

Fact Sheet on the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)

African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) legislation mandates that the United States and member countries regularly engage in trade and investment policy discussions at the annual Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, known as the AGOA Forum. This event brings together senior officials from the United States and AGOA member countries, as well as civil society and private sector stakeholders, to discuss a broad range of trade and investment-related issues. **On August 24-27, 2015, the government of Gabon will host the 2015 AGOA Forum in Libreville. The theme of this year's Forum is "AGOA at 15: Charting a Course for a Sustainable U.S.-Africa Trade and Investment Partnership."** Interested stakeholders can find more information or register to participate in the Forum at: <http://agoa.ga>.

In both Africa and the United States, there is a growing consensus that open trade and increased international investment are critical to spurring economic development and reducing poverty in Africa. To this end, the United States enacted AGOA in May 2000, offering duty-free entry for nearly 98 percent of all imports from eligible African countries, in combination with other trade preference programs. The cornerstone of U.S. trade relations with the region, AGOA uniquely promotes value-added export development, strengthens U.S.-sub-Saharan African relations in trade and investment, stimulates economic growth, provides for regular high-level dialogue on trade and investment-related issues, encourages regional economic integration, and facilitates sub-Saharan Africa's integration into the global economy.

To be eligible for AGOA trade preferences, a sub-Saharan African country must protect human and labor rights; take steps to combat corruption and enhance rule of law; demonstrate progress towards the development of a market-based economy; and be open to U.S. trade and investment. In 2015, 39 countries are eligible for trade preferences under AGOA, benefiting from duty-free exports of more than 6,400 products to the United States -- 1,800 more products than the 4,600 offered through the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). To date, eligible countries have exported nearly \$480 billion worth of goods to the United States under AGOA and the GSP program. In 2014, AGOA exports totaled over \$14 billion. This was a decline from previous years, reflecting global downward oil price trends; however, agricultural, apparel, and metal products experienced notable growth.

AGOA has facilitated new investment, created jobs, and cultivated business linkages that create new markets and investment opportunities for the future. In addition to supporting development across the continent, AGOA encourages African economic and governance reform; spurs African engagement on trade capacity building; and fosters goodwill between the United States and Africa. The Obama Administration has been working closely with Congress to renew AGOA for an additional ten years. The 2015 AGOA Forum will provide a unique opportunity to take stock of AGOA's successes over the last fifteen years and launch a dialogue on our shared vision for the post-AGOA future of U.S.-Africa trade.