amazon's international trade legal team for a Port overview and discussion on tariffs impacts and trade.

14. On December 3, the MPA met with Mr. Ade Kusmana, Transportation Attache for the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to discuss the possibility of a future Port visit.

Strategic Goal 3:

Establish Maryland as the Acknowledged Leader and Epicenter of Life Sciences, Bluetech and Greentech, Cybersecurity, Emerging Technologies, Quantum Computing, Artificial Intelligence, and Innovation.

Office of the Secretary of State

1. On February 7, Secretary of State Susan Lee provided remarks and presented the Governor's Asian Lunar New Year Proclamation at an Artificial Intelligence forum hosted by BioHealth Hub at Greencourt Innovation Center in Rockville. Expert panelists discussed the application, use, and benefits of Artificial Intelligence in healthcare, health data, clinical trials, and other timely issues. Also in attendance from the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) were Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt and Executive Assistant Cathy Bauer.
2. On February 18, in collaboration with Commerce and the OSOS, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore hosted a delegation from the United Kingdom, composed of seven founders of U.K.-based startup companies. The companies included: Plexal, Intellium, Overe, SafeTech, SiteHop, and Validato. Over a lunch meeting, Deputy Secretary Lore, Assistant Director of International Affairs Rosanna Mantova, and Regional Manager of Commerce Brian Castleberry highlighted Maryland's strengths and opportunities in life sciences and biotechnology. Following the discussion, Deputy Secretary Lore led a brief tour of the State House, providing insights into Maryland's historical and economic ties with the UK.
3. On February 21, Deputy Secretary Lore and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova attended the Republic of Estonia's 107th Independence Day Celebration. In his remarks, Deputy Secretary Lore emphasized the strong partnership between Maryland and Estonia, fostered through the State Partnership Program (SPP) and Maryland's Sister State relationship.
4. On February 22, Secretary of State Lee provided remarks and presented the Governor's Lunar New Year Proclamation to leaders of the Chinese Biopharmaceutical Association at their 2025 Spring Gala. In attendance were leaders of the Chinese Biopharmaceutical Association and several hundred Marylanders heavily involved in life sciences.
5. In conjunction with Commerce, the OSOS spearheaded the second renewal signing of the life sciences MOU with Kanagawa Prefecture during the Governor's Trade and Investment Mission to Asia. Governor Wes Moore and Governor Yuji Kuroiwa of Kanagawa signed the MOU on April 15. The agreement focuses on continuing the relationships already created in this important sector for both regions and advancing new opportunities in areas such as research and development. The MOU signing ceremony was followed by a Maryland investment seminar organized by Maryland Commerce and the Kanagawa government and focused on the sector of life sciences.

6. Governor Moore and Governor Wan-soo Park met in Gyeongnam to sign a renewed Aerospace MOU between Maryland and our Sister State Gyeongnam on April 17. The MOU portends greater collaboration between the two Sister States in space science and technology.

7. The OSOS and Commerce organized a life sciences-oriented extension to the Asia Trade Mission, where Secretary of State Lee and Commerce Life Sciences Manager Bradley Gillenwater met with government officials and other decision makers of Korean-based life sciences firms interested in expanding their operations to Maryland.

8. On May 16, Director of International Affairs Nitsch represented Secretary of State Lee at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly expanded Chinese Culture and Community Service Center (CCACC) health center in Gaithersburg. Expanded care now includes dental appointments, among other services. Center patients are predominantly Asian American and Chinese American, but also include a significant number of Hispanic Americans. Ben Wu, Yu Yang, Chairperson of the GOCI APA Commission, and Roxanne Yamashita, GOCI APA Commissioner, among many others, were in attendance.

9. On May 20, Secretary of State Lee hosted a delegation from Aruba consisting of Plenipotentiary Minister of Aruba Zulema C. Erasmus, President of Parliament Marlon Sneek, and 10 members of the Aruba Parliament in the HGO Committee Room. Discussion topics included the Maryland-Aruba MOU, higher education opportunities for Aruban students (including their work with UMB to provide students with a scholarship opportunity to cover their tuition and living expenses), renewable energy opportunities, sports diplomacy, and tourism. The delegation was also provided a tour of the State House and a viewing of the Blue Angels at the Wineland Building. Also in attendance were Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Executive Assistant Bauer, and Budget Analyst Fitzpatrick, Executive Assistant Lin, Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) Director of Communications Kristin Clarkson, and OSOS Intern Justin Carlson.

10. On June 6, Secretary of State Lee provided remarks and presented a Governor's Citation at the Chinese Biopharmaceutical Association's (CBA-USA) 30th Anniversary Annual Conference. CBA is one of the largest Chinese-American professional associations in the U.S. and brings together leaders of the biopharmaceutical industry, including internationally-renowned scientists, business leaders, and guests from China. Secretary of State Lee was awarded the CBA Pillar of Support Award in recognition of her longstanding and impactful support of the CBA. Also in attendance were Executive Assistant Bauer, OAH Chief Judge Pak, and Chair of the Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs Dr. Yang Yu.

11. On June 20, Secretary of State Lee spoke at the Annual Dinner of the Coordinated Council of Chinese American Associations, an umbrella organization of 36 Chinese American organizations whose members are business leaders and top professionals in the life sciences, IT, and technology fields. She was joined by Minister Counselor Dong Chuanjie from the PRC Embassy, Executive Assistant Bauer, State Senator Clarence Lam, Delegate Lily Qi, OAH Chief Judge Chung Pak, Governor's AAPI Commission Chair Dr. Yang Yu, GOCI Administrative Director Christina Poy, and over 500 community leaders.

12. On September 23, Deputy Secretary Lore greeted a health delegation from the Maryland Sister State of Ondo, Nigeria at the State House. The OSOS connected the delegation with one Maryland businesses that provide nurse training AI augmented reality technology and urine tests for malaria. Dr. Antwan Brown,

Administrative Director for the Governor's African Commission, and several of the Commissioners, initiated the meeting request. Brian Castleberry, Department of Commerce Regional Manager for Africa, also joined the meeting and was instrumental in engaging the Maryland companies.

13. On September 24, Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations Alexandria Liu briefed Senior Policy Advisor Connor Shinn, Department of Commerce Energy Program Manager Ryan Powell, Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) Director of Energy Policy Ryan Opsal, and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Power Plant Research Division Director Bob Sadzinski on the Gyeongsangnam-do Sister State relationship. The briefing covered Maryland's invitation to present at the Korea Small Modular Reactor (SMR) International Conference 2025 in October, as well as opportunities to explore joint research activities in SMR technologies.

14. On October 16, Deputy Secretary Lore gave remarks at the Estonian Aerospace and Defense Industry Reception hosted by the Washington International Trade Center at bwtech @ UMBC South. Representatives from the Estonian Aerospace and Defense Industry Association gave presentations on innovations and opportunities for collaboration in security, defense technology, and aerospace solutions.

15. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #55.

16. On October 21, Secretary of State Lee hosted a delegation from Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, South Korea, led by Jeju Province Governor Oh Young-hun. The delegation, including Counsellor of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea Park Young Su, and Intellian Technologies Inc. Vice President Hannah Shon, had originally requested to meet with Governor Moore, and the OSOS coordinated the meeting in the James Senate Building Cade Room. Secretary of State Lee, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain, and Senior Advisor on Energy Connor Shinn of the Governor's Office led the discussion with Governor Park. Topics of discussion included: climate goals for Jeju Province and Maryland, energy technologies such as carbon capture and energy renewal, innovations in Maryland due to the Intellian-IonQ agreement, an invitation to the Governor to attend the 2026 Jeju Forum, and a potential renewal of the Maryland - Jeju Province Mutual Cooperation Agreement previously signed in 2022. Also in attendance were Assistant Secretary of the Environment Dr. Rachel Lamb, Executive Assistant (MDE) Brandon Brooks, Deputy Secretary Lore, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, Executive Aide Lin, Executive Aide Kim, OSOS Intern Carlson, and prominent members of the Korean-American community and media in Maryland.

17. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #57.

18. On November 2, Secretary of State Lee provided remarks at the 2025 Medical Korea in the U.S. Symposium at TPC Potomac at Avenel Farm. The invitation was extended from the Korea-America MedTour Association (KAMTOUR) and the Korea Health Industry Development Institute (KHIDI), which contributed to business meetings and discussions on the 2025 Asia Mission. Secretary of State Lee participated in a private roundtable with representatives from KAMTOUR and KHIDI, including President of KHIDI Dr. Soon Do CHA, before the program. In her remarks, Secretary of State Lee highlighted the follow-up to the Asia Mission to Korea and Japan, such as ongoing meetings with specific Korean companies, and affirmed Maryland's desire to engage Korean businesses and life sciences professionals. Also in attendance were Executive Aide Lucas Lin and Chief OAH Judge Chung Pak.

19. Dr. Akilah Alleyne, incoming Deputy Director of International Affairs, attended a meeting in Lagos, Nigeria, on November 3, with Deborah Enyone Oni, Esq., Founder of Hilton Top Solicitors, and Convener of Hilton Emerging Tech Women. Mrs. Enyone Oni and Dr. Alleyne briefly discussed the "Women in Emerging Tech Conference," a flagship event hosted by Hilton Top Solicitors, a Nigeria-based law firm, and Hilton Innovations Hub, which will celebrate five years of empowering women to thrive in the digital age. The platform has empowered over 5,000 women in AI, blockchain, cybersecurity, and STEM. It also helps foster skill development and increased access to opportunities, encouraging young women to become leaders in the digital economy. This year's convening will be held at the American Corner, at the courtesy of the U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Nigeria, in Ikeja, Lagos State, on November 13, 2025. The conference provides a space for learning, networking, and building a future-focused community hub geared towards educating young women in the intersections of leadership, law, and technology. The goal of the conference and ongoing training hub is to develop young women leaders who drive Africa's digital transformation and become pioneers and trailblazers in the digital economy. Dr. Alleyne and Mrs. Enyone Oni scheduled a follow-up call in two weeks, joined by Secretary of State Lee and Senior Advisor Gebhardt, to discuss the conference attendance and takeaways, as well as potential future partnerships centered on smart-city infrastructure, economic partnerships, and technology policy. Mrs. Enyone Oni's work in AI advancement is centered mainly in Kogi State and Osun State.

20. On November 3, incoming Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Alleyne attended an in-person meeting in Lagos, Nigeria, with Ghana-native entrepreneur Augustine Degrol II, founder of The School of Wisdom, an organization that focuses on identifying educational and technological gaps in Africa's economic growth. This multi-million-dollar, education-focused cybersecurity company focuses on upskilling young adults in rural areas of Africa and creating outsourcing hubs to provide sustainable employment opportunities. "The School of Wisdom" proposes to work with the State of Maryland to collaborate in the development of innovative SIM cards with preloaded educational content that can be distributed to youth and young adults in rural communities. Dr. Alleyne plans to continue her discussions with Mr. Degrol II on the K-12 education space, particularly related to technology-driven learning and youth mentorship; Dr. Alleyne will involve Secretary of State Lee and Senior Advisor Gebhardt in these discussions.

21. On December 7, Secretary of State Lee, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, and Executive Aide Lin met with the CEO of a Shanghai-based company specializing in DNA amplification technology and who was interested in establishing a headquarters and distribution facility in Maryland. Meeting information details were sent to Commerce Asia Regional Manager Hui-Min Tzeng and Life Sciences Director Brad Gillenwater. Also in attendance was GOCI Commissioner Ping Lu, who helped facilitate the meeting.

22. On December 21, Secretary of State Lee gave remarks at the Chinese American Health Services (CACHS) Annual Meeting to the organization members, composed primarily of volunteer doctors, research scientists, and health care professionals. Also in attendance were State Senator Clarence Lam, Chief OAH Judge Chung Pak, and GOCI Commissioner Ping Lu.

23. Secretary of State Lee supported Chief of Staff Lester Davis in a meeting with Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) Consular Division Deputy Director Edward Chen on December 23. Deputy Chen expressed TECRO's position and strong recommendation for a meeting between Taiwanese Representative to the U.S. Alexander Yui and the Governor in order for TECRO to request

investment interest from Taiwanese companies. Other topics of discussion included other Governors' visits to Taiwan, aligning on sectors such as the life sciences, pharmaceuticals, semiconductor technology, and cybersecurity, and areas of collaboration between Maryland and Taiwan. Chief of Staff Davis directed the OSOS to facilitate follow-up with Commerce and TECRO on further details. Also in attendance were Senior Advisor Gebhardt and Executive Aide Lin.

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

1. See Goal 2, LG, Item #2.

2. During April 28 to 30, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller traveled to San Francisco with Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. and other members of the Department of Commerce to participate in the RSA Conference. The cybersecurity conference included live demonstrations of cybersecurity technology, presentations from cybersecurity experts, and plenty of opportunities for networking with business leaders and software engineers. On April 29, the Lt. Governor and Secretary of Commerce Coker made stops at the tables of multiple international delegations including those of the Netherlands, Spain, and Singapore. Additionally, the Maryland delegation was provided an executive tour of the NVIDIA headquarters. Overall, this trip provided the Maryland team the opportunity to learn more about the state of cybersecurity and AI technologies to make more strategic investments here in Maryland.

3. Taking actionable steps toward establishing Maryland as a hub for quantum computing and artificial intelligence, the Office of the Lt. Governor coordinated with Commerce, Labor, and MHEC to host representatives from NVIDIA to learn more about what Maryland is working on, from June 9 to 11. Lt. Governor Miller joined the NVIDIA representatives to tour and meet with senior leadership from University of Maryland Baltimore County, Johns Hopkins University, University of Maryland College Park, and Morgan State University. Lt. Governor Miller was thrilled to bring NVIDIA behind the scenes to interact with the developers of exciting projects that demonstrate the talent and dedication of the students in our State. This multi-day visit allowed Maryland universities to share their vision with Lt. Governor Miller and the representatives from NVIDIA while setting aside time for constructive dialogue between the Maryland agencies and one of the world's largest AI technology companies.

4. On August 13, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor organized a multi-agency visit to University of Florida's HiPerGator AI Facility. In collaboration with MHEC and the Departments of General Services, Commerce, Labor, and Information Technology, the Maryland delegation was given a tour of the Data Center and engaged in day-long conversations and meetings to learn how Maryland could incorporate some of the strategies that Florida has utilized in building and operating an AI Facility. This visit builds upon the relationships that the Office of the Lt. Governor has established with NVIDIA, which plays an integral role in the HiPerGator Facility in Florida.

5. On August 15, Lt. Governor Miller delivered the Keynote Address at the 3rd Annual UMD Cyber Systems Physical Engineering Demo Day Showcase. This was hosted at the Universities at Shady Grove with 47 students from high school, community college, and university finishing their five-week summer "Jumpstart Your Engineering Career" program. This keynote address was delivered to the students, their families, coaches, and mentors as well as Universities at Shady Grove leadership.

6. On November 20, the Lt. Governor hosted the leadership from NatureCell, a South Korean-based company that is bringing a new stem cell manufacturing facility to Baltimore with 500 new jobs, at the State House for a brief meeting ahead of its official announcement of the facility. The Lt. Governor was joined by Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ricardo Benn to convey Maryland's appreciation and gratitude to NatureCell for their decision to invest in Maryland and in Baltimore. The Lt. Governor had the opportunity to talk extensively with Dr. Jeong-Chan Ra, Chairman of NatureCell, about the journey of his company and the substantial impact that South Korean investments have had on Maryland. Additionally, the Lt. Governor had the opportunity to talk with Jim Chivers, Vice President of Gold & Company LLC., who was responsible for the sale of the 100,000 square-foot mixed-use complex in Downtown Baltimore to NatureCell. This investment reflects the Moore-Miller administration's commitment to expanding FDI while uplifting a key strategic industry in biotechnology and stem cell production.

7. On December 15, the Office of the Lt. Governor coordinated a multi-event day with Governor Moore, leadership from NVIDIA, MHEC, Department of General Services, Department of Commerce, numerous R1 universities, and other members of Maryland's information technology and artificial intelligence sector to examine the State's current landscape surrounding AI and identify areas of strategic partnership.

The Lt. Governor welcomed Chris Malachowski, Co-Founder of NVIDIA, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai, leadership from Morgan State University, University of Maryland, College Park, Johns Hopkins University, and University of Maryland, Baltimore County to University of Maryland, College Park for an NVIDIA Higher Education Roundtable. This high-level meeting provided an opportunity for Maryland's R1 universities to share how their schools utilize AI and how they anticipate a partnership between NVIDIA and the State of Maryland could increase their ability to generate opportunities for students to have hands-on experience implementing AI in various fields and professions. Additional points of discussion included education and workforce development efforts related to AI.

Following the roundtable discussion, the university leadership joined the Governor, Lt. Governor, leadership from various state agencies, business leaders, and entrepreneurs in the Governor's Reception Room for an exciting announcement and signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation. This Memorandum of Cooperation was signed by Governor Moore and Chris Malachowski to indicate that NVIDIA and the State of Maryland would work in tandem to create opportunities for students, businesses, and agencies to capitalize on the use of artificial intelligence in their personal and professional lives.

Maryland Department of Agriculture

1. In March, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) received \$15,000 from the USDA Market Access Program through the U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc. (USLGE). This funding will be used for projects in 2025 to increase export sales of livestock genetics. Projects include inbound trade missions to bring United Kingdom and Australian dairy genetics buyers to visit Maryland dairy farms and an outbound trade mission to Euro Paint, the largest Paint Horse show outside of the U.S., to promote Maryland equine genetics.

2. On March 14, the MDA submitted a grant proposal to USLGE to fund projects to increase livestock genetic exports in 2026. Proposed projects include a dairy inbound mission from the United Kingdom and

an equine outbound trade mission to Italy. The MDA will determine if the projects receive funding by the end of 2025.

3. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #55.

4. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #57.

Maryland Department of Commerce

1. In April, the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) and Department of Commerce organized a life sciences-oriented extension to the Asia Trade Mission, where Secretary of State Susan Lee and Commerce Life Sciences Manager Bradley Gillenwater met with government officials and other decision makers of Korean-based life sciences firms interested in expanding their operations to Maryland.

2. Commerce coordinated an event with the Embassy of the Netherlands on June 4 aboard the Clipper Ship “Stad Amsterdam.” The event featured Maryland and Dutch companies and entities working together around climate adaptation, urban resilience, and trade and investment (especially Maryland’s lighthouse sectors). It was announced that Maryland and the Netherlands would work together to sign an MOU later this year. This request to explore an MOU was initiated by the Embassy, demonstrating that Maryland is an acknowledged leader in these areas.

3. In June, the Maryland Innovation Lab is actively promoting its second cohort, which is focused on Affordability in Decarbonization, with three innovation sponsors from Maryland: BGE Exelon, Pompeian, and Capital Logistics. Scouting of start-ups is underway. This program promotes Maryland as a leader in innovation.

4. See Goal 3, Lieutenant Governor, Item #4.

5. On September 4, Commerce participated in the Maryland Tech Council’s Bio Innovation Conference. This Conference brought together the region’s top life sciences professionals with global industry leaders, venture capitalists, and innovative startups.

6. From September 16 to 18, Commerce had a booth and participated in the Quantum World Congress held in Tyson’s Corner to promote Maryland as the Capital of Quantum.

7. From September 16 to 18, Commerce participated in the BioHealth Capital Region Forum, which serves as the premier gathering for the biopharma sector, bringing together nearly 1,000 registrants annually, including government officials, academic leaders, and industry executives.

8. From October 7 to 11, Secretary of Commerce Harry Coker, Jr. visited Estonia to attend the Tallinn Digital Summit, an exclusive global leadership forum hosted by the Prime Minister of Estonia. The summit is dedicated to establishing frameworks for the beneficial, scalable, and interoperable implementation of AI across diverse societies and economies. The visit included a meeting with Piret Sauter, Director of Distant Markets at Enterprise Estonia, and the Secretary also spoke on a panel entitled “High Stakes, High Gains: National AI and Cyber Innovation.” Secretary Coker also met with high-level officials, including Estonia’s Minister of Economy and Industry Erkki Keldo, and Jonatan Vseviov, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

9. On October 16, OIIT participated in a WTCI hosted reception for the Embassy of Estonia and the Estonian Defense and Aerospace Industries Association. Assistant Secretary John Gilstrap delivered opening remarks.

10. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #55.

11. Commerce led the Indo-Pacific Maritime Expo in Sydney, Australia, with a delegation of six companies. The purpose of this trade show was to promote exports for Maryland companies utilizing STEP 12 funding. In addition, the team promoted Maryland as a place for investment.

12. On November 11, the OIIT hosted the Japanese Alps Alpine organization, which has plans to invest into a long-term collaboration on quantum materials research and workforce development. They visited Johns Hopkins as a potential partner. Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ricardo Benn gave welcoming remarks.

13. Commerce led a delegation to the MEDICA Trade Fair in Dusseldorf, Germany, with a delegation of 13 companies. This is the world's largest medical device trade show. The purpose of this trade show was to promote exports for Maryland companies. In addition, the team promoted Maryland as a place for investment with support from our Germany FDI Representative, and had several valuable meetings with European industry clusters.

Maryland Department of the Environment

1. In February, senior leadership met with GovTech & Climate Solutions, from Denmark, to discuss ways that digitization and AI can assist states in accelerating their environmental permitting in an inclusive and sustainable way. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is considering additional conversations with Denmark's Ministry of Environment to learn more about their experience working with this innovative software/technology.

2. On May 13, Assistant Secretary of the Environment Dr. Rachel Lamb joined Quebec at their third Smart & Sustainable Mobility Showcase in partnership with the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) and the City of Philadelphia. This showcase highlighted the ways local governments and companies are working together to deploy medium and heavy-duty electric vehicles and related infrastructure and technologies. The MDE continues to explore opportunities with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to host a similar event in Baltimore next year.

3. On September 5, Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb joined Commerce and MDOT in hosting a staff delegation from Quebec to advance planning on a Maryland delegation trip to Montreal and the Baltimore-hosted stop on the Smart and Sustainable Transportation showcase in Spring 2026.

4. From September 21 to 25, Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain participated in several high-level roundtables with other subnational governments at Climate Week in New York City. During these roundtables, panels, and other events, the Secretary was able to champion Maryland's climate leadership on clean energy, methane, circular economy, and more. Secretary of the Environment McIlwain and Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb also had a bilateral meeting with Quebec officials to support the upcoming delegation trip to Montreal.

5. On September 26, the MDE's Radiological Health Program (RHP) met with four members of the Japan Nuclear Regulation Authority (JNRA) and two representatives from International Technology and Trade Associates. The JNRA members are part of a young professional group visiting the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). During the meeting, RHP delivered a presentation outlining the radioactive material processes for ensuring public health and radiation safety for both the public and occupational workers. This was followed by a question-and-answer session. The group expressed particular interest in our interactions with the NRC, as its nuclear regulatory agency operates under a different structure than ours.

6. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #55.

Maryland Higher Education Commission

1. On April 10, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai joined Lt. Governor Aruna Miller and fellow Cabinet members at the Maryland Asian American Business Conference where he served on a panel discussing "Leveraging Technology for Growth." The conference hosted over 100 startup founders and celebrated the significant contributions of Maryland's Asian American community to the State's economic growth. The event took place at the Universities at Shady Grove and was organized by the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives.

2. On May 20, representatives from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) attended the meeting hosted by Secretary of State Susan Lee and her team as they welcomed Ambassador of Aruba Zulema Erasmus and a delegation of National Assembly legislators from the Committee on North American Relations (CNAR) for an introductory meeting in Annapolis. The Aruban delegation, who were also visiting Capitol Hill, expressed interest in potential areas of collaboration between Aruba and Maryland, including cybersecurity, clean water initiatives, port cooperation, sustainable tourism, and higher education. Notably, discussions also involved the potential renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Maryland and Aruba, originally established in 2013. Furthermore, it was mentioned that Aruba has recently finalized negotiations with US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for a Pre-Clearance Treaty, which is expected to be signed shortly. Director of Communications Clarkson highlighted MHEC's ongoing efforts and expressed enthusiasm for developing mutually beneficial programs and exchanges in the academic sphere. The meeting provided a platform for initial dialogue and the identification of areas for future cooperation in advancing higher learning opportunities for both entities.

3. Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai joined Lt. Governor Miller and other distinguished guests on May 5, for the grand opening of AstraZeneca's new Cell Therapy facility in Gaithersburg. The event celebrated the inauguration of the new building and the collaborations between industry, government, and education within the State. Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai and Deputy Secretary of Higher Education Elena Quiroz-Livanis will meet with CCBC President, Provost, Education Dean, and other senior leaders on Friday. The meeting is a follow-up to Governor Moore's "Feds to Eds" initiative, which aims to create pathways for displaced federal workers to become teachers in Maryland.

4. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #55.

5. See Goal 3, Lieutenant Governor, Item #4.

6. Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai underscored MHEC's commitment to acting as a partner and accelerator for Maryland's life sciences sector, directly aligning the State's post-secondary education ecosystem with economic development priorities during the Life Sciences Advisory Board (LSAB) meeting on November 18. Acknowledging the LSAB's recent focus on global strategic positioning, including debriefs on the BIO International Convention, Maryland MedTech Week, and the Asia Trade Mission, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai reaffirmed MHEC's goal of strengthening the State's talent pipeline. He highlighted that MHEC has modernized its approach to program approval by aligning reviews with the statewide Workforce Needs Analysis, shifting from reactive responses to a data-driven, future-focused strategy. This has led to the approval of over 1,000 academic programs in the last two years, including 71 new programs directly aligned with Maryland Lighthouse Industries (Life Sciences, IT/Cyber/Quantum, Aerospace), with specific approvals for 15 new programs in AI and 28 in Nursing. Furthermore, MHEC has maintained an efficient program review timeline, averaging decisions in approximately 45 days, and has hired an inaugural Director of Workforce Need to institutionalize continuous cross-agency coordination and real-time labor market intelligence. Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai emphasized that higher education is actively responding to the impact of AI by integrating digital and data literacy into curricula, essential for sectors like biopharma manufacturing. He concluded by introducing the concept of Lighthouse Credentials and Degrees to signal programs with transparent, evidence-based standards for high labor-market demand and strong earnings, and sought the LSAB's guidance on how to ensure academic programs reflect the Board's priorities and better support R&D and advanced manufacturing needs to attract more life sciences companies to the State.

7. On November 10, MHEC representatives met with Minister Counselor SHEN Xuesong of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) Education Office to discuss higher education collaboration between China and Maryland. The meeting was convened with two primary objectives: first, to provide the Maryland team with an overview of recent developments and engagements in China's higher education sector; and second, to discuss and explore potential ideas and mechanisms for strengthening higher education cooperation and exchanges between institutions in China and Maryland. Attendees from the Embassy of the PRC include Minister Counselor SHEN Xuesong (Principal), Counselor ZHANG Yun, and Third Secretary SHU Danyi. The Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) was represented by Mary E. (Mendy) Nitsch, Director of International Affairs, and Dr. Akilah Alleyene, Deputy Director of International Affairs.

8. Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai participated in an international engagement on December 4 at the National Youth Apprenticeship Summit with the Swiss Delegation. Held at the Residence of the Swiss Ambassador in Washington, DC, the event centered on a strategy meeting with the Honorable Dr. Martina Hirayama, Swiss State Secretary for Education, Research, and Innovation, and Ralf Heckner, Ambassador of Switzerland.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss expanding the Swiss-Maryland partnership in workforce development and STEM education, exploring new avenues for apprenticeship cooperation as Maryland continues to grow as a tech-driven state. The session included a closed strategy discussion with leadership from the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology, followed by an evening reception.

Strategic Goal 4:

Lead the Nation in Combating Climate Change, Addressing Damage to the Environment, and Supporting Climate Change-Resilient Communities with a Whole-of-Government Approach.

Office of the Secretary of State

1. On January 17, Secretary of State Susan Lee, Director of International Affairs Mary E. (Mendy) Nitsch, and Executive Assistant Cathy Bauer participated in a virtual meeting with Paul Tiao and Julie Cerqueira, outgoing representatives of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) International Affairs (IA) division, to discuss opportunities for DOE and Maryland to engage in the future.

In a follow-up email to the virtual meeting, Ms. Cerqueira introduced Director Nitsch to Bob Dixon, the IA division liaison to subnational governments, and Paul Tumminia who has been leading efforts to bring US and eastern/central European cities together as part of the Partnership on Transatlantic Clean Energy and Climate.

Other topics that Ms. Cerqueira touched on which Director Nitsch will follow up with Mr. Dixon and Mr. Tiao include:

- Maryland participation in trade missions led by the U.S. Department of Commerce with DOE engagement.
- Maryland participation in Select USA, led by the U.S. Department of Commerce.
- Maryland and its municipalities link up with international cities, such as Sister Cities, to share challenges and solutions, taking advantage of technical assistance provided to the DOE's international partners.
- DOE could invite Maryland to speak at events we host, or share the stage with Maryland, to highlight the U.S. leadership at the national, state and local level.
- DOE could connect foreign officials with the State of Maryland to engage directly; and
- Maryland could participate in site visits (When Ms. Cerqueira worked with the governors, foreign governments and philanthropies often paid for state officials to conduct site visits overseas to learn about solutions, technologies, make contacts with businesses); DOE could help facilitate this.

2. On February 25, Assistant Secretary of the Environment Dr. Rachel Lamb provided an overview of the relationship between the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and Quebec's government. Commerce already has an MOU with Quebec (dated October 15, 2020), and Quebec officials have shown interest in signing a new agreement. Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb recommended using the New Jersey - Quebec MOU as a template, with adjustments to reflect Maryland's priorities. Other key agencies for drafting the MOU include the Office of the Secretary of State, Commerce, and MDOT.

Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb also proposed expanding Maryland's ties with Quebec by hosting the start of Quebec's Smart and Sustainable Mobility Showcase week in Maryland on May 12, potentially featuring an

MOU signing ceremony and exhibits from both regions. The event would precede Quebec's participation in a similar showcase in Philadelphia on May 13.

3. In February, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, and Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt met with Dave Nemazie, Chief of Staff at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES), about updating our environmental MOU with the state of Rio de Janeiro.

4. In March, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, and Senior Advisor Gebhardt met with Chief of Staff Nemazie and Alex Fries, Program Manager and Researcher at UMCES, to discuss the background of the Maryland-Rio de Janeiro environmental partnership and next steps on renewing the related MOU.

5. Deputy Secretary Lore and Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations Alexandria Liu attended a reception at WildKidAcres, operated by community leader Gerardo Martinez. Gerardo is engaged in high-level global initiatives, including at the UN, as he also serves as the President of the Global Association of Latinos in Agriculture. The reception followed a meeting of the GOCI Hispanic Commission Meeting, which concluded with a well-received speech by Governor Moore.

6. Deputy Secretary Lore and Assistant Director of International Affairs Rosanna Mantova attended a special reception in honor of the ocean and the City of Nice, held at the French Ambassador's Residence in Washington, DC, on May 14. The event was organized in anticipation of the upcoming UN Ocean Conference, which will take place in Nice, France, this June. Secretary of the Environment McIlwain and Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb were also in attendance.

7. See Goal 3, OSOS, Item #9.

8. See Goal 3, OSOS, Item #16.

9. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #58.

10. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #59.

11. On December 4, Deputy Secretary Lore and Director of International Affairs Nitsch attended the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) Open House for its new office in Annapolis. It was an opportunity to reengage with UMCES Chief of Staff Dave Nemazie and Program Manager Alex Fries, among others. Chief of Staff Nemazie and Program Manager Fries thanked the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) and MDE for the recent signing of the environmental-themed MOU with the state of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and have a planning call with counterparts in Rio the following week.

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

1. On November 15, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller spoke at an event in Bethesda supporting the Roundglass Foundation and other stakeholders. The Roundglass Foundation, founded by philanthropist Gurpreet Sunny Singh, is a purpose-driven organization committed to cultivating holistic wellbeing throughout Punjab, India. Guided by the conviction that every person and every village hold infinite potential; the foundation works hand in hand with communities to achieve lasting change in people's lives.

Since 2018, the foundation has specialized in initiatives in youth development, environmental renewal, and women's equity that have reached more than 2.5 million people in 2,700 villages, providing a blueprint for resilient, self-reliant communities. One of the foundation's key programs is the Billion Tree Project, which sets out to combat the severe environmental crisis occurring in Northern India and has successfully planted over 3.5 million trees in the region.

Maryland Department of Commerce

1. On August 20, at the Maryland Innovation Lab, Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ricardo Benn provided welcome remarks alongside WTCI and LMarks CEOs during Pitch Day. OIIT representatives attended and engaged with partners and pitch participants of the second Maryland Innovation Lab cohort focused on Decarbonization. 15 U.S. and international pitch companies showcased the value of their solutions to three Maryland corporate partners BGE, Pompeian, and Capital Logistics demonstrating how they address pre-defined problem areas and highlighting their effectiveness during a 10-week pilot scheduled to begin in late September.
2. On October 16, OIIT connected the University of Maryland with the University of Adelaide to discuss joint programs for undergraduate, graduate, and professor exchanges regarding environmental studies in coastal flooding, algae blooms, and other aquatic areas.
3. On October 29, OIIT supported the EU Circularity Forum for its event on the Circular Economy in Annapolis featuring 100 stakeholders, officials and experts to discuss cooperation between the EU and U.S. states and cities, focused on advancing the circular economy. Deputy Secretary Benn provided remarks.

Maryland Department of the Environment

1. In March, Assistant Secretary of the Environment Dr. Rachel Lamb met twice with Quebec's Government Relations Attache to consider shared climate and environmental areas of cooperation that could be further developed within a potential MOU and connected Commerce and MDOT with Quebec to consider a Baltimore-based stop on Quebec's Sustainability Mobility Showcase.
2. In March, on behalf of the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb participated in an in-person "Next Generation Budgets" workshop held in Brussels, Belgium, to learn more about climate budgeting and how countries from around the world have employed green budgeting tools to advance state climate and environmental goals. This in-person workshop is part of a longer series of virtual workshops that the MDE, Maryland Department of Budget and Management, and the Comptroller's Office are joining together on behalf of Maryland.
3. From June 15 to 26, Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain, supported by Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb, represented the State of Maryland at the Bonn Climate Convention, the official meeting of the parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and London Climate Week. Joining the Under2 Coalition and America Is All In Coalition, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain emphasized the importance and power of subnational climate action in the face of changes at the U.S. federal level. She also matured partnerships with other public and private sector organizations interested in working with Maryland to advance climate progress.

4. On August 20, Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb joined Commerce at the Maryland Innovation Lab pitch day, featuring innovators from over 20 countries pitching breakthrough approaches to decarbonization and affordability.

5. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item # 55.

6. From November 3 to 6, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain traveled to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to represent Maryland at the COP30 Local Leaders Forum, marking her third consecutive year participating in this global gathering of subnational climate leaders. She highlighted Maryland's ambitious climate agenda—including the Climate Pollution Reduction Plan, clean energy deployment, and resilience investments—as examples of state-led implementation at scale. Secretary of the Environment McIlwain underscored that, even amid uncertain federal leadership, Maryland is moving forward with policies that cut emissions, create jobs, and protect frontline communities. During the forum, she engaged with governors, mayors, and international partners to expand collaboration on climate finance, methane reduction, and circular economy solutions. She also emphasized Maryland's leadership within the U.S. Climate Alliance and Under2 Coalition as proof of the power of coordinated state action. Overall, the visit reinforced Maryland's role as a leading U.S. state advancing climate solutions on the world stage. The Secretary was accompanied by Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb.

While Secretary of the Environment McIlwain was in Rio de Janeiro, she also signed a new MOU with the Environmental Secretary from the State of Rio to reestablish a partnership to advance joint restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and Guanabara Bay. This MOU provides a new opportunity to share best practices and facilitate technical exchange with support from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.

7. On November 19, Secretary of the Environment McIlwain and Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb joined Commerce and the OSOS on an official delegation trip to Québec to advance shared learning ahead of an upcoming Maryland - Québec MOU signing. Secretary of the Environment McIlwain met with Alstom and toured the REM rapid rail project, where the MDE engaged Québec partners on transportation electrification, emissions reduction, and integrated climate planning. The delegation then visited Hydro-Québec's IREQ Research Institute and the Beauharnois hydroelectric facility, allowing the MDE to explore approaches to clean power generation, grid modernization, and system resilience. Overall, the visit strengthened interagency collaboration and laid the groundwork for a deeper Maryland - Québec partnership through the forthcoming MOU.

8. Secretary of the Environment McIlwain was invited by the French Embassy to provide a keynote address at their 10th Anniversary Paris Agreement event on December 9, featuring Maryland as a leader in subnational climate action.

9. On December 12, Assistant Secretary Dr. Lamb joined members from the State of Rio, UMCES, and the Department of Natural Resources to kick off planning for work under the new MOU between Rio and Maryland on Guanabara Bay and Chesapeake Bay restoration.

Maryland Department of Transportation

1. During January 20 to 22, representatives from the Maryland Port Administration (MPA) attended the American Association of Port Authorities' 2025 Port Opportunities with Energy, Resilience, and Sustainability (POWERS) Summit & Expo in Tampa, Florida. The summit brings together industry leaders from around the globe to explore the transformative power of purpose-driven innovation in the port industry, focusing on sustainable growth, resilience, and environmental justice.
2. In February, representatives from the MPA attended the American Association of Port Authorities' 2025 Port Opportunities with Energy, Resilience, and Sustainability (POWERS) Summit & Expo in Tampa, Florida, during January 20 to 22. This summit brings together industry leaders from around the globe to explore the transformative power of purpose-driven innovation in the port industry, focusing on sustainable growth, resilience, and environmental justice.
3. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #59.

Strategic Goal 5:

Support Educational Exchange Opportunities for Students from Foreign Countries and Students from Maryland and Expand Access for International Opportunities for Students in Underrepresented Communities.

Office of the Secretary of State

1. Deputy Secretary Michael Lore, Director of International Affairs Mary E. (Mendy) Nitsch, Kristin Clarkson, Director of Communications for the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), and Patrick Capurro, Chair of the Maryland - Hauts-de-France Committee, met in Annapolis to discuss higher education initiatives between Maryland and France. Top of mind was taking advantage of the agreement between Sister States of Maryland, Inc. and the Society of Friends of Versailles to create connections between higher education institutions in the sectors of architecture, history, and engineering.
2. Secretary of State Susan Lee, Deputy Secretary Michael Lore, and Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations Alexandria Liu met with Maryland-based retired foreign service officer and ambassador Francis Ricciardoni and Fanta Aw, CEO of Association for International Educators (NAFSA), to discuss strategies to connect international students and educators with opportunities in Maryland. An introduction will be made to the MHEC.
3. In February, the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) worked with the Office of the Governor to expedite a request for students from Sister State Gyeongnam Province to tour NASA Goddard during their exchange program with Towson University.

While engaging with counterparts in Gyeongnam, Korea, to plan the tour of KASA for Governor Moore, Special Assistant Liu learned that a tour of NASA Goddard requested by Towson University for their Korean student exchange program was not progressing. With assistance from Deputy Chief of Staff Manny Welsh and Assistant Secretary for Business Development Brad Fallon to escalate the request to NASA Goddard, NASA Goddard honored the request from Towson University.

4. On February 21, Deputy Secretary Lore welcomed a delegation from the Anhui Vocational College Program and delivered remarks during their visit. The delegation participated in a four-week faculty development program hosted by the University of Maryland College Park, designed to enhance workforce training and academic development within Maryland's community college system. This program provided insights for faculty members from Anhui Province's vocational colleges (two-year institutions), collaborating in education and skills training.

Delegate Chao Wu, treasurer of the Maryland Legislative Asian-American and Pacific Islander Caucus, also met with the delegation and delivered remarks in Chinese. As an alumnus of the University of Science and Technology of China, based in Anhui Province, Delegate Wu shared his insights on the Apprenticeship 2030 Commission, which focuses on addressing skill shortages in high-demand fields and expanding

affordable career pathways for young professionals. He also highlighted potential partnerships between Anhui Province and Maryland universities, including Salisbury University and the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

5. Director of International Affairs Nitsch and Special Assistant Liu participated in the Lunar New Year Celebration at Bard Early College High School in Baltimore City. The school has a Chinese language program, and attendees included representatives of the Baltimore Mayor's Office, GOCI, and the Embassy of China.

6. Secretary of State Lee kicked off a meeting with MHEC and the University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB) to discuss a potential collaboration between UMB School of Pharmacy and Chosun University in South Korea. This collaboration, facilitated by Executive Assistant Bauer, is a potential deliverable for Governor Moore's Asia Trade Mission. Also in attendance were Special Assistant Liu, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai, representatives from UMB, including Provost and Executive Vice President Roger Ward, Dean of the Pharmacy School Sarah Michel, Associate Dean for Recruitment and Admission at UMB Leah Sera, Associate Professor in the Department of Practice, Sciences, and Health Outcomes Research (P-SHOR) Agnes Ann Feemster, and Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Pharmaceutical Sciences Andy Coop.

7. In March, Secretary of State Lee joined Lt. Governor Miller in the Governor's Reception Room to host ASSE International High School Exchange students from France, Germany, Greece, Georgia, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Uzbekistan, Spain, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Ukraine, Italy, and Azerbaijan and their host families (who host the students on their own dime). Lt. Governor Miller and Secretary of State Lee welcomed questions from the students regarding her role as a public servant, especially regarding possible hardships and discrimination she may have faced because of her ethnicity and gender.

8. Secretary of State Lee and Executive Assistant Bauer attended a meeting with Korean-American community leaders and Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai to discuss leads for follow up in South Korea.

9. On March 21, Deputy Secretary Lore met with the Kanagawa Prefectural Department of Education Student Group as part of the Sister State program, which fosters cultural and educational exchange between Maryland and Kanagawa high school students. The meeting provided a unique opportunity for students to meet a state leader, visit the state capital, learn about Maryland's history, gain a deeper understanding of the Maryland-Kanagawa Sister State partnership, and practice their English. For nearly 20 years, the Kanagawa Prefectural Department of Education has organized an English language competition for high school students across the Prefecture, selecting approximately 10 students annually to visit Maryland for a week of educational and cultural exchange, including homestays, sister school visits, and sightseeing during Japan's March school break.

10. On March 25, Secretary of State Lee and Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai hosted the Seiko Gakuin student group from Kanagawa Prefecture, further strengthening the ties between Maryland and Kanagawa through meaningful engagement and exchange.

11. As part of Governor Moore's 2025 Asia Trade Mission, the OSOS arranged the signing of two MOUs between Maryland-based higher education institutions and counterparts in Asia. In Japan, Secretary of State Lee and her staff attended the signing ceremony of an MOU between Salisbury University President Carolyn Lepre and the leadership of the Japan Study Abroad Foundation in Tokyo. In Korea, Secretary of State Lee and her team attended the signing ceremony of an MOU between University of Maryland, Baltimore Provost Roger Ward and the President of Chosun University, which was also supported by Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai.

12. On April 25, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova attended the Maryland International Education Consortium (MIEC) event to celebrate Maryland International Education Day, which was held at Coppin State University. The event emphasized the importance of international educational exchanges at Maryland's higher education institutions. At the event, Assistant Director Mantova, accompanied by Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai and President of the MIEC Rachel Scholten, presented and read the proclamation dedicated to Maryland International Education Day in Maryland for April 26.

13. Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova met with representatives of the Maryland - Bosnia and Herzegovina Exchange Council (MBHEC), on May 29. This initial meeting served as an introduction of the Bosnian institutions. A follow-up meeting scheduled for the following week will have the MIEC members introducing their schools. Among other initiatives, MBHEC will host a virtual meeting on June 4 between members of the MIEC and universities in BiH.

14. On June 11, the MBHEC and MIEC had a virtual meeting to discuss collaborative opportunities aimed at bringing Bosnian students to Maryland. Secretary of State Lee opened the meeting with welcoming remarks. Representing the OSOS were Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova and GSIP Intern Megane Mbape Tchinda. Participating higher education institutions included Loyola University Maryland, Towson University, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), and Goucher College. Each institution provided MBHEC with an overview of their academic programs and international engagement initiatives.

15. On June 20, Director of International Affairs Nitsch accompanied by Governor's Summer Internship Program Fellow (GSIP) Megane Mbapte Tchinda attended the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders (YALI) welcome event at UMBC's School of Public Policy in conjunction with the Governors Office of Community Initiatives. The event welcomed 25 leaders, innovators, founders and professionals between the ages of 25 and 35 from various Sub-Saharan African countries invited to Maryland to deepen their understanding of civic engagement and to expand their professional networks in their respective professions.

16. On June 24, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Special Assistant Liu, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, and GSIP Intern Mbapte Tchinda held a virtual meeting with Dr. Erwan Ladadec of the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University to discuss extending an open invitation to Governor Moore to serve as a guest speaker for their subnational diplomacy programs.

17. On June 24, Secretary of State Lee made opening remarks at the third annual PACSE, organized by the U.S. - Africa Collaborative. The purpose of the Expo was to bring together experts, practitioners, academics, and policy makers to examine the challenges of housing, community development, and human

settlements and to share and propose ethical and sustainable solutions. In her remarks, the Secretary underscored Maryland's leadership in subnational diplomacy and in promoting inclusive, forward-looking policy amidst an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape. PASCE grew out of the Maryland/KwaZulu-Natal Sister State partnership. Several presenters throughout the week were from Maryland. Secretary of State Lee also shared details about Governor Wes Moore's historic \$400 million equitable housing initiative, an effort that reflects Maryland's commitment to economic justice and community resilience.

18. On July 24, the Mandela Washington YALI Fellows Closing Ceremony was held at Baltimore Unity Hall. Representing the OSOS were Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova and GSIP Intern Mbapte Tchinda. The event was hosted by the UMBC Center for Global Engagement and attended by its leadership and staff, along with 22 Mandela Washington Fellows. The Mandela Washington Fellowship, part of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, is administered locally through UMBC and brings together young professionals from various sectors across Sub-Saharan Africa. The six-week program at UMBC included leadership workshops, site visits, networking opportunities, and other professional development activities.

19. On July 11, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova represented the OSOS at the send-off event of students from Baltimore's Bard Early College High School who are participating in the Baltimore - Xiamen Sister City Committee's Youth Ambassador Student Travel Program. The students will visit the city of Xiamen (with which Baltimore has a 40-year Sister City relationship), Anhui Province (with which Maryland has a 45-year Sister State relationship), and Shanghai. Also in attendance were representatives from the Baltimore City Council, Embassy of the People's Republic of China, and officials (who joined virtually) from Xiamen, Anhui, and Shanghai.

20. On July 18, 30 students from Maryland's Sister State of Gyeongsangnam-do, along with 11 international students from Towson University's English Language Center, visited the Maryland State House in Annapolis for a meet-and-greet with Governor Moore. The group was accompanied by Dr. Lyle Nash, Director of Towson University's English Language Center, two chaperones from the Gyeongsangnam-do Scholarship Agency, and Towson University's Assistant Vice-President for International Initiatives Christopher Powers.

Secretary of State Lee provided opening remarks. Governor Moore then met the students and discussed the value of international exchange programs and building global friendships, and his appreciation for the opportunity to extend the same hospitality he experienced during his visit to Gyeongsangnam-do in April as part of his Asia Trade Mission. The group took commemorative photos with the Governor before proceeding to the Senate Chamber, where Deputy Secretary Lore provided a guided tour of the State House.

21. On July 23, Mandela Washington Fellows for Young African Leaders sponsored by the U.S. Department of State visited Annapolis for a meet-and-greet with Governor Moore, coordinated by our Office and UMBC. The 22 Fellows hailed from 17 African countries, including from our Sister States Liberia and South Africa. Secretary of State Lee provided opening remarks. Governor Moore then met the Fellows and discussed the value of international exchange programs and building global friendships, and their positions as the future leaders of the world. The group took commemorative photos with the Governor

before proceeding to the Senate Chamber, where Deputy Secretary Lore provided a guided tour of the State House.

22. On July 24, the Mandela Washington YALI Fellows Closing Ceremony was held at Baltimore Unity Hall. Representing the Maryland Secretary of State's Office were Rosanna Mantova, Assistant Director of International Affairs, and GSIP Intern Mbapte Tchinda, International Affairs Intern. The event was hosted by the UMBC Center for Global Engagement and attended by its leadership and staff, along with 22 Mandela Washington Fellows. The Mandela Washington Fellowship, part of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, is administered locally through UMBC and brings together young professionals from various sectors across Sub-Saharan Africa. The closing ceremony marked the transition of the 2025 cohort from Fellows to Alumni. Fellows received certificates of completion and citations from the Governor, heard remarks from UMBC leadership, and enjoyed speeches delivered by two Fellows on behalf of the cohort. The six-week program at UMBC included leadership workshops, site visits, networking opportunities, and other professional development activities.

23. Secretary of State Lee provided congratulatory remarks and presented a Governor's Proclamation at the Commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of the Maryland - Anhui Sister State Partnership. The event, held both in-person and virtually on July 25, memorialized the 45-year Sister State relationship between the two regions, Maryland's first Sister State relationship and the first U.S.-China Sister State. In-person attendees met at the Anhui Provincial Foreign Affairs Office and included students from Baltimore's Bard Early College High School who visited Anhui as a part of the Baltimore-Xiamen Sister City Committee's Youth Ambassador Student Travel Program, who also presented the Governor's Proclamation in person on behalf of Maryland. Also in attendance were Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Special Assistant Liu, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Aide Lin, officials from the Anhui Provincial Foreign Affairs Office, and representatives from Anqing City. The students from Bard Early College High School will visit our Office next week to debrief Secretary of State Lee on their experience in China.

24. Secretary of State Lee, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai, and an Assistant Secretary of MSDE hosted a large group of high school students from Maryland Sister State Kanagawa, Japan in our Offices on July 29 where the students were encouraged to continue their higher education experience in Maryland. Also in attendance were Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Special Assistant Liu, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, UMBC Director Ryan Sheldon, UMBC Assistant Director Madison Pickard, Chair of the Kanagawa Sister State Committee Dr. Tomoko Hoogenboom, and the OSOS Interns. Deputy Secretary Lore provided a tour of the State House to the student delegation after the meeting.

25. On August 1, Director of International Affairs Nitsch attended and made remarks at the MIEC annual meeting at Loyola University of Maryland. In attendance were representatives of approximately ten higher education member institutions, as well as the U.S. Commercial Service USEAC Baltimore Office, and MBHEC. During her remarks, Director Nitsch emphasized the Administration's commitment to international higher education and promoted the higher education component of the upcoming inbound mission from Hauts-de-France. The MIEC members asked if the Governor would consider writing a welcome letter to incoming international students that the MIEC institutions could send/include in welcome

packets. This would demonstrate from a high level the state's commitment to international education and sincere interest in the welfare of international students.

26. OSOS hosted 14 students, parent chaperones, and Baltimore - Xiamen Sister Cities Committee (BXSCC) leaders from Baltimore's Bard High School Early College in the Wineland Building on August 5. The group visited Anhui, Xiamen, Shanghai, and Nanjing as a part of the BXSCC Youth Ambassador Student Travel Program, and presented a Governor's Proclamation commemorating the 45th Anniversary of the Maryland-Anhui Sister State Partnership to the Anhui Provincial Foreign Affairs Office on behalf of Maryland. The students debriefed their experiences from the exchange to Secretary of State Lee. Also in attendance were Assistant Chief of Staff Andy Parker, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Aide Lin, GSIP Intern Mbapte Tchinda, and the OSOS Interns.

27. Director of International Affairs Nitsch made remarks on behalf of Secretary of State Lee at the Towson University English Language Center (ELC) Certificate Ceremony on Friday, August 8. The majority of the students were from Gyeongnam Province, one of Maryland's two sister states in the ROK. Towson University (TU) Assistant Vice President Chris Powers and ELC Director Lyle Nash, Ph.D., also made remarks. This is the second summer in a row that Gyeongnam Province has sent university students to TU for a summer English language program. TU leadership and Gyeongnam students were especially appreciative of the opportunities to meet with Governor Moore and tour NASA Goddard, brought to them by the OSOS staff.

28. On August 17, Secretary of State Lee and Executive Aide Lucas Lin attended the 2025 First Annual Airborne Robotics Cup hosted by the Zhejiang University Alumni Association of Greater Washington (ZUAADC), Control, Intelligent Autonomy, and Optimization (CIAO) Lab of George Mason University, and the Capital Youth Outreach Club (CYOC). The Airborne Robotic Cup is a national STEM competition where middle and high school students design, build, and operate autonomous robotic blimps in a hands-on engineering challenge. Secretary of State Lee provided remarks and gave awards to 50 outstanding students from six states, with over 100 audience members, including parents, educators, industry professionals, and community leaders. Also in attendance were members of the Embassy of the PRC, Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships Asian Liaison Yi Shen, State Senator Lam, and GOCI Commissioner Ping Lu.

29. Deputy Secretary Lore and Special Assistant Liu met with former French Ambassador to UNESCO and Senior Director of the Atlantic Council Africa Center Rama Yade on August 21. Topics of discussion included Maryland as a trailblazer of sports diplomacy (ex. F1 racing, World Cup qualifier games, the Orioles-Kanagawa Sister State connection, Washington International Horse Show), and the creation of the Coalition of Sports organized by the Atlantic Council. The Atlantic Council sent a letter to Governor Moore kindly inviting the State of Maryland to join the Coalition for Sports along with many sports organizations, embassies, and multilateral institutions. Additionally, Governor Moore was invited to attend the public announcement of the program, on the sidelines of the UNGA in New York on September 24 on the occasion of the Atlantic Council Global Citizens Awards, with FIFA President Gianni Infantino as an awardee. The inaugural meeting of the Coalition for Sports is planned to be in early October to discuss the calendar and topics of work in the coming year in the lead up to the U.S. World Cup.

30. On September 16, Deputy Secretary Lore and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova hosted a German Fulbright Delegation at the State House. The delegation, composed of 24 students from various German universities, was in residence at the University of Maryland as part of the 2025 Summer Institute Discover the USA. Deputy Secretary Lore provided an overview of Maryland's legislative process and state government and a tour of the State House. Both Deputy Secretary Lore and Assistant Director Mantova highlighted Maryland's subnational diplomacy and international affairs initiatives. Delegate Dana Jones also joined the meeting to engage with the students and answer their questions. The visit was coordinated in partnership with the University of Maryland's Office of International Affairs.

31. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #45.

32. On September 18, Director of International Affairs Nitsch and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova attended a virtual meeting with University System of Maryland (USM) International Officers to discuss methods and platforms like the Maryland Sister States Program and Subcabinet for International Affairs to attract international students to study at Maryland universities and what Maryland State Government can do to assist in such initiatives.

33. On October 20, Director of International Affairs Nitsch helped facilitate a meeting between Vice President of Hauts-de-France Decoster, members of the Hauts-de-France delegation, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai, and Provost of Prince George's County Community College Dr. Patricia Armstrong at Prince George's Community College. Also in attendance was the MHEC Chief of Staff Tiffany Majors.

34. Dr. Akilah Alleyne, incoming Deputy Director of International Affairs, attended a meeting in Lagos, Nigeria, on November 3, with Deborah Enyone Oni, Esq., Founder of Hilton Top Solicitors, and Convener of Hilton Emerging Tech Women. Mrs. Enyone Oni and Dr. Alleyne briefly discussed the "Women in Emerging Tech Conference," a flagship event hosted by Hilton Top Solicitors, a Nigeria-based law firm, and Hilton Innovations Hub, which will celebrate five years of empowering women to thrive in the digital age. The platform has empowered over 5,000 women in AI, blockchain, cybersecurity, and STEM. It also helps foster skill development and increased access to opportunities, encouraging young women to become leaders in the digital economy. This year's convening will be held at the American Corner, at the courtesy of the U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Nigeria, in Ikeja, Lagos State, on November 13, 2025. The conference provides a space for learning, networking, and building a future-focused community hub geared towards educating young women in the intersections of leadership, law, and technology. The goal of the conference and ongoing training hub is to develop young women leaders who drive Africa's digital transformation and become pioneers and trailblazers in the digital economy. Dr. Alleyne and Mrs. Enyone Oni are scheduled to have a follow-up call in the upcoming two weeks, joined by Secretary of State Lee and Senior Advisor Gebhardt, to discuss the conference attendance and takeaways, as well as potential future partnerships centered on smart-city infrastructure, economic partnerships, and technology policy. Mrs. Enyone Oni's work in AI advancement is centered mainly in Kogi State and Osun State.

35. On November 5, Secretary of State Lee hosted a delegation from Anhui Province, China, led by Vice Governor Mrs. Ren Qinghua, at the Maryland State Archives (MSA). Their visit commemorated the 45th year of the Maryland-Anhui Sister State Agreement, Maryland's oldest Sister State relationship, where State Archivist Elaine Bachmann displayed documents owned by MSA related to the Maryland-Anhui Sister State relationship, such as the delegation list under Governor Hughes that travelled to Anhui, and the original Sister State Agreement as signed in 1980. Secretary of State Lee, Vice Governor Ren, and State

Archivist Bachmann provided remarks. Secretary of State Lee and Vice Governor Ren then signed the Memorandum of Understanding On Strengthening Youth Exchanges Between Maryland and Anhui Province, and exchanged gifts. Our Office thanks MSA for the extensive work and communication regarding logistics, original documents, and parking for the delegation. Also in attendance were Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Executive Aide Lin, Executive Aide Kim, Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Alleyne, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, OSOS Intern Carlson, Delegate Chao Wu, Sister States of Maryland, Inc. Anhui Chair Mark Xu, GOCI Commissioner Dr. Ping Lu (who facilitated interpretation for the OSOS), and members of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China.

36. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #60.

37. On November 10, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai, Director of International Affairs Nitsch and Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Alleyne hosted a delegation from the Embassy of the PRC led by Minister Counselor of Education Mrs. SHEN Xuesong. Director Nitsch sent the recently signed Maryland-Anhui MOU to both the MHEC and the Embassy and will work with Embassy staff to strategically reconnect the Embassy education division with Maryland International Education Consortium member institutions. Topics of discussion included: support to the extent possible the 2026 Baltimore-Xiamen Sister City Student Ambassadors from Baltimore City Public Schools on their trip to China in Summer 2026, an invitation for Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai to attend the October 2026 international education expo in Beijing, China, and follow-up with the staff of the Anhui Overseas Training Base at UMD College Park to discuss ideas on increasing inbound delegations.

38. On November 12, Director of International Affairs Nitsch supported Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai at the MHEC building in Baltimore hosting a delegation from the U.S. Department of State and discussing the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Office of English Language Programs. English language program administrators from several countries are currently visiting the U.S. for purposes of professional training and exchange. Delegates met with Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai on their first full day of programming to hear his perspectives on higher education and English language study in Maryland and the U.S.

39. On November 17, Director of International Affairs Nitsch attended a networking reception hosted by WTCI designed to connect the Baltimore international education community with higher education English language program leaders from 12 different countries. The group visited Baltimore through The English Access Program, an exchange program designed to build U.S. English education expertise globally. The reception was a great opportunity for anyone interested in the future of global education to make both local and international connections.

40. On November 21, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, and Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Alleyne attended the forum entitled Education, Security, and Development in the Age of Renewed Hope, an International Education Week presentation by the Office of Global Partnerships (OGP) at Morgan State University (MSU). The program was organized and moderated by Professor Hakeem Tijani, Executive Director of the OGP - Africa who also serves as Commissioner on the Governor's Commission on African American Affairs. Deputy Secretary Lore made brief remarks on behalf of the OSOS. Director Nitsch served on the panel and presented on the roles and responsibilities of the OSOS International Division. Other members of the panel included representatives of The Renewed Hope

USA, as well as staff and faculty of MSU. Director Nitsch and Deputy Director Dr. Alleyne joined Professor Tijani and other panelists for lunch.

41. On December 2, Director of International Affairs Nitsch attended a virtual information session for those applying for the U.S. - Japan Impact Grant. The information session was hosted by Sister Cities International and the U.S. - Japan Foundation. Director Nitsch was joined by a representative from Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS) who will be submitting the grant application with the support of the Baltimore - Kawasaki Sister City Committee (BKSCC), the Kawasaki City Government, and the OSOS. Director Nitsch will continue to work with BCPS and BKSCC to meet the application deadline of December 31.

42. Director of International Affairs Nitsch and Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Alleyne participated in the MIEC members' virtual meeting on December 19. Director Nitsch introduced Deputy Director Dr. Alleyne to the members and spoke briefly about the recent request for partnership from the Université de Technologie de Compiègne (UTC) in Hauts-de-France. Discussion centered around the OSOS' support of the MIEC and how important it will be to continue the partnership in the coming year. Director Nitsch provided a general review of the work of the International Division in the OSOS and how the Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs, the Maryland Sister States Program, and connections to the diplomatic community in Maryland can benefit the mission of the MIEC. The MIEC now has 17 member institutions across the state; a great one-stop shop for the OSOS to partner with the higher education system around Maryland.

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

1. In March, Secretary of State Susan Lee joined Lt. Governor Aruna Miller in the Governor's Reception Room to host ASSE International High School Exchange students from France, Germany, Greece, Georgia, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Uzbekistan, Spain, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Ukraine, Italy, and Azerbaijan and their host families (who host the students on their own dime). Lt. Governor Miller and Secretary of State Lee welcomed questions from the students regarding her role as a public servant, especially in possible hardships and discrimination she may have faced because of her ethnicity and gender.

2. On June 11, Lt. Governor Miller visited the Baltimore International Academy (BIA) to learn more about the language immersion programs that are offered to its students. After meeting with school administrators and leadership, the Lt. Governor had the opportunity to witness how the language immersion classes are run. Visiting classrooms with BIA leadership, Lt. Governor Miller observed dedicated teachers working with students who were learning Arabic, French, Chinese, Spanish, or Russian. This charter school is a staple in its Baltimore community and provides a unique opportunity for residents to have their children become bilingual and reap the cognitive, social, and academic benefits of language immersion programs. The Lt. Governor presented the Founder and CEO, Dr. Freeman Nepay with a Governor's citation to recognize the successes of the Baltimore International Academy and the impact that the school has had on its community in the past 18 years.

Maryland Higher Education Commission

1. As part of Governor Moore's Asia Trade Mission, two higher education-related MOUs were signed. In Korea, Secretary of State Lee and her staff attended the signing ceremony of an MOU between University of Maryland, Baltimore Provost Roger Ward and the President of Chosun University, which was also supported by Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai.

In Japan, Secretary of State Susan Lee attended the MOU signing ceremony between Salisbury University President Carolyn Lepre with her counterpart Japan Study Abroad Foundation.

2. Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai gave the keynote address during the Maryland International Education Consortium (MIEC) event at Coppin State University on April 25. Assistant Director of International Affairs Rosanna Mantova also participated. This event commemorated Maryland International Education Day and highlighted the significance of global educational exchanges within Maryland's higher education system. During the event, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Sanjay Rai and Assistant Director Mantova presented the MIEC President Rachel Scholten the official proclamation for Maryland International Education Day, designated for April 26.

3. Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai leveraged his established relationships and strong reputation within Maryland's institutions of higher learning to successfully facilitate a partnership between the University of Maryland, Baltimore and Chosun University in Gwangju, South Korea. This agreement had previously faced significant obstacles that were overcome through Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai's direct involvement and support. The four MOUs supported the priorities of Governor Moore in the areas of life sciences, quantum, computer science, and business

4. On April 28, to help celebrate Vaisakhi, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai gave remarks at an event hosted by the Governor's Office of South Asian American Affairs. He presented background on the festival, which marks the beginning of the new year and harvest season, and reminded attendees of the strength and beauty in unity and diverse communities coming together with shared values. The celebration took place at Carroll Community College. Also attending were Secretary of State Lee, Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, and Executive Aide Lucas Lin.

5. On May 20, Director of Communications Kristin Clarkson attended a meeting with Secretary of State Lee and representatives from the Aruban Parliament.

6. On September 29, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) was honored to attend Excelencia's invitational Fall Convening. This prestigious event served as a platform for the Celebración de Excelencia and the highly anticipated national announcement of the Seal of Excelencia. This significant certification is awarded to colleges and universities demonstrating an exceptional commitment to Latino student success.

The MHEC's representative actively participated in a series of engaging and insightful sessions throughout the convening. These sessions were strategically designed to delve into critical strategies aimed at fostering student success across all demographics and, more specifically, to cultivate diverse talent essential for America's future workforce and civic leadership. Discussions focused on innovative approaches to academic support, financial aid access, and culturally responsive learning environments, all geared towards

ensuring that a broader range of students can achieve their educational and career aspirations. The event provided valuable opportunities for networking and collaboration with other leaders in higher education, further enhancing the MHEC's ability to advocate for and implement best practices within Maryland's educational landscape.

7. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #55.

8. On November 12, the MHEC staff met with an international cohort of educational administrators to discuss the subject of Higher Ed Policy for English Language Programs. The meeting involved 13 EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Program Administrators from global higher education settings. The program was sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and implemented locally by the World Trade Center Institute (WTCI), continuing a historical relationship between the MHEC and WTCI's exchange programs. The primary purpose of the session was for the visiting cohort to learn about the MHEC's mandate, focusing on two key policy areas: first, Student Success Policies, specifically the practices the MHEC employs to ensure student success within Maryland's higher education system; and second, the ESOL Teacher Pipeline, detailing the strategies and initiatives Maryland is implementing to address the shortfall of trained and credentialed ESOL teachers to work with English Language Learners.

9. See Goal 2, MHEC, Item #5.

10. On November 10, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai and Chief of Staff Majors met with Minister Counselor SHEN Xuesong of the PRC Embassy's Education Office to discuss higher education collaboration between China and Maryland. The meeting was convened with two primary objectives: first, to provide the Maryland team with an overview of recent developments and engagements in China's higher education sector; and second, to discuss and explore potential ideas and mechanisms for strengthening higher education cooperation and exchanges between institutions in China and Maryland. Attendees from the PRC Embassy include Minister Counselor SHEN Xuesong (Principal), Counselor ZHANG Yun, and Third Secretary SHU Dangyi. The OSOS was represented by Director of International Affairs Mary E. (Mendy) Nitsch and Deputy Director of International Dr. Akilah Alleyene. Director Nitsch to distribute a list of Maryland universities interested in STEM exchanges). The meeting concluded with a mutual understanding of the immense potential for beneficial partnerships, with both sides expressing commitment to taking tangible steps toward realizing stronger academic and research ties soon.

11. See Goal 3, MHEC, Item #8.

Strategic Goal 6:

Promote and Support the International Efforts of Maryland's Agricultural and Seafood Sectors

Office of the Secretary of State

1. On January 30, Governor Wes Moore, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Secretary of State Susan Lee, and other Maryland Cabinet Secretaries and state government representatives attended the Maryland Reception at the residence of Japanese Ambassador Shigeo Yamada. The event celebrated the strong Maryland-Japan partnership, highlighting Kanagawa as one of Maryland's oldest Sister States. It also provided a platform to showcase the seafood of both Maryland and Japan.

In addition, Maryland companies including TCOM, Red Six, Juxtopia, PsyTech VR, and REPROCELL, were represented at booths demonstrating the state's innovation and industry ties with Japan.

Distinguished guests included Japan's Economic Minister to the U.S., Kosei Nomura, Congresswoman Sarah Elfreth, Congresswoman April McClain Delaney, and Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich.

2. On June 6, Director of International Affairs Mary E. (Mendy) Nitsch attended a meeting between the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and a Vietnamese Agricultural Business Delegation in Annapolis, where new business connections were established between Maryland agriculture and seafood companies and Vietnamese importers from matching market sectors. The purpose of the meeting was to increase Maryland agriculture and seafood exports to Vietnam through fostering business and government connections. The Vietnamese Embassy requested that the MDA host the delegation. The MDA invited Maryland agriculture and seafood companies capable of supplying the Vietnamese delegation's desired products and encouraged the agriculture trade organizations to consider signing Memoranda of Understanding.

This B2B event was a direct result of a meeting between the Vice President of the National Assembly, Vice President Nguyen Thi Thanh, Governor Moore, and Lt. Governor Miller on Wednesday, March 12, in Annapolis. Results of the meeting include the signing of two MOUs, one in the grain sector and one in the soybean sector. A Maryland company also signed a contract to sell poultry products to Vietnam. Maryland representatives in attendance included: Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Steve Connelly, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Cassie Shirk, Chief of Marketing Powell, Director Slade, Agricultural Programs Manager Joseph Milone, Commerce Senior Regional Manager Mia Romeo, Programs Manager of the Department of Natural Resources Dan Rider.

3. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #38.

4. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #45.

5. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #55.

6. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #57.

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

1. On January 30, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller attended and delivered remarks at Japan - Maryland Night, co-hosted with Japanese Ambassador Shigeo Yamada and Maryland officials. The event celebrated the longstanding relationship between Japan and Maryland. During the evening, she met with Japanese agricultural and seafood businesses interested in expanding to Maryland.
2. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #57.

Maryland Department of Agriculture

1. On January 30, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) participated in Japan - Maryland Night at the Japanese Embassy. This event featured Maryland-sourced products, including blue catfish, oysters, and Maryland whiskey. In addition, several Maryland seafood and agriculture companies doing business in Japan were in attendance.
2. In February, the MDA International Marketing managed pavilion at Gulfood in Dubai. The SUSTA pavilion featured 20 companies, including three from Maryland. Gulfood is one of the largest food trade shows in the world.
3. Following Secretary of Agriculture Kevin Atticks' trade mission to the Philippines in 2024, the MDA has been working with buyers from grocery stores and food manufacturers by connecting them with Maryland agriculture and seafood producers. Products of interest have included vegetables, frozen oysters, blue catfish, chicken, and beef.
4. On February 3, the MDA met with representatives of the standardbred horse industry in Maryland to discuss potential livestock genetics proposals for the USDA RAPP Grant. This grant is aimed at developing new markets in foreign countries. This work is ongoing.
5. On February 11, the MDA representatives attended the 2025 U.S. Livestock Genetics Export annual meeting in Guadalajara, Mexico. This meeting was an opportunity to identify federal funding sources to support foreign market development, collaborate with partners on joint projects, learn about opportunities in foreign markets, and learn about livestock genetics opportunities in Mexico.
6. During February 17 to 21, the MDA staff managed the Southern U.S. Trade Association (SUSTA) pavilion of 20 southern U.S. food companies at Gulfood in Dubai, U.A.E. This expo is the world's largest food and beverage tradeshow and offered opportunities for companies to connect with buyers from throughout the region. Export sales are anticipated from this trade show.
7. On March 12, Secretary of Agriculture Atticks and Deputy Secretary Connelly attended a meeting hosted by the Office of the Secretary of State (OSOS) for a delegation from Vietnam, including the country's Vice President and Ambassador to the U.S. In this meeting, Vice President Madam Nguyen stated that Vietnam is interested in increasing agricultural trade and educational exchange between Maryland and Vietnam. In

2025, the MDA has several projects planned through SUSTA to increase Maryland agriculture exports to Vietnam.

8. On March 12, the MDA sponsored and attended the WTCI International Business Leadership Awards. More than 300 business leaders, including the Governor of Maryland and over 70 company Presidents and CEOs, attended this event.

9. In March, the MDA and the State of Virginia began working on a project to increase seafood exports to China and Hong Kong. This project will feature an inbound delegation of buyers from China and Hong Kong to visit Maryland and Virginia seafood companies in October 2025.

10. On April 8, Secretary of Agriculture Atticks attended a reception at the Irish Embassy for Minister Martin Heydon, Minister of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine. Discussions on agricultural trade between Secretary of Agriculture Atticks and Minister Heydon continued from their previous meeting in 2024.

11. During April 8 to 9, Deputy Secretary Connelly and International Marketing Staff attended the Southern U.S. Trade Association's Spring Meeting. Member states determined project plans and partners for 2025 and 2026 at this meeting. In addition, strategies for company recruitment and executing international activities were discussed.

12. On June 6, the MDA hosted a delegation of government officials and importers from Vietnam. During the meeting, Maryland seafood and agriculture companies had the opportunity to network with Vietnamese importers from matching industry sectors. Additionally, a poultry aggregator located in Maryland and a Vietnamese importer signed a sales contract at the meeting, and the Vietnamese government, the Maryland Grain Producers Association, and the Maryland Soybean Board signed an MOU to facilitate an increase in trade. Initial follow-up from the meeting has shown promising leads between the companies in attendance, with one Maryland produce distributor working on their first shipment of apples to Vietnam.

13. From June 9 to 12, Secretary of Agriculture Atticks participated in the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service agribusiness trade mission to Lima, Peru. Peru is the third-largest market for U.S. agricultural exports in South America. In 2023, the United States was Peru's second-largest agricultural supplier with a 13 percent market share. While on the mission, Secretary of Agriculture Atticks met with industry representatives, attended market briefings by the USDA Agricultural Trade Office, and participated in market tours to identify opportunities. Two product sectors identified for potential growth are distilled spirits and livestock genetics. Follow-up from this mission is ongoing.

14. On June 20, the MDA facilitated a meeting and tour of a halal poultry operation for a Malaysian delegation of government officials and representatives from the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI). The visit included a tour of the halal poultry processing facility, as well as discussions on technology and international trade.

15. On June 25, Matt Scales, Director of Seafood Marketing, and Director of International Marketing Slade attended the 25th Evening of Food & Agriculture reception, hosted by the Japanese Embassy. This event provided networking opportunities, and new connections were formed with Embassy staff and Japanese companies.

16. From July 7 to 9, the MDA hosted a delegation of U.K. and Australian dairy genetics buyers who toured Maryland herds at Maple Dell Farm, Vales-Pride Farm, Trans Ova Genetics, and Kueffner Holsteins and Jerseys. This inbound mission was a joint project between the MDA and the U.S. Ayrshire Breeders

Association and was funded through the United States Livestock Genetics Export, Inc. Sales of Maryland dairy genetics are anticipated.

17. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #38.

18. From August 23 to 28, the MDA exhibited at Euro Paint in Kreuth, Germany. This event is the largest American Paint Horse show outside of the United States. At the show, the MDA promoted Maryland's Paint Horse genetics, along with breeders from the state. Additionally, the delegation hosted a seminar on the process and benefits of importing equine genetics from Maryland. Many of the show participants were already familiar with Paint Horses from Maryland, and the MDA is optimistic that this exposure will lead to an increase in equine genetics exports to Europe. This promotion was in partnership with the United States Livestock Genetics Export, Inc.

19. From September 10 to 12, the MDA launched a two-year promotion of blue catfish in Singapore in partnership with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Southern United States Trade Association. The launch of the promotion included new blue catfish marketing materials and signage, as well as exhibiting at Seafood Expo Asia and a special promotion at Jurong Fishery Port. During these promotions, the MDA collaborated with chefs to sample blue catfish and established connections with Southeast Asian seafood importers. At the expo, the MDA attracted 500 visitors to the blue catfish booth and identified over a dozen promising leads for export sales. The promotion at the Jurong Fishery Port reached 350 seafood traders, including wholesalers, retailers, and foodservice buyers. The first exports of blue catfish to the region are forthcoming.

20. From October 15 to 17, the MDA hosted a delegation of 11 seafood buyers from China and Hong Kong in Maryland. This project was in partnership with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Southern United States Trade Association. During the trade mission, the seafood buyers visited six Maryland seafood producers, which offered a range of products, including blue catfish, oysters, eel, and scallops. The trade mission not only facilitated potential business deals but also promoted Maryland's seafood industry and the diversity of its products, enhancing the state's reputation in the global market. The participating companies are currently working on follow-up from the mission, and seafood exports are anticipated because of this activity.

21. In November, the MDA, along with project partners, launched the new Chesapeake Bay Blue Catfish website in Singapore. This new site, available in both English and Chinese, features information, recipes, sources, and more on blue catfish.

22. On November 21, the MDA presented to the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce on export resources available to Maryland agriculture companies. This presentation was in partnership with MAPIT, which includes the Maryland Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the University of Maryland.

23. The MDA staff hosted a meeting with representatives from the National Chung Hsing University on December 3. In this meeting, the delegation shared insights into the Taiwanese dairy industry and the education system as they relate to agricultural pathways. Discussions also covered opportunities for U.S. dry milk exports and the desire to integrate conservation practices into Taiwanese agricultural systems, based on U.S. advancements in this area.

24. On December 9 and 10, the MDA representatives attended the SUSTA Winter meeting in Durham, North Carolina. Attendees for this meeting included state departments of agriculture from the Southern region, SUSTA staff, and foreign in-country marketing consultants. Discussions and presentations at the meeting covered a review of past export activity performance, new opportunities in global markets, and collaboration and plans for 2026 export activities. At this conference, the MDA received the 2024 SUSTA Global Event Award for having the highest number of companies participating in global activities in 2024.

Maryland Department of Commerce

1. See Goal 6, OSOS, Item #1.
2. See Goal 2, OSOS, Item #57.

Strategic Goal 7:

Uphold and Promote Democratic Values and Civic Participation on a Geopolitical Level through Strategic Alliances and Other Appropriate Engagements

Office of the Secretary of State

1. On January 4, Secretary of State Susan Lee along with Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, Office of Administration Hearings (OAH) Chief Judge Chung Pak, State Senator Clarence Lam, Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich, and People's Republic of China Ambassador Xie Feng provided remarks at the Asian American New Year Gala sponsored by the Chinese American, Korean American, South Asian, and Southeast American community organizations and attended by over 800. They were also joined by top AAPI community leaders, GOCI Commission members, Strathmore Performing Arts Center board members, and other local government officials.
2. On January 7, Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Michael Lore, Senior Advisor Joseph Gebhardt, and Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations Alexandria Liu met with U.S. Ambassador (retired) Francis Ricciardone and CEO of NAFSA Fanta Aw to discuss their interest in bridging their international expertise with opportunities in Maryland. Next steps include introducing Ms. Aw, who runs an organization with 4,000 participating educational institutions in 150 countries, with Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai.
3. On January 9, Deputy Secretary Lore and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova welcomed a delegation from the Palestinian Youth Leaders for Democracy Project (PYLD) supported through a US State Department grant. The visit provided the delegation with a unique opportunity to gain insight into the workings of state and local governments from a civics perspective. Deputy Secretary Lore led a tour of the historic Maryland State House and shared its rich history. The delegation also observed a live session of the Maryland General Assembly, offering them a closer look at Maryland's legislative process. Additionally, they met with Paul Monteiro, Secretary of Service & Civic Innovation.
4. On January 11, Deputy Secretary Lore joined an event with Sister Cities International at the German Ambassador's residence. He spoke with the Ukrainian ambassador as well as the ambassador from Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was also invited to join the Sister Cities trip to Japan in September.
5. On January 13, Secretary of State Lee and staff joined Governor Moore and Lt. Governor Miller in the GRR to recognize Korean American Day, which was well-received by the leaders of Maryland's Korean American community. Joining Governor Moore, Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, and Secretary of State Lee, were Republic of Korea Ambassador Hyundong Cho, Maryland OAH Chief Judge Chung Pak, House Majority Leader Delegate David Moon, Senator Clarence Lam, Cheverly Vice Mayor Amy Chung Fry, GOCI Director Rev. Larry Walker, and top Korean American leaders and Korean War veterans. Governor Moore was presented the Plaque of Peace by Ambassador Cho and the Korean War 60th Anniversary

Commemoration Medal by the Korean War Veterans. Ambassador Cho also presented Second Gentleman David Miller with the Ambassador of Peace Medal received on behalf of his late father U.S. Navy Korean War veteran Jacques Miller. Our Office drafted the Governor's briefing document and worked with Deputy Speechwriter Cynthia Gross for the Governor's speech. In attendance for the OSOS were Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Special Assistant Liu, Executive Assistant Cathy Bauer, and Executive Aide Naomi Kim.

6. On January 14, Special Assistant Liu joined Lt. Governor Miller in a meeting with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Verma and Ambassador Hachigian at the U.S. Department of State. Maryland's prominence in subnational diplomacy was recognized, and strategies to deepen subnational engagement were discussed. Our Office's main takeaway is that our strategies and ideas about subnational diplomacy are in line with those of the top leaders of the U.S. State Department.

7. On January 15, Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Lore, and Special Assistant Liu attended the Strategic Subnational Diplomacy Symposium hosted by Meridian Center and Truman Center where Lt. Governor Miller delivered remarks on Maryland's subnational engagement before an audience of foreign policy experts, foreign service officers, and international subnational leaders. The speech was well received, and our Office networked with attendees such as the Mayor of Bordeaux, France, the head of intergovernmental affairs for the Embassy of Canada, the attaché of multilateral affairs of the Government of Quebec, and the director of policy for the Aichi, Japan government.

8. On January 17, Deputy Secretary Lore met with Taiwan's Deputy Representative Andrea Yi-Shan Yang for a lunch meeting in Annapolis. The introductory meeting was short and was a chance to highlight his experiences in Taiwan over the summer and continue engagement to attract more investment to Maryland.

9. On January 17, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Special Assistant Liu, and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova met with Mr. Frédéric Blanc from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Thibaut Lespagnol from the French Embassy to discuss Maryland's subnational diplomacy efforts. The discussion highlighted initiatives such as the OSOS International Division's engagement with the diplomatic community in Washington, DC, and the Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs.

Mr. Blanc shared insights into France's National Commission for Decentralized Cooperation, a governmental body responsible for fostering and overseeing partnerships between local and regional authorities in France and their international counterparts. The meeting also provided an opportunity for Mr. Blanc to learn more about the Sister State relationship between Maryland and Hauts-de-France, as well as current initiatives in higher education, business, and the equine industry.

10. On January 24, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova attended the 2025 Chinese New Year Reception at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Washington, DC. Attendees included representatives from the U.S. Department of State, Chinese officials, members of the Chinese-American community from D.C. and Maryland, and others. The reception celebrated the Chinese Lunar New Year of the Wood Snake and featured the debut of the pandas recently welcomed to the Smithsonian Zoo. Ambassador Xie Feng delivered remarks emphasizing the importance of strengthening the U.S. - China relationship.

11. In February, Deputy Secretary Lore joined the Sister Cities International Inauguration event at the German Ambassador's residence. Deputy Secretary Lore spoke with the Ambassadors of Ukraine as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina and was invited to join the Sister Cities International's trip to Japan in September.

12. In February, Secretary of State Lee and Executive Assistant Bauer attended a welcoming reception for Commissioner Jack Chao of Taipei City, Taiwan. Topics of discussion included business opportunities that could benefit both Maryland and Taiwan as well as Secretary of State Lee's potential attendance and speaking role in the 2025 Smart City Summit and Expo in March.

13. In February, Deputy Secretary Lore met with the Azerbaijani Ambassador where they discussed potential religious tolerance and multiculturalism initiatives and trade opportunities including for cybersecurity. This meeting was facilitated by Maryland - Türkiye Sister State Committee Member Gunay Evinch who encouraged further engagement.

14. On February 21, Deputy Secretary Lore gave remarks at the 107th Estonian Independence celebration at the Embassy of Estonia highlighting the strong bonds from the Sister State relationship as well as the SPP. Ambassador Prikk was very appreciative and noted the MD National Guard was on their way to Estonia at the same time to celebrate. Also in attendance for the OSOS was Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova.

15. In February, Special Assistant Liu delivered remarks on behalf of the State of Maryland to a U.S. State Department-led delegation of culinary-industry focused investors from China at the Harvard Club in New York. Special Assistant Liu connected Maryland-based Atlas Restaurant Group with suppliers in the delegation and connected with former American Chambers of Commerce (AMCHAM) and U.S. Embassy - Beijing officials in attendance. She also discussed Baltimore's Chinatown with the Director of New York China Town.

16. On March 3, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, and Legislative Advisor Anne Hoyer had a meeting with Max Bouchet of the Truman Center, who just completed a report on Subnational Diplomacy, about opportunities to engage with more subnational diplomatic engagements around the world. Max indicated that Maryland is a leader of subnational diplomacy, and he would make sure we were included and considered with opportunities as he becomes aware of them.

17. On March 5, Deputy Secretary Lore met with the Vice President of Liberia, the Honorable Jeremiah Koung, in Laurel with the Liberian Community Association in the DMV.

18. Deputy Secretary Lore presented a Governor's Proclamation to the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina at their Embassy to commemorate their Independence Day on March 1.

19. Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova attended the National Day of Bulgaria on March 3. Other attendees include U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Sonata Coulter, U.S. Representative Joe Wilson of South Carolina, military service members, aerospace (including Lockheed Martin, which last month delivered their first F-16 to Bulgaria), and other international stakeholders. Assistant Director Mantova met with Ambassador Bulgaria to the U.S. Ambassador Georgi Panayotov, where they spoke both in English

and Italian, and discussed Maryland's subnational engagements. The Bulgarian Embassy will remain in contact with Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova to learn more about Maryland's efforts in international affairs.

20. On March 16, Deputy Secretary Lore and Director of International Affairs Nitsch attended the United Maryland Muslim Council (UMMC) Interfaith Iftar Dinner in Ellicott City. They met with leadership and members of UMMC, as well as community leaders and elected officials from the federal, state, and local levels. The program included the presentations of citations and proclamations and remarks about the significance of Ramadan/Iftar and the importance of being inclusive of all faiths. The program was followed by a traditional Iftar meal.

21. Deputy Secretary Lore joined Lt. Governor Miller at the Egyptian Embassy on April 14 for an event entitled "Stars in the Sky - An Art Exhibition Featuring the Works of Renowned Egyptian Caricature Artist Amr Fahmy."

22. In May, Secretary of State Lee, Executive Assistant Bauer, and Executive Aide Lucas Lin attended the Silk Road Tours in Gansu Province event at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China and met with Governor Ren Zhenhe of Gansu Province.

23. On May 22, Director of International Affairs Nitsch attended the ASEAN Spouses' Circle Asian Cultural Heritage Celebration and Reception to promote Maryland's international outreach to Embassy officials and influential groups.

24. Secretary of State Lee attended the Annual Dragon Boat Festival hosted by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office on May 31. In attendance was Deputy Representative Johnson Chiang of the Embassy of Taiwan as well as other Embassy officials, Executive Aide Lin, Senator Lam, and Chief OAH Judge Chung Pak, and leaders of the Taiwanese community in Maryland.

25. In June, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova had two meetings with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Exchange Council. The OSOS met with Chief Operating Officer Emir Nurkic Kacapor, Adnan Hadrovic, and Andrea Pozderac, Research Analyst, from the Institute for Development Impact / Maryland - Bosnia and Herzegovina Exchange Council in Annapolis. The purpose of the meeting was for the Institute for Development Impact / Maryland - Bosnia and Herzegovina Exchange Council to provide updates and exchange perspectives on ongoing and upcoming initiatives related to the U.S.-Bosnia and Herzegovina and Maryland-Bosnia and Herzegovina cooperation, including education partnerships, civil-military engagement, commemorative events, and joint strategic planning. The meeting explored future activities, stakeholder engagement in Maryland, and support for MBHEC's sustainability and fundraising efforts. The delegation requested the Governor provide video remarks commemorating the 30th anniversary of the massacre of Srebrenica.

26. On June 7, Secretary of State Lee attended the Ambassador of Japan's BBQ hosted by Ambassador of Japan to the U.S. Shigeo Yamada at the Ambassador's Residence. Also in attendance were Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Assistant Bauer, Executive Aide Lin, Senior Regional Manager of East Asia at the Department of Commerce Hui-Min Tzeng, and five of the OSOS interns.

27. On June 10, Deputy Secretary Lore represented the OSOS at the Charles County-Matola (a municipality in Maputo, Mozambique) Sister City Partnership Agreement Ceremony in Charles County.
28. In June, Executive Assistant Bauer presented Governor's Proclamations at the Korean War Remembrance Event hosted by the Organization of Korean American Women. Also in attendance were Defense Cooperation Attache Col. Youngsun Kim and Patriots & Veterans Attache Gilhyun Lee from the Embassy of Korea. Executive Assistant Bauer touched base with Col. Kim on the idea presented by KAI to send their Black Eagles flight demonstration squadron to Maryland. Special Assistant Liu is working with MMD, the Embassy, and KAI to explore the feasibility of including KAI's offer to send one of their jets to perform in an aerial show in Maryland as part of a Sail250 air demonstration next summer in Baltimore.
29. On June 18, Deputy Secretary Lore attended an event with a Korean delegation hosted by the City of Annapolis honoring St. John and Annapolis' relationship with the Korean city of Chuncheon on June 18. Deputy Secretary Lore provided the Korean delegation with a tour of the State House, and joined them for lunch and a dinner at the home of the President of St. John's College.
30. On June 25, Secretary of State Lee and Director of International Affairs Nitsch attended the farewell reception for Minister Nomura at the Japanese Ambassador's Residence.
31. Deputy Secretary Lore and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova attended the 30th Anniversary Commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide at the Kennedy Caucus room in the Russell Senate Office Building on June 27.
32. On June 30, Special Assistant Liu coordinated a meeting with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and the Maryland Military Department and Sail250 Festival and Airshow organizers to discuss inviting the KAI aircraft/Black Eagles aerial team to perform aerial demonstrations at Sail250 next summer. This would serve as an anchor for an inbound Korean trade delegation.
33. Deputy Secretary Lore met with President of Liberia Joseph Nyuma Boakai at a meeting with local diaspora as a part of the President's working visit to the U.S. on July 10.
34. Deputy Secretary Lore attended a reception at the Residence of the Irish Ambassador on July 10 for diplomats returning to Ireland, where he discussed the Maryland - Ireland Trade Commission work with economic and cultural representatives of Ireland.
35. Deputy Secretary Lore and Director of International Affairs Nitsch hosted Chairman Marko Mihkelson and three other members of the Foreign Affairs Committee from the Parliament of Estonia in Annapolis on July 15. Also in attendance were representatives from Commerce.
36. Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Aide Lin, and Governor's Summer Internship Program (GSIP) Intern Megane Mbapte Tchinda met with Ambassador Bili and Consul General Monvoisin at the French National Holiday reception at the Ambassador's Residence on July 14. Also in attendance were Secretary of the Environment McIlwain and Chairman of the Maryland Sister States, Inc. Hauts-de-France Committee Patrick Capurro.

37. On July 17, Deputy Secretary Lore, Special Assistant Liu, Executive Aide Natalie Kim, Executive Aide Naomi Kim, GSIP Intern Mbapte Tchinda joined the virtual launch of the cutting-edge, first-of-its-kind, “Global Engagement, Local Benefits: A Strategic Subnational Diplomacy Toolkit for City, State, and Local Leaders” toolkit developed by foreign policy think tanks Meridian Center and the Truman Center, with input from 40 subnational leaders in 9 countries, including Lt. Governor Miller and the Office of the Secretary of State. President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and Mayor of Oklahoma City David Holt provided opening remarks. Maryland’s international engagement, including the Governor’s Inaugural Trade Mission to Asia, Maryland’s “cross-agency collaboration” approach to international affairs, and the infrastructure of the Subcabinet for International Affairs, were prominently featured in the toolkit as best practices. The document will be provided to the members of the Subcabinet for International Affairs

38. Deputy Secretary Lore attended the Liberian Community Association Gala on July 26. He spoke with Prince George’s County Councilwoman Wala Blegay and Ambassador of the Republic of Liberia Al-Hassen Conteh about strengthening partnerships between Maryland and Liberia. The Ambassador was receptive to potential MOU discussions with our Office, and a potential Sister State relationship with Maryland.

39. On July 30, Deputy Secretary Lore and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova hosted representatives from the Marshall Legacy Institute who provided a demonstration of landmine detection K9s. MLI works in partnership with Bosnia, and the demonstration was a result of collaborative civilian activities arising from our Maryland - Bosnia and Herzegovina Exchange Council SPP.

40. Secretary of State Lee attended the Taiwanese Heritage Night at Nationals Park at the invitation of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) on August 30. Also in attendance were Taiwan Representative to the United States Yui, TECRO Consular Division Director Joe Chou, TECRO Consular Division Deputy Director Edward Chen, Delegate Mike Rogers, Marylander Dr. Eugenia Henry, and Executive Aide Lin.

41. Secretary of State Lee gave remarks at the TECRO Double Ten Performance Celebration on September 3. Also in attendance were TECRO Minister Yang, Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) elder Dr. Wong, Marylander Dr. Eugenia Henry, and Executive Aide Lin.

42. On September 9, Secretary of State Lee convened a meeting with 11 chairs and committee members of the nonprofit Sister States of Maryland, Inc. (SSMD), including former State Senator Michael Bowen Mitchell, SSMD President Dr. Jean Bailey, and SSMD Vice Chair Ardath Cade. The chairs and committee members in attendance represented the Anhui, Cross-River State, Estonia, Korea, KwaZulu-Natal, Leningrad (a former Sister State), Liberia, Ondo State, and Piura Sister State committees. Topics of discussion included the activities of SSMD, community interest in continuing Sister State engagement with the respective regions, the ongoing the OSOS assessment of Maryland’s Sister State agreements, and expectations from the OSOS for future operating relations with SSMD. Also in attendance were Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, and Executive Aide Lin.

43. On September 10, Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, and Executive Assistant Lin attended the 24th Annual Soirée Suisse at the Swiss Residence in Washington, DC. Secretary of State Lee and her team met with Swiss Ambassador Dr. Ralf Heckner and Madam Dr. Ilaria Macconi

Heckner. Centered on the theme “A Swiss Culinary Journey,” the evening highlighted Switzerland’s past, present, and future contributions to food and culinary innovation. The program featured welcome remarks by Ambassador Heckner, the 2025 Embassy of Switzerland Gallatin Award Ceremony, and a dinner buffet that showcased the diversity of Swiss cuisine.

44. Secretary of State Lee gave remarks and presented a Governor’s Proclamation at the 47th Annual Maryland Korea Festival at Howard High School on September 13. Secretary of State Lee greeted representatives from the Jeollanam-do USA Office of Tourism from Los Angeles, with whom the OSOS helped establish a connection and booth at the event. Also in attendance were Former First Lady Yumi Hogan, Chief Administrative Law Judge Chung Pak, Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) Asian Pacific Affairs Chair Dr. Yang Yu, GOCI Commissioner Alanna Lee, Executive Aide Lin, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, and OSOS Intern Justin Carlson.

45. Deputy Secretary Lore provided remarks at the Baltimore Ukrainian Festival organized by the Baltimore-Odesa Sister Cities Committee on September 27. His remarks noted the longstanding Sister City relationship between Baltimore and Odessa and were made in the presence of Mayor of Odessa Gennadiy Leonidovich Trukhanov.

46. Deputy Secretary Lore attended an event organized by the Liberia diaspora in Maryland on September

28. Deputy Secretary Lore presented a draft MOU proposing a Sister State relationship between Maryland and the country of Liberia to Ambassador of Liberia Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh in the presence of President of Liberia Joseph Boakai. Also in attendance were Prince George’s County Councilmember Wala Blegay and GOCI Chief of Staff Greg Yancy.

47. Secretary of State Lee provided remarks at the 76th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China on September 28 hosted by the Coordination Council of Chinese American Associations (CCCCAA). Also in attendance were Ambassador of the PRC to the United States Xie Feng, PRC Embassy Minister Qiu Wenxing, Delegate Lily Qi, Montgomery County Executive Mark Elrich, Chief OAH Judge Pak, GOCI APAA Chair Dr. Yang Yu, and GOCI Commissioner Ping Lu.

48. Secretary of State Lee, Deputy Secretary Lore, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Aide Lin, and attended the African Heritage Month Proclamation Ceremony in the Governor’s Reception Room on September 29 in support of African Heritage month and the Governor’s Commission on African Affairs.

49. Secretary of State Lee attended the 76th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China at the Embassy of the PRC on September 29. Ambassador Xie offered a holiday card and mooncakes to Governor Moore. Also in attendance were DC Deputy Secretary of State Alma R. Candelaria, GOCI APAA Chair Dr. Yang Yu, foreign officials, Executive Aide Lin, and OSOS Intern Carlson.

50. Secretary of State Lee, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, and OSOS Interns Carlson and Isaac Hawkins attended the German Day of Unity Celebration at the German Ambassador’s Residence on September 30. Secretary of State Lee spoke with Ambassador of Germany Jens Hanefeld about Maryland-German relations, hosting German Parliamentarian Metin Hakverdi, and a potential Sister State relationship with a state in Germany.

51. At the request of the Governor's Scheduling Team, Secretary of State Lee met with Member of the German Parliament and Coordinator of Transatlantic Cooperation for the German Federal Foreign Office Metin Hakverdi on October 3. Topics of discussion included: geopolitical issues, opportunities for Maryland and German cooperation including a potential soccer match, the Subcabinet for International Affairs and its Strategic Plan, and a potential Germany - Maryland Sister State relationship with Niedersachsen and/or a Baltimore Sister City relationship with Hamburg. Also in attendance were the Embassy of Germany Second Secretary for Political Development Ruben Schwarz, Chief of Staff to Metin Hakverdi Dr. Max Kanzow, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Executive Aide Lin, and OSOS Intern Isaac Hawkins.

52. Secretary of State Lee presented a Governor's Citation at the Brasier con Propósito Pink & Black Gala, a fundraising event providing specialty garments to disadvantaged women and victims of breast cancer, on October 3. Also in attendance were Executive Aide Lin, GOCI Commission on Hispanic & Latin American Community Affairs Administrative Director Gabriela Argoti-Fernandez, and Embassy of Guatemala Consul General Andrea Furlán.

53. Deputy Secretary Lore hosted Mayor from Frankston, Australia, Kris Bolam with Annapolis Mayor Gavin Buckley on October 6. The mayors signed a friendship MOU between Annapolis and Frankston, and Deputy Secretary Lore provided a tour of Annapolis including a trip to the top of the State House dome.

54. Secretary of State Lee attended the 114th National Day of Taiwan hosted by the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO), and Taiwanese Representative to the U.S. Alexander Yui at the Twin Oaks Estate on October 8. At the request of TECRO, our Office provided a Governor's Proclamation, House Resolution, and Senate Resolution to commemorate the event. Also in attendance were former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (CA-11), Secretary of State DC Kimberly Bassett, members of U.S. Congress, GOCI APAA Administrative Director Christina Poy, Deputy Secretary Lore, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Executive Aide Lin, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Aide Kim, OSOS Intern Carlson.

55. Deputy Secretary Lore met with Mayor of Annapolis Gavin Buckley to greet an Australian delegation including Member of Parliament Representative Garth Hamilton and Senator Glenn Sterle in Annapolis on October 10. They provided a tour of the city and boat show to the delegation. Deputy Secretary Lore then facilitated a meeting in the State House and provided a tour of the dome.

56. On October 12, Director of International Affairs Nitsch was co-emcee with Rianna Wan of Maryland Tourism at the fifth annual Japan Day Festival at the Harriet Tubman Cultural Center in Columbia, MD. The Festival was organized by the Maryland-Kanagawa Sister State Committee and included music and dance performances, as well as other cultural presentations and Japanese food offerings. Several hundred guests attended the family-friendly event, including County Executive Calvin Ball, Jennifer Jones, CEO of the Howard County Economic Development Authority, and Japanese Embassy staff.

57. On October 20, Deputy Secretary Lore facilitated a meeting between Vice President Decoster and the MD250 Commission Director Michele Johnson and two Service-Learning Year members of the MD250 Commission. Topics of discussion included: national and local plans surrounding the 250th anniversary celebration, and HdF interest for the national Lafayette graduate exchange competition. Also in attendance

were Embassy of France Consul General Caroline Monvoisin, Embassy of France Cultural Cooperation Attaché of Villa Albertine Lynda Fresnois, and members of the MD250 Commission planning team.

58. On October 28, in preparation for the EU Circular Economy Forum, Deputy Secretary Lore greeted the Forum attendees from the U.S., Canada, and Europe, and provided them with a State House tour. Deputy Secretary Lore introduced the attendees to Mayor Buckley at Annapolis City Hall and followed with a tour of the town.

59. Secretary of State Lee, accompanied by Senior Advisor Gebhardt and Executive Assistant Lin, attended the celebration of the 102nd Anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye, at the Türkiye Ambassador's Residence on October 29 in Washington, DC. Secretary of State Lee and Senior Advisor Gebhardt briefly spoke to the Ambassador of Türkiye Sedat Onal, extending greetings from Governor Moore to the Ambassador on this important occasion. Through Maryland - Türkiye Sister States Committee Chair Gunay Evinch, Secretary of State Lee and her team were introduced to Embassy Counselors Fatih Ozturk and Eyup Can Dervisoglu, and Embassy lobbyist Lydia Borland. Secretary of State Lee and Senior Advisor Gebhardt made it clear that Maryland wants to strengthen relations with Türkiye in the coming year and hopes to develop a closer relationship with the Izmir region. In turn, the Embassy representatives reiterated their request that Governor Moore have a meeting with Ambassador Onal. Later that day at an evening reception at the Embassy, Assistant Director for International Affairs Mantova, accompanied by Executive Aide Lin, presented a Proclamation for the 102nd Anniversary of the Republic of Türkiye to Ambassador Onal.

60. On October 31, Secretary of State Lee convened a virtual meeting to discuss Hurricane Melissa Relief with the Ambassador of Jamaica Antony Anderson, and GOCI Executive Director Rev. Lawrence Walker. It was agreed that GOCI would be the focal point for Maryland's Jamaica Hurricane Relief efforts, and Points of Contact were designated for GOCI (Ethnic Commissions Director Keith Colston) and the Jamaican Embassy (Deputy Chief of Mission Lishann Salmon). Also in attendance were Senior Advisor Gebhardt and Executive Aide Lin.

61. Deputy Secretary Lore and Senior Advisor Gebhardt participated in a virtual meeting on October 31 to discuss the possibility of Argentina playing a pre-World Cup exhibition soccer match next June at the Ravens Stadium in Baltimore. The meeting was convened by Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (MDHCC) President Marco Avila and included the Secretary of the Embassy of Argentina Carlos Múscari, Argentina Football Association in Miami Ambassador Tomás Regalado, and Maryland Sports Commission President and Chairman Terry Hasseltine. It was agreed to move forward with this project; and another meeting was tentatively planned for November 7. Also in attendance was Executive Aide Lin.

62. On November 3, Senior Advisor Gebhardt and Executive Aide Lin convened a virtual meeting to connect Director Colston and Maryland Pentecostal Minister Leoni Benjamin to better understand specific target areas requiring relief in Jamaica.

63. On November 6, Deputy Secretary Lore welcomed the Brazil naval training vessel "Brasil" in Fells Point with officials from the City and Sail Baltimore. The following day on November 7, Deputy Secretary Lore attended a naval training exercise event showcasing the vessel "Brasil" with the Ambassador of Brazil Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti. They discussed the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) attendance at COP30 in Brazil, and Maryland's interest in engaging with Rio de Janeiro State and Brazil.

64. On November 12, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Deputy Secretary Lore, Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Akilah Alleyne, and Executive Aide Lin, met with the Ambassador of Liberia Dr. Al-Hassan Conteh and Minister Counselor for Political & Diaspora Affairs Charles Allen in the Wineland Building to revise the draft Maryland - Liberia MOU. Topics of discussion included specifying the goals of Liberia, including strengthening rule of law and economic development, Liberia's participation with the MD250 commission, and the expressed desire of Liberia to continue work with the state of Maryland. Deputy Secretary Lore presented to Ambassador Conteh a replica map of historic Maryland County in Liberia from the Maryland State Archives, and Ambassador Conteh presented Liberia Presidential Pens to be sent to Secretary of State Lee and Governor Moore. Also in attendance were Executive Aide Kim and OSOS Interns Carlson and Hawkins.

65. Secretary of State Lee, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Aide Lin, and former Executive Aide Bauer attended the Korea National Day and Armed Forces Day at the Andrew Carnegie Auditorium hosted by the Embassy of South Korea on November 14. Secretary of State Lee met the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Kang Kyung-Hwa. Also in attendance were Chief OAH Judge Chung Pak, Suns Media Founder Sun Myung-Hwang, Korea Society of Maryland President AHN Suah, and Interns Carlson and Hawkins.

66. On November 18, Deputy Secretary Lore and Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Alleyne attended the Tribute to Veterans reception hosted by the Ambassador of the European Union Jovita Neliupšienė in Kalorama. The reception highlighted the efforts of transatlantic peace undertaken by the military and members of the EU and U.S. Deputy Secretary Lore introduced Adjutant General Birckhead and DVMF Secretary Rothstein to the EU Delegation Ambassador.

67. On November 19, Deputy Secretary Lore and Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Alleyne attended the 30th Anniversary of the Signing of the Dayton Accords at the Embassy of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Deputy Secretary Lore and Deputy Director Dr. Alleyne spoke with the Chairman of the Presidency Željko Komšić on Maryland-BiH relations, including the activities of MBHEC.

68. On November 19, Deputy Secretary Lore hosted a delegation led by the U.S. State Department including anti-corruption prosecutors from Moldova and Romania. Deputy Secretary Lore introduced the delegation to officials from the Office of State Prosecutors and Common Cause Maryland, and provided a tour of the State House.

69. On November 20, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, along with Christina Poy, Administrative Director of the Governor's Commission on Asian American Pacific Islander Affairs, attended the Vibrant Harmony of Indonesia: A Cultural Journey with Angklung program at the Indonesian Ambassador's Residence. The program featured performances and lessons on the Angklung, a traditional Indonesian musical instrument. The lighthearted celebration was organized by the Indonesian Ladies Association of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia Washington DC. Guests included several ambassadors and their spouses, many of whom are members of the ASEAN Spouses Circle. The program was followed by a luncheon featuring Indonesian culinary specialties.

Indonesian Ambassador Soesilo and his wife, Dr. Ir. Nining Sri Astuti, M.A., spoke fondly of Dr. Astuti's attendance at the WIHS Embassy Night last month. Director of International Affairs Nitsch also greeted

Vietnamese Ambassador Nguyen Quoc Dzung and his wife, Madame Van, as well as Singaporean Ambassador Mr. Lui Tuck Yew and his wife.

70. Senior Advisor Gebhardt, accompanied by Executive Aide Lin, spoke about the OSOS Sister States and International Affairs programs at Montgomery Sister Cities (MSC) on November 22. Senior Advisor Gebhardt provided the MSC attendees with copies of the Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs' Strategic Plan and Annual Reports as well as a sample Sister State MOU. At this meeting, MSC founder Bruce Adams described the organization's history and how Montgomery County selected its five Sister Cities. The five MSC Student Ambassadors each made a presentation on how the relationship can be improved with a Sister City they researched. The Student Ambassadors, which include our past the OSOS Intern Sherry Lin, covered Montgomery Sister Cities in China, El Salvador, Ethiopia, India, and South Korea.

71. Secretary of State Lee and Secretary of Commerce Coker attended the United Arab Emirates National Day at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium on December 2. Secretary of State Lee and Secretary of Commerce Coker met with Ambassador of the UAE Yousef Al-Otaiba and expressed their thanks to the coordination efforts provided by the Embassy. Also in attendance were Ambassador of Vietnam Nguyễn Quốc Dũng, Ambassador of Brunei Serbini Ali, Embassy of the UAE Head of Communications and Public Diplomacy Maha Al Hebsi, DS Lore, Deputy Secretary of Commerce Ricardo Benn, Special Assistant Liu, Executive Aide Lin, and political commentator Armstrong Williams.

72. Deputy Secretary Lore and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova attended the Anniversary Celebration hosted by the MBHEC, commemorating two years of MBHEC and 22 years of the SPP between Maryland and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event was held on December 4, in Washington, DC, and brought together leaders and partners from the State of Maryland, the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and supporting institutions.

Welcome remarks and keynote addresses were delivered by Deputy Secretary Lore, Deputy Chief of Mission Amela Sudžuka-Ćerimagić, LTC Zoran Jović, and Dr. Azra Kačapor Nurkić.

The celebration also included a cultural performance featuring “Jutros mi je ruža procvjetala” and “Tebi majko misli lete.”

73. On December 5, Deputy Secretary Lore and Director of International Affairs Nitsch participated in a virtual meeting with representatives from the Embassy of Indonesia. The meeting was requested by the Embassy staff and had two objectives: 1. Discuss how the crew and cadets of the Indonesian Tall Ship, the Bima Suci, and local Indonesian cultural groups might participate in Maryland 250 festivities; and 2. Share with the Embassy staff the objectives and structure of the state government's subnational diplomacy and consider areas of cooperation. Director Johnson will send to the Embassy representatives a list of statewide Maryland 250 events as soon as it is available. Director Nitsch will send the Embassy copies of the Subcabinet for International Affairs Annual Report and Strategic Plan. The group will reconvene after the Maryland 250 list is made public. Those on the meeting from the Embassy included: Pangeran Ibrani Situmorang, Minister Counsellor - Economic Affairs, Anggi Jenie (Economic Section), Carolyn Sinulingga (Socio-cultural Section), Yudi Ardian (Naval Attache), and Miguel Abulhajat (Economic Section). Also in attendance were GOCI APAA Administrative Director Christina Poy, Maryland 250 Commission Director Michele Johnson, and Commission staff Parys Wyatt.

74. On December 6, Executive Aide Lin provided remarks on behalf of Secretary of State Lee to the Chinese American Professional Association of Washington, DC (CAPA - DC) for their 50th Anniversary Celebration. The organization provided key contacts and support during Secretary of State Lee's visit to Taiwan. GOCI APAA Administrative Director Poy presented a Governor's Citation to President Jane Yang. Also in attendance were representatives from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO).

75. On December 8, Deputy Secretary Lore, Director of International Affairs Nitsch, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, and Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova had a virtual meeting with former Secretary of State John McDonough, UMD Vice President and Chief Research Officer Patrick O'Shea and Tom Hucker to discuss the Maryland - County Cork relationship. Discussion centered on moving the inactive relationship between Maryland and County Cork to the national level and having an MOU with the Republic of Ireland instead of County Cork. The participants agreed to provide written comments on a potential MOU with the Republic of Ireland.

76. On December 9, the OSOS facilitated a meeting between the Lt. Governor and representatives from the Ghana Football Association (GFA) and stakeholders. Senior Advisor Gebhardt and Deputy Director Dr. Alleyne represented the OSOS. Also, in attendance were associates of Director of the Maryland Sports Commission Terry Hasseltine, including Senior Advisor of FIFA World Cup Legacy Projects (U.S. - Africa) Bunmi Jinadu.

Chief of Staff Byrd, Deputy Chief of Staff PK Owusu-Acheaw, Senior Advisor Gebhardt, and Deputy Director Dr. Alleyne had a follow-up meeting with the GFA on December 10 to continue the previous discussion about making a formal proposal for an exhibition match with the Ghana Black Stars in Maryland. A letter of interest signed by Governor Moore and LG Miller was then sent to the GFA; and Maryland seems to be the recommended site for Ghana Soccer.

77. On December 11, Secretary of State Lee met with the Ambassador of Germany Jens Hanefeld at the Christmas Market at the Ambassador's Residence. Also in attendance were the Ambassador of Singapore LUI Tuck Yew, Assistant Director of International Affairs Mantova, Executive Aide Lin, Executive Aide Kim, and OSOS Interns Carlson and Hawkins.

78. On December 12, Secretary of State Lee provided remarks at the Maryland - Anhui Sister State Committee Holiday Gathering and Year-End Meeting. Director of International Affairs Nitsch spoke about the relationship between Maryland and Anhui, and events in the last year including Bard High School students travelling to Anhui, and the OSOS having hosted Anhui Province Vice Governor Ren to sign an MOU renewal on education exchange. Also in attendance were Senior Advisor Gebhardt, Executive Aide Lin, Commerce East Asia Regional Manager Hui-Min Tzeng, members of the Sister States of Maryland, Inc. Anhui Committee led by Chair Mark Xu, and members of the Baltimore-Xiamen Sister States Committee.

79. On December 18, Secretary of State Lee met with former U.S. Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and founder of the Alliance for Local Leaders International (ALLIES) Nina Hachigian. Secretary of State Lee had previously met Ambassador Hachigian at the Symposium on Strategic Subnational Diplomacy, co-hosted by Meridian International in January. Topics of discussion included navigating international diplomacy on a subnational level (including engagements with Taiwan

and the People's Republic of China), potential areas of collaboration, and a future re-meeting with LG Miller. Also in attendance were Deputy Secretary Lore, Special Assistant Liu, and Executive Aide Lin.

80. On December 18, Secretary of State Lee attended the Holiday Reception celebrating the Comte de Rochambeau and 250 years of U.S. - France Friendship at the Ambassador's Residence. Ambassador of France Laurent Bili gave remarks honoring the partnership between France and the U.S. since the American Revolutionary War and looked forward to the activities of the America 250 Commission. Also in attendance were several members of Congress, documentarian Ken Burns, Deputy Secretary Lore, Executive Aide Lin, and Maryland 250 Commissioner Patricia L. Maclay.

81. On December 18, Deputy Secretary Lore attended a special exhibit at the Embassy of Australia, co-hosted by the National Gallery of Art. The exhibits highlighted the indigenous artists of the continent. Also in attendance was Director of Federal Relations Matt Verghese.

82. On December 19, Director of International Affairs Nitsch met virtually with Maryland 250 Commission Director Michele Johnson and our point of contact at the Embassy of Japan, Second Secretary of the Economic Section Takayuki Yamazaki, to introduce them to one another. Second Secretary Yamazaki invited the Maryland 250 Commission to host a booth at the upcoming Japan - Maryland Night reception, date TBC, and the Commission is excited to do so. Director Johnson will send a list of Commission members to Yamazaki-san for invitations to the reception. Director Johnson and her team will keep the Embassy apprised of future events and programs and invited the Embassy to use the Maryland 250 Commission logo on related products and at related events. She will send Yamazaki san the branding catalogue.

83. On December 20, Secretary of State Lee attended the TAC (Talent Attitude Confidence) Talk Christmas Episode in Columbia, hosted by Suns Media Systems. Secretary of State Lee introduced guest speakers State Attorney John McCarthy and Montgomery Sheriff Maxwell Uy. Also in attendance were Chief OAH Judge Chung Pak and former OSOS Executive Assistant Bauer.

84. On December 23, Deputy Secretary Lore provided a tour of the State House to Embassy of Botswana DCM Mabedi T. Ngwenya. Also in attendance was Deputy Director of International Affairs Dr. Alleyne.

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

1. On January 15, Secretary of State Susan Lee, Deputy Secretary of State Michael Lore, and Special Assistant for Intergovernmental Relations Alexandria Liu attended the Strategic Subnational Diplomacy Symposium hosted by Meridian Center and Truman Center where Lt. Governor Aruna Miller delivered remarks on Maryland's subnational engagement before an audience of foreign policy experts, foreign service officers, and international subnational leaders. The speech was well received, and our Office networked with attendees such as the Mayor of Bordeaux, France, the head of intergovernmental affairs for the Embassy of Canada, the attaché of multilateral affairs of the Government of Quebec, and the director of policy for the Aichi, Japan government.

2. On August 22, Lt. Governor Miller joined Major General Janeen Birkhead for a full day of spending time with Maryland National Guard members, employers and business leaders, and representatives from the Maryland Military Department (MMD) at Warfield Air National Guard Base in Middle River and Blum

Military Reservation. From helicopter rides to briefings, Lt. Governor Miller sat side by side with the men and women who serve both our State and our Nation every single day. The annual tradition features an immersive experience for the employers of active-duty National Guard members, including businesses and organizations across the State, to witness the dedication and preparation of the employees in our workforce.

Maryland Higher Education Commission

1. Director of External Relations Derek Coley and Director of Communications Kristin Clarkson attended an event at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China on January 24. The gathering was held to welcome the pandas back to the U.S., celebrate the Chinese New Year, and learn more about the Panda Diplomacy agreement that has been in place between the U.S. and China for five decades.

2. On September 5, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai offered well-received congratulatory greetings during the 14th Annual DC South Asian Film Festival on behalf of Governor Moore and Lt. Governor Miller. He called the festival a powerful gathering that offers stories reflective of our global society. The event brings filmmakers, dignitaries, and audiences together to view works that highlight the diversity and creativity of the South Asian diaspora. He was featured in an article from the South Asian Herald.

3. On September 13, during the National Council of Asian Indian Associations' celebration of India's 79th Independence Day, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai delivered a keynote address on the enduring values of democracy, freedom, and human dignity that connect India and the United States. He highlighted the significant contributions of the Indian-American community to Maryland's economy and culture through its work in education, medicine, business, and technology. The speech concluded with a call to action to continue building a better world through collaboration, compassion, and a belief in democracy's promise.

4. Although unable to attend in person, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai extended his warmest congratulations to the Indian Association of Frederick for their remarkable Festival of India held on September 13, conveying his well wishes through a heartfelt letter. In his message, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai eloquently articulated how the annual festival serves as a vibrant and invaluable platform for participants to proudly showcase the rich tapestry of heritage and traditions deeply embedded within the Indian community. Beyond mere display, he emphasized the festival's profound role in fostering a strong sense of community, strengthening bonds among attendees, and actively promoting cross-cultural exploration and understanding. He concluded his letter by expressing deep appreciation for the indispensable contributions the Indian community makes to Maryland's economic and social fabric, specifically highlighting their critical roles in the vital healthcare, innovative engineering, and dynamic information technology industries, which are crucial for the state's prosperity and advancement.

5. On September 29, Director of Communications Clarkson represented the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China National Day reception to celebrate the 76th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. The event provided a variety of cultural, technological, and historical experiences.

6. Governor Wes Moore and Lt. Governor Miller hosted the annual Diwali celebration at the Governor's Mansion in Annapolis on October 23. The celebration served as a powerful gesture of inclusion and

renewal, bringing together leaders from Maryland’s growing South Asian community. The event honored the state’s diverse faiths and cultures while underscoring Diwali’s central message of light prevailing over darkness. Throughout the evening, speakers linked the festival's theme to contemporary challenges, with Governor Moore praising the South Asian community for embodying "the spirit of light over darkness" and affirming the necessity of hope during uncertain times.

The Lt. Governor, the nation’s first Indian American in statewide office in Maryland, delivered a deeply personal address, using a childhood memory to affirm that the community "belongs here" and highlighting the role of professionals like teachers and physicians who "light the lamps within us." Governor Moore, in turn, called Lt. Governor Miller "a human Diwali" and linked the festival's message to the state's political agenda of moving forward with clarity. The ceremony culminated with the Governor presenting an official Diwali Proclamation, formally recognizing the Indian American community's significant civic, cultural, and economic contributions to Maryland.

The high-profile event successfully served as an affirmation of the state's diversity and demonstrated the administration's commitment to inclusivity. The gathering acknowledged state partners critical to the administration's goals, including Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Rai, and featured remarks from Gurpreet “Preet” Takhar, Chair of the Commission on South Asian American Affairs, who praised the administration's "inclusive and caring light that leaves no one behind." The entire evening reinforced a message of unity and partnership between the state government and Maryland's diverse cultural and business sectors.

Maryland Military Department

April 2025 was a high-operations month for the Maryland National Guard’s State Partnership Program (SPP), with multiple engagements across both partner nations—Estonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). These efforts focused on building interoperability, advancing strategic relationships, and preparing for upcoming multinational exercises.

1. The month began with the Joint Logistics and Media Management engagement in Sarajevo, BiH. From April 1 to 8, over 40 Soldiers and Airmen worked side by side with the Armed Forces of BiH (AFBiH) to finalize planning, coordination, and communication strategies in support of the upcoming Immediate Response 25 (IR25) exercise. The engagement was the largest event in the history of the Maryland–BiH partnership and demonstrated an exceptional level of integration between public affairs and sustainment professionals.
2. From March 31 to April 4, a Soldier from B Co, 2/20th Special Forces Group conducted a Counter Sniper and Event Planning engagement in Tallinn, Estonia. This focused exchange allowed Maryland and Estonian special operations forces to coordinate future sniper training objectives and develop planning support for special operations integration in upcoming joint events.
3. From April 6 to 12, five Soldiers from the 115th Military Police Battalion conducted a Pre-Deployment Site Survey (PDSS) in Croatia and BiH. This PDSS supported detailed planning for IR25, focusing on the alignment of Military Police operations between Maryland, the AFBiH, and Croatian Armed Forces.

4. From April 15 to 17, MDNG hosted Major General Ilmar Tamm, Commander of the Estonian Defence League (EDL), for a Senior Leader Visit (SLV) to Maryland. MG Tamm met with MG Janeen Birckhead in Annapolis, conducted site visits to the Army Aviation Support Facility, 1-175 Infantry Battalion, and 175th Cyberspace Operations Group, and engaged with the 58th Troop Command. Discussions included plans for light infantry interoperability training and future staff exchanges to further integrate the EDL and MDNG.

5. On April 23, MDNG welcomed a delegation from the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Defense, including senior officials and key staff. The delegation met with MDNG leaders to review ongoing cooperation, examine lessons from the April logistics engagement, and discuss next steps for IR25 and longer-term collaboration.

6. In late April, 17 Airmen from the 175th Cyberspace Operations Group deployed to Estonia to participate in Locked Shields 2025, the premier cyber defense exercise hosted by the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. This engagement, running from April 25 to May 4, focused on coalition cyber incident response in a contested environment and helped refine both defensive and analytical capabilities.

7. Rounding out the month of April, an Airman from the Maryland Air National Guard (MDANG) conducted a Democratic Institution and Law of Armed Conflict (DILLS) event in Bosnia and Herzegovina, delivering subject matter expertise on human rights, legal frameworks, and rules of engagement to AFBiH personnel. This engagement reinforced MDNG's support for the professional development and democratic orientation of its BiH partners.

In total, April's engagements showcased the full spectrum of MDNG capability—from cyber and SOF to logistics, law, and strategic diplomacy. Each event played a key role in preparing for future exercises, strengthening interoperability, and reinforcing the Maryland National Guard's long-standing commitment to global security through the SPP.

In June, the Maryland National Guard conducted a high-impact slate of international engagements under the SPP. In Estonia, the MDNG participated in the Victory Day celebrations, hosting a joint flag team during the Victory Day Parade. Senior leaders from the MDNG and Estonian Defense Forces used the event to advance cooperation on cyber and emergency management issues.

8. Simultaneously, 48 Airmen from the 175th Cyberspace Operations Group deployed to Romania for Exercise Saber Guardian 25, conducting live cyber operations and reinforcing multinational resilience in NATO's southeastern flank. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the MDARNG conducted a Joint Fires and Medical Interoperability Exchange with the AFBiH Light Infantry Battalion Group, enhancing NATO-standard coordination for future operations.

9. In July, the Estonian senior enlisted leader is observing MDNG operations during the NBWC and visiting the MDANG cyber and wing elements at the EDF CSM Adoson visit.

10. The SPP team met with the Maryland-Bosnia and Herzegovina Exchange Council to align FY25-26 civil-military priorities.

11. Members of the Maryland National Guard participated in a multi-national exercise with the armed forces of BiH in Croatia. MDNG leadership also participated in the Estonia Victory Day on June 23 and 24.

12. In June, the MDARNG conducted JFO/JTAC training with AFBiH light infantry elements.

13. In July, Estonian and BiH soldiers participated in and observed the National Guard Best Warrior Competition (NBWC) at Sideling Hill Creek State Park, running multinational partnership lanes.

14. In August, Maryland National Guard leaders participated in key events in Tallinn, Estonia, reinforcing the state's strong defense and cyber partnerships. TAG, MG Janeen L. Birkhead, presented the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF) Cyber Command flag on behalf of the Maryland National Guard during the Cyber Command's 7th Anniversary and Flag Unfurling, symbolizing continued U.S. support for Estonia's national defense and cyber resilience. Additionally, Senior Enlisted Leader CSM Harry attended the EDF Change of Responsibility Ceremony, strengthening enlisted-level ties and highlighting the Maryland National Guard's commitment to professional military education and leadership exchange with Estonia.

15. From September 8 to 12, Maryland SPP personnel participated in the EUCOM Strategy Implementation Conference (ESIC) in Germany. Both Bilateral Affairs Officers for Estonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina attended. This engagement aligned Maryland's SPP activities with EUCOM's theater strategy and strengthened interagency synchronization.

16. From September 14 to 18, the TAG and SEL attended the A5 CHOD Conference in Albania, co-hosted by Bosnia and Herzegovina. The conference provided a senior-level platform to highlight the Maryland National Guard's contributions to the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina modernization, with emphasis on cyber, military police, aviation, and health cooperation.

17. From September 21 to 25, 2025, BG Collins, as Maryland Army National Guard Commander, led the delegation for the Senior Leader Visit and Army-to-Army Bilateral Defense Consultations (SLV/ABCD) in Estonia. The visit strengthened operational cooperation, set conditions for FY26 events, and reinforced strategic alignment with Estonian defense priorities.

18. From October 13 to 18, the Estonian Division Commander participated in the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) conference in Washington, DC., and met with senior leaders from the State of Maryland. Discussions focused on advancing strategic cooperation and multinational defense readiness while strengthening Maryland's long-standing partnership with Estonia.

19. From October 16 to 21, the 1-175th Infantry Regiment traveled to Estonia to assist the Estonian Defence League (EDL) in conducting a Squad Live Fire Exercise (LFX) at the Sirgala Training Area as part of a Train-the-Trainer program. Maryland National Guard soldiers worked alongside their Estonian counterparts to demonstrate best practices in planning and executing efficient, meaningful, and safe maneuver exercises, including scenario development, ammunition distribution, surface danger zone calculations, and range safety positioning. The exercise further reinforced NATO interoperability and enhanced multinational defense readiness.

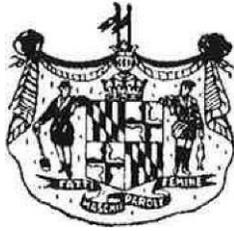
Due to the federal government shutdown, all engagements were on hold pending appropriations.

20. On November 19, COL Louis Hawkins and SPP personnel attended the 82nd Bosnia and Herzegovina Statehood Day and the 30th Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords at the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Washington, DC. Their participation reinforced the Maryland National Guard's long-standing partnership with the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH) and highlighted continued cooperation, shared commitments to regional stability, and the strength of the Maryland–BiH relationship under the State Partnership P1. In May, the Maryland National Guard's State Partnership Program executed a robust series of engagements with Estonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), enhancing interoperability, cyber cooperation, and multinational readiness. Highlights included the participation of 26 the MDARNG Soldiers in Exercise Hedgehog 2025 in Estonia, reinforcing total defense and joint maneuver capabilities. Five Soldiers also conducted Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) training with the Estonian Defence League, building partner medical readiness. Simultaneously, 17 the MDANG Airmen supported EUCOM's cyber defense team during Locked Shields 2025, NATO's premier cyber exercise. In BiH, the SPP team held a planning session with MBHEC to align FY25–26 civil-military priorities, while elements of the 115th MP Battalion and 200th MP Company deployed to Croatia for Exercise Immediate Response 25, supporting multinational law enforcement operations.

21. On December 3, the Adjutant General (TAG) and Maryland National Guard (MDNG) senior leaders attended the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH) Day celebration at the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Washington, DC. This engagement reinforced the enduring partnership between the MDNG and AFBiH, demonstrating a continued commitment to shared security goals and supporting high-level diplomatic relations.

22. On December 12, TAG and MDNG senior leaders attended the Christmas Reception at the Embassy of Estonia in Washington, DC. This event supported the State Partnership Program by fostering diplomatic relations with Estonian officials and strengthened the partnership through cultural engagement.

Executive Order 01.01.2024.33



The State of Maryland

Executive Department

EXECUTIVE ORDER

01.01.2024.33

(Rescinds Executive Order 01.01.2005.24)

Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs

- WHEREAS The State of Maryland is committed to strengthening its comprehensive and cohesive international strategy to enhance the State's competitiveness and stature in the global marketplace and international arena;
- WHEREAS, Executive Order 01.01.2005.24 amended Executive Order 01.01.2001.20, which created the Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs within the Office of the Secretary of State to coordinate open communication and collaboration among State agencies regarding international affairs for the State of Maryland;
- WHEREAS, The Adjutant General of the Maryland National Guard, who serves as an international representative of the State of Maryland and maintains important relationships with international militaries, should be designated as a member of the Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs; and
- WHEREAS. Given its mission and expertise, the International Affairs Division within the Office of the Secretary of State should provide the primary staff support necessary for the completion of the Subcabinet's duties.

NOW THEREFORE, I, WES MOORE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAWS OF MARYLAND, HEREBY RESCIND EXECUTIVE ORDER 01.01.2005.24 AND PROCLAIM THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE ORDER, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY:

- A. Establishment. There is a Governor's Subcabinet for International Affairs ("Subcabinet") established for the purpose of developing, evaluating and coordinating a cohesive international strategy to

enhance the State's competitiveness and stature in the global marketplace and international arena.

B. Membership. The Subcabinet shall consist of:

- (1) The Secretary of State;
- (2) The Secretary of Commerce;
- (3) The Secretary of Agriculture;
- (4) The Secretary of Transportation;
- (5) The Secretary of Higher Education;
- (6) The Adjutant General;
- (7) The Secretary of the Environment; and
- (8) The Lieutenant Governor.

C. Chair. The Secretary of State shall chair the Subcabinet and is responsible for the oversight and direction of the work of the Subcabinet.

D. Administration.

- (1) The Subcabinet shall be staffed by the International Affairs Division within the Office of the Secretary of State.
- (2) The Governor or the Chair may establish subcommittees to carry out the work of the Subcabinet.

E. Procedures.

- (1) The Subcabinet shall meet as often as its duties require, but no less than quarterly.
- (2) The Subcabinet shall consult with other State departments and agencies as needed to carry out the provisions of this Executive Order.

F. Duties. The Subcabinet shall:

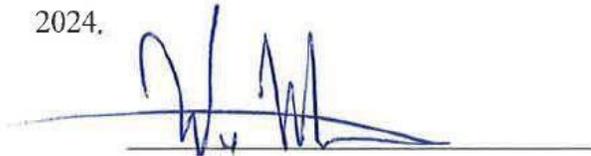
- (1) Advise the Governor on matters of international affairs.
- (2) Coordinate the State's international activity including international cultural and educational, and economic development events, trips, and activities, and cooperate with the federal government, where necessary.
- (3) Oversee the protocol functions of the State by developing and implementing a system to ensure that international protocol is adequately conducted on behalf of the State.
- (4) Contribute to the economic development of the State by ensuring that all appropriate State agencies work in a cooperative, coordinated manner to plan, implement, oversee and evaluate the foreign affairs of the State.
- (5) Examine the current structure and organization of Maryland's system of international affairs to develop:
 - a. A coordinated State international strategy that includes a procedure for identifying and assessing foreign developments that may impact the State;
 - b. An annual interagency plan for implementation of the State international strategy, including services and functions dealing with the international affairs of the State;
 - c. A consistent and clear international identity of the State by serving as the official liaison between the Governor and foreign governments and international organizations; and
 - d. Recommendations for programs and policies, if appropriate, to ensure that the needs and goals of the State's international strategy are met and accomplished.
- (6) Develop a plan to coordinate and respond to international correspondence and requests.
- (7) Perform other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the Governor.

G. Reporting. The Subcabinet shall submit a report to the Governor by January 31st each year, detailing its recommendations to support a coordinated State international strategy.

H. General Provisions.

- (1) This Executive Order shall be implemented in a manner that is consistent with all applicable statutes and regulations. Nothing in this Executive Order shall operate to contravene any State or federal law or to affect the State's receipt of federal funding.
- (2) If any provision of this Executive Order or its application to any person, entity, or circumstance is held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, all other provisions or applications of the Executive Order shall remain in effect to the extent possible without the invalid provision or application. To achieve this purpose, the provisions of this Executive Order are severable.

GIVEN Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the State of Maryland, in the City of Annapolis, this 30th Day of September 2024.



Wes Moore
Governor



ATTEST:



Susan C. Lee
Secretary of State