



Civil Society Organization Session

of the



14th U.S. - Africa Trade & Economic Cooperation Forum

AGOA at 15: Civil Society organizations Working to Chart a Course for Sustainable U.S.-Africa Trade and Investment Partnership

August 24 - 27, 2015

Andgondje Friendship Stadium
Libreville, Gabon



About the AGOA Civil Society Network

The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Civil Society Network was established on January 17, 2003 at the end of the AGOA Civil Society Forum in Phoenix, Mauritius, with 102 member organizations from the United States,

The AGOA Civil Society Network is a consortium of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), small-to-medium sized business representatives, chambers of commerce and other groups in the United States and Africa that are interested in the successful application of AGOA for the benefit of the US and African peoples.

This focus is with an eye towards improving the ease and understanding of US-Africa trade and to fully utilizing the benefits of AGOA, thus securing a place for African countries in the global economy and raising the standards of living of the masses of Africa.

Mission

In keeping with the spirit of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the mission of the network is to empower African people through their civil society organizations to work with governments and businesses to take maximum advantage of AGOA benefits on behalf of the citizens of their countries.

The Network will accomplish this mission through three means:

1. Monitoring compliance with AGOA eligibility requirements
2. Providing technical assistance to its members, public and private sectors on AGOA compliance and trade capacity where feasible; and
3. Tracking the impact of AGOA specifically and trade generally on African societies

Objectives

Objectives of the AGOA Civil Society Network include increased US-Africa trade, economic development, and the establishment of good governance, transparency, sustainable democracy and human rights throughout the countries of Africa.

Projects

- Annual report on eligibility requirement compliance of AGOA nations and assessment of compliance by non-AGOA nations compiled by national network affiliates
- Ongoing training by network member NGOs on trade capacity for African and American businesses to support and expand AGOA trade by small and medium enterprises
- Ongoing training by network member NGOs on trade, economic, political and social policy issues for African governments to enhance AGOA eligibility and compliance
- Annual report on the impact of trade on African societies that measures the impact beyond commercial statistics and offers recommendations on broadening the benefits of trade

AGOA Civil Society Network Membership

- To apply for membership with the AGOA Civil Society Network online, please fill out the form visit our website <http://www.democracy-africa.org/agoacsonet-membership.html> or stop by the AGOA Civil Society Organization Registration Desk during the 14th AGOA Forum in Libreville, and complete the application form, TODAY!

Remarks by the President at Signing of the Defending Public Safety Employees' Retirement Act and the Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015



East Room

June 29, 2015

2:10 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well, welcome to the White House. I thought we'd start off the week with something we should do more often -- a truly bipartisan bill signing. (Applause.)

For six and a half years, we've worked to rescue the economy from the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, to get it growing again and to rebuild it on a new foundation for prosperity. Today, our businesses have created more than 12 million new jobs in the past five years -- that's the longest streak of job growth on record; 401(k)s have been replenished; the housing market is stronger; and more than 16 million Americans have gained the financial security of health insurance. (Applause.)

But a constantly changing economy demands our constant effort to protect hardworking Americans and protect their success. And one of the things we ought to be doing is rewriting the rules of global trade to make sure that they benefit American workers and American businesses, and that they reflect American values -- especially now, while our economy is in a position of global strength. The two bills that I'll sign today will help America do just that.

The first will help us pass new, 21st century trade agreements with higher standards and tougher protections than those that we've signed before. The Trans-Pacific Partnership, for example, includes strong protections for workers and the environment. Unlike previous agreements, those provisions will actually be enforceable. And that's good for American businesses and American workers because we already meet high standards than -- higher standards than most of the rest of the world. So we want to make sure that everybody else catches up. This agreement will help us level the playing field.

The second bill offers even more support for American workers. It renews and expands the trade adjustment assistance program, which provides job training and other assistance to tens of thousands of American workers every year. It gives us new tools to help American steelworkers and folks in other

critical industries fight against unfair practices by other countries. It also reauthorizes AGOA, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which has had strong bipartisan support for many years now, and which helps open up markets in Africa to American businesses while making it easier for African businesses to sell their products in America. And we're extending a similar program to Haiti, and renewing support for other development -- developing economies through what's known as the Generalized System of Preferences.

Now, I think it's fair to say that getting these bills through Congress has not been easy. (Laughter.) They've been declared dead more than once. They have inspired long and passionate debates -- and that's entirely appropriate for our democracy. That's how this country is supposed to work. We're supposed to make sure that we air our differences and then, ultimately, Congress works its will -- especially on issues that inspire strongly held feelings on all sides.

But I would not be doing this, I would not be signing these bills if I was not absolutely convinced that these pieces of legislation are ultimately good for American workers. I would not be signing them if I wasn't convinced they'd be good for American businesses. I would not be signing them if I did not know that they will give us a competitive edge in this new economy, and that that new economy cannot be reversed. We have to embrace it.

This legislation will help turn global trade -- which can often be a race to the bottom -- into a race to the top. It will reinforce America's leadership role in the world -- in Asia, and in Europe, and beyond. If I didn't believe it, I wouldn't have fought so hard to get these things done.

So this is a good day. And I want to thank everybody who has helped us get it -- get to this day. We've got small business owners, environmental and global development groups, other advocates who were a big part of this campaign. We've got some outstanding members of Congress, both Republican and Democrat, who came together to make this happen. I want to name just a few. Although Congress is on recess, I think it's important to acknowledge Speaker John Boehner and Leader Mitch McConnell; Senators Orrin Hatch, Ron Wyden and Patty Murray; Congressmen Paul Ryan, Ron Kind and Pat Tiberi. And thanks to all the senators and representatives who took tough votes and encouraged their colleagues to do the same.

This was a true bipartisan effort. And it's a reminder of what we can get done -- even on the toughest issues -- when we work together in a spirit of compromise. I hope we're going to be able to summon that same spirit on future challenges, like starting to rebuild some of our roads and bridges and infrastructure around the country -- (applause) -- because the American people deserve nothing less from us.

Let me just make one more comment. The trade authorization that's provided here is not the actual trade agreements. So we still have some tough negotiations that are going to be taking place. There

has always been concern that people want transparency in those agreements -- under this authorization, these agreements will be posted on a website for a long period of time for people to scrutinize, and take a look at, and pick apart.

And so the debate on the particular provisions of trade will not end with this bill signing. But I'm very confident that we're going to be able to say at the end of the day that the trade agreements that come under this authorization are going to improve the system of trade that we have right now. And that's a good thing.

I think it's also important to note that trade is just one part of a broader agenda of middle-class economics. And so we've still got more work to do on infrastructure. We've still got more work to do on job training. We've still got more work to do on research and development. We've still got more work to do to make sure that folks are getting good wages for hard work. We've still got too many communities that are left behind around the country. We've still got more work to do to help support our small businesses, who are extraordinary job creators.

So this is not the end of the road; this is just one step in a long path to making sure that the next generation enjoys the extraordinary prosperity that our parents and grandparents passed down to us. And although there are going to be disagreements between the parties on particular elements, I think what we can agree on is that in this country, if you work hard, you should be able to get ahead no matter where you come from, what you look like, or who you love. (Applause.)

With that, let me sign this piece of legislation. (Applause.)

(The bill is signed.)

All right. For those of you who work for me, get back to work. (Laughter.)

Thank you very much, everybody. (Applause.)

END

2:23 P.M. EDT

U.S. Congressional Support for AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act of 2015



Ed Royce Chair, House Foreign Relations (R-California)

“I am very pleased that the African Growth and Opportunity Act reauthorization passed today and am proud to be part of the AGOA coalition since its beginning. We were bipartisan when we beat the odds to get AGOA signed into law in 2000, and remain bipartisan today. AGOA has drawn hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign investment to Africa and has economically uplifted Africans, while helping U.S. businesses and workers export more.” Ed Royce Chair, House Foreign Relations (R-California)



Congresswoman Karen Bass (D-Calif.), Ranking Member of the Africa Subcommittee, (D-California)

“After years of tireless work and effective advocacy, our work in Congress to reauthorize the African Growth and Opportunity Act is now complete. I am proud that both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate voted overwhelmingly to reauthorize AGOA, sending the legislation to the President and guaranteeing a seamless and long-term extension of this vitally important law.

“Today’s vote was a direct result of the bipartisan work and commitment from Houses of Congress, the African Diplomatic Corps, African heads of state, members of African governments, the Obama Administration and countless individuals from the African Diaspora and African civil society who spoke and worked for an African continent that is a partner to the United States. I have spoken with you during our policy breakfasts, met with you both here in the United States and in Africa, and read your op-eds and letters. Every one of these actions was an essential part in guaranteeing the flood of support that carried AGOA to final Congressional passage.

“I look forward not just to President Obama signing this legislation, but also continuing to work with you as we look beyond AGOA’s reauthorization. Today’s vote marks a new chapter and American leaders must be as focused as ever on this vitally important part of the world. From 2000 to 2010, six of the world’s 10 fastest-growing economies were in sub-Saharan African countries. And this growth has helped to grow Africa’s middle class, which has tripled in size over the last 30 years--numbering 313 million people, greater than 34 percent of the population of the whole continent.

“Over the next 10 years, Africa will become an even more important part of the world economy with a large, youthful population that is increasingly university-educated, tech-savvy and entrepreneurial. Without question, it is in the interest of the United States and the countries of

Africa--the world's new economic frontier--which we work toward a stronger and mutually beneficial economic relationship that will stand the test of time. AGOA has been called 'the cornerstone' of the U.S.-Africa economic relationship, and on this stone we will build an even more lasting and stronger commitment between the United States and the nations of Africa."



Congressman Charley Rangel Ranking Member, Ways and Means (D-New York)

"As a congressman who has been working on AGOA for over 15 years, I cannot be more proud and pleased today," said Rangel. "Since it was enacted in 2000, AGOA has been the cornerstone of U.S. trade policy with sub-Saharan Africa, and has been a true success. AGOA has further contributed to diversification and competitiveness of sub-Saharan Africa's economies and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs across the continent. We have modified and improved AGOA and renewed it for 10 years. This bill ensures predictability for producers, consumers and investors," said Rangel.

"I want to thank Chairman Ryan for his work on AGOA as well as Congressman Royce of the Foreign Affairs Committee," Rangel commented. "This is a really significant occasion because there hasn't been this type of cooperation between the House and Senate or Republicans and Democrats in a long time and it feels extremely good



Paul Ryan Chairman, Ways and Means (R-Wisconsin)

"I thank Congressman Rangel for his work on this," Ways and Means Committee Chairman Paul Ryan said on the House floor. "He is a champion of this and one of the primary authors and the person who has done so much work to help forge better ties between the nations of Africa and our country and to help the rising tide lift all of the boats. I thank him for his leadership on this issue."

"America is now backing in the game. With TPA in place, the United States can once again play a leading role in writing the rules of the global economy. This will help us create a healthier economy and bolster our foreign policy. It's a big win, and I want to thank all those who worked so hard to make it possible, especially Representatives Tiberi and Sessions, as well as Senators Hatch and Wyden. I'm also pleased that our trade preferences bill has become law. This will strengthen our ties and promote market-based economics in important, developing nations.

"With TPA in place, our attention shifts to the trade agreements currently being negotiated with our friends in the Asia-Pacific region and Europe. Just as TPA allows greater oversight of the process, it requires the administration to follow Congress's priorities and achieve high-standard agreements. We have a great opportunity ahead of us, and Congress and the administration both must do their parts to seize it."



Dear Colleagues,

During the 13th AGOA Forum that coincided with the US-Africa Leader's Summit in Washington D.C., August 1-2, 2014, civil society called on the U.S. Congress for a seamless reauthorization of an extended and enhanced AGOA and Third Country Fabric Provision legislation.

On June 25, 2015 the U.S. Congress overwhelmingly passed the AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act (AEEA) of 2015, HR 1295, reauthorizing AGOA and the Third Country Fabric Provision until September 30, 2025, the longest extension since the law was first enacted in 2000.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you, and congratulate you for your hard work, dedication and contributions to our collective efforts for the reauthorization of AGOA.

Since AGOA was passed into law in 2000, total African exports under AGOA have more than quadrupled. As of June 2015, AGOA eligible countries have exported nearly \$480 billion worth of goods to the United States under AGOA and the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences. Currently there are 39 AGOA eligible countries.

In 2014, non-oil AGOA trade was valued at \$4.4 billion, up about 250 percent from 2001, creating an estimated 300,000 direct jobs in beneficiary countries and 120,000 jobs in the United States.

AGOA provides generous trade preferences to Sub-Saharan African countries that are making progress in implementing economic, legal, and labor and human rights reforms. However, we MUST do better. More will be required of you, and more will be required of me in coming months to construct a framework of engagement with our governments and private sector for reforms to optimize the benefits of AGOA, spur development, boost economic growth and reduce poverty by working together to avoid the removal of countries from the AGOA eligibility list through early intervention strategies.

The reauthorization of AGOA for ten years also provides the predictability and sustainability required to address supply side gaps, especially in the areas of trade facilitation and transportation linkages which hinder the competitiveness of African products and services, within Africa, globally, and particularly in U.S. markets. . Additionally, Africa's economic development partly depends on the reduction of trade transaction costs, which are currently unacceptably high, over time these costs will decline.

We must work smarter and more strategically during this Session of the 14th AGOA Forum to ascertain solutions to these pressing problems that limit Africa's competitiveness, as we celebrate our recent successes and work for enhanced US-Africa trade and economic cooperation.

Again, thank you for your presence here, today. Bravo to the Government of Gabon for hosting us. We are here to assist the people and the Government of Gabon utilizes AGOA to create good paying jobs, and strengthen democratic institutions.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred Oladeinde', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fred Oladeinde, Chair AGOA Civil Society Network Secretariat

AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act of 2015

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), first authorized in 2000, provides for duty-free treatment for nearly all goods from eligible sub-Saharan African countries. AGOA is currently set to expire on September 30, 2015.

Provides a long-term extension of AGOA for 10 years, including a 10 year extension of third-country fabric provisions, which are important to continue to nurture the development of the textile and apparel industry in sub-Saharan Africa.

Reaffirms Congress's commitment to Africa through clear statements of policy on the importance of AGOA and expanding trade and investment ties between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa.

Promotes greater regional integration by expanding the rule of origin to allow AGOA countries greater flexibility to combine inputs to meet the rule of origin for AGOA-eligible products and statements of policy encouraging the adoption and implementation of WTO Agreements, including the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, which can reduce red tape at the border.

Promotes compliance with eligibility criteria by providing greater flexibility to the Administration to withdraw, suspend, or limit benefits under AGOA if it determines that such action would be more effective than termination.

Ensures greater certainty in operation of AGOA by requiring the Administration to notify Congress and any affected country at least 60 days before removing a country from the program or withdrawing, suspending, or limiting any benefits.

Simplifies claims for preference, improving transparency and making it easier to complete paperwork on imports from AGOA beneficiaries.

Encourages development by AGOA beneficiaries of utilization strategies to improve effectiveness and use of the program. Commits the United States to working with AGOA beneficiaries to develop and implement strategies.

Improves transparency and participation in AGOA review process by codifying the process and ensuring that the Administration establishes mechanisms for public input.

Creates new review mechanisms so that any party, at any time, can petition USTR about whether a country is meeting the AGOA eligibility criteria and USTR can initiate an out-of-cycle review of a country's eligibility.

Outlines a path for deepening and expanding trade and investment ties by requiring the Administration to develop a long-term strategy for negotiating trade agreements with sub-Saharan African countries and setting clear statements of U.S. policy.

Strengthens Congressional oversight through additional notification and reporting requirements.

Addresses unfair practices by the European Union that condition African access to the European market on signing imbalanced and substandard trade agreements.

Renewal of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) Program

The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), first authorized in 1974, is a unilateral preference program that allows eligible developing countries to import duty-free import over 3,500 items.

Extends the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) until December 31, 2017 and provides retroactive relief to eligible products that were imported during GSP's lapse.

Promotes export growth and economic development for developing countries by continuing to provide duty-free entry for approximately 5,000 agricultural and non-agricultural products from 126 designated beneficiary countries and territories.

Implements U.S. WTO commitments by making duty-free certain cotton articles eligible from Least-Developed Beneficiary Developing Countries (LDBDCs).

Benefits U.S. companies by eliminating an estimated \$2 million a day in tariffs on imported goods.

Supports an estimated 80,000 jobs in the United States through the movement of GSP products from ports to manufacturers, farmers, and stores.

Fosters innovation and U.S. competitiveness in the global marketplace by lowering costs for intermediate goods, including components, parts, and material imported from designated beneficiary developing countries.

Ensuring Continued Benefits for Haiti

Congress provides duty-free benefits on apparel exports from Haiti to the United States through the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Act, which was enacted in 2006 and renewed and expanded in 2008 and 2010. The program currently expires in 2020.

Extends the HOPE and HELP programs for products from Haiti until September 30, 2025.

Promotes export growth and economic development for Haiti by continuing to provide duty-free entry for a variety of products, including certain apparel products.

Supports an estimated 30,000 jobs in Haiti that are created by the apparel industry, the core export industry and primary source of employment growth.

Encourages foreign investment and job creation by extending trade preferences to reinvigorate the apparel industry and attract new and expanded foreign direct investment.

Reaffirms U.S. foreign policy and national security interests by promoting trade and long-term investments in Haiti.



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 of the
 14th U.S.-Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum

*AGOA at 15: Civil Society Organizations Working to Chart a Course for Sustainable
 U.S.-Africa Trade and Investment Partnership*

August 24-27, 2015
Andgondje Friendship Stadium
Libreville, Gabon

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2015

09:00 - 17:30	<i>Advance Registration (Badge Pick-up)</i>	Hotel Lobby
14:00 - 15:30	<p style="text-align: center;">WORKSHOP I</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AGOA: Annual Country Review for Eligibility Compliance SEC. 105. MONITORING AND REVIEW OF ELIGIBILITY</p> <p><i>During this workshop, U.S. and in country agencies responsible for annual compliance reviews will provide participants with pertinent information regarding the annual eligibility compliance review process, including the importance of having a country strategic plan, Rule of law; market based economy; protection of property rights, protection of internationally recognized worker's rights; intellectual property rights; and how the report on eligibility compliance is compiled and sent to Congress by the White House. Additionally CSOs will be taken through the compliance process, and will discover early intervention techniques to avoid removal from the list of AGOA eligible countries.</i></p> <p>Chair: Professor Abdellatif Mahamat Taha, Ph.D., Associate Professor in Management Sciences Governance and Organizational Control Laboratory (LGCO), University of Toulouse, France</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connie Hamilton, Deputy Assistant US Trade Representative (USTR) for Africa, Office of African Affairs, Office of the US TR • Eric R. Biel, Associate Deputy Undersecretary, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor • Memory Dube, Senior Researcher, Economic Diplomacy Programme, South African Institute of International Affairs, South Africa • Peter H. Barlerin, Director, Office of Economic and Regional Affairs, Africa Bureau, U.S. Department of State <p>Q&A</p>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2015		
16:00 -17:30	<p>WORKSHOP 2</p> <p><i>Trade Facilitation, and Transportation Linkages: Vehicles for Enhancing Competitiveness</i></p> <p><i>To maximize AGOA's effectiveness we must address trade facilitation related procedures, not just provide preferential trade conditions. Trade Facilitation best practices including the integration of technology, capacity building, and legal and regulatory reform should be implemented to promote the smooth flow of goods and services as well as further regional integration.</i></p> <p><i>This workshop will underscore a number of the trade facilitation, and transportation gaps on the supply side, and discuss regional and continental integration approaches in providing sustainable solutions for enhancing competitiveness on the continent.</i></p> <p>Opening Remarks: Tewelde GrebreMariam, CEO, Ethiopian Airlines</p> <p>Chair: Fred O. Oladeinde, Chair, AGOA Civil Society Organization Network Secretariat</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frank Matsuert, CEO, TradeMark East Africa • Fauster Rogombe, Commissioner General for Regional Integration, Gabon • Brian Glancy, Director, Trade Facilitation, USAID Southern Africa Trade Hub, Botswana • Dichaba Molobe, Director for Policy Advocacy, Botswana Confederation of Commerce, Industry, and Manpower (BOCCIM), Botswana <p>Q&A</p>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium
TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2015		
08::00 - 8:30	<p><i>Registration and Continental Breakfast</i></p>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium
08:30 – 10:00	<p>JOINT OPENING CEREMONY <i>Civil Society Organizations, Private Sector, AWEP</i> "AGOA from Where to Where"</p> <p>Welcome by the Mistress of Ceremonies: Bernadette Paolo, President and CEO, The Africa Society of the National Summit on Africa</p> <p>Introductory Remarks: <i>Civil Society Organization Network Secretariat</i> – Fred Oladeinde, President, The Foundation for Democracy in Africa <i>Civil Society Organization Gabon</i> - Chantal Paraiso, Chair, AGOA Civil Society, Gabon</p>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium



Private Sector USA – Patricia R. Sheikh, Agribusiness Director, Corporate Council on Africa (CCA)

Private Sector Gabon – Jean Baptiste Bikalou, President of Gabon Chamber of Commerce

Pan Africa AWEF – Sylvia Banda, President, Zambia

AWEF Gabon – Rachel Ebaneth, Deputy Secretary General of Gabon’s Ministry of Small and Medium Size Businesses, Arts & Crafts Development of Services, and President of AWEF, Gabon Chapter

Welcome Remarks:

H.E. Minister Gabriel Tchango, Minister of Trade , Gabon

View from the U.S. Congress:

The Honorable Karen Bass, Member of Congress –D-CA, U.S. House of Representatives.(TBD)

The Honorable Paul Mba Abessole, Member of Parliament, Gabon

Keynote Remarks:

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs

Declaration of the Opening of the 2015 AGOA Forum:

H.E. Minister Gabriel Tchango, Minister of Trade, Gabon

Closing by the Mistress of Ceremonies:

Bernadette Paolo, President and CEO, The Africa Society of the National Summit on Africa

10:00 -10:30

Coffee Break, networking and Expo Visit

10:30 - 12:00

PANEL I: AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act of 2015: OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

The AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act of 2015, HR 1295 was introduced in both Houses of Congress on April 16, 2015. The Bill recently passed by Congress, and signed into law by President Barak Obama, extends AGOA and AGOA’s Third Country Fabric Provision to 2025. This is the longest authorization since AGOA became law in 2000.

This panel of experts will discuss the nuts and bolts, and the opportunities and challenges that the AGOA Extension and Enhancement (AEE) Act of 2015 presents, as well as, AEE’s expected effect on US- Africa Commercial relations. In addition, the panelists will highlight the Act’s new provisions, particularly, improved rules of origin; eligibility review; agriculture and women and the resources that are provided within the Act for capacity building, trade facilitation and civil society empowerment.

Opening Remarks: Peter H. Barlerin, Director, Office of Economic and Regional Affairs, Africa Bureau, U.S. Department of State

Chair: Florie Liser, Assistant US Trade Representative (USTR) for Africa, Office of African Affairs, Office of the USTR

Panelists:

- Oren E. Whyche-Shaw , Deputy Assistant Administrator, US Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Honorable Paul Mba Abessole, Member of Parliament, Gabon
- Earl W. Gast, Senior International Advisor, Covington & Burling LLP

Q&A

Andgondje Friendship Stadium

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2015		
12:00 –13:30	<p>PANEL II: Textiles and Apparel OPTIMIZING THIRD COUNTRY FABRIC PROVISION</p> <p><i>The AGOA apparel program has been one of AGOA's foremost success stories; having created more than 300,000 new direct jobs and more than one million indirect jobs in supporting sectors. The benefits of apparel trade with the United States are spread among 12 AGOA beneficiaries. With the extension of AGOA and third fabric provisions for 10 years, the longest extension, ever, the textile and apparel sector is expected to thrive and trade volume is expected to increase, significantly, attracting user friendly foreign and domestic investment to the sector. This panel will focus on the opportunities and challenges in the textile and apparel sector over the next decade in areas of vertical and horizontal integration and regional production and distribution approaches.</i></p> <p>Chair: Finn Holm -Olsen, East Africa Trade Hub, USAID</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parfait Alexis Ndjombouet Ratanga, Procurement Manager, MGV (Manufacture Gabonaise des vetements) • Zo Randriamaro, Coordinator, Research and Support Center for Development Alternatives – Indian Ocean (RSCDA-IO), Madagascar • JC Mazingue, EATIH Apparel Consultant • Caroline Sack Kendem, President, AWEP, Cameroon Chapter <p>Q&A</p>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium
13:30 – 14:30	<p>LUNCHEON</p> <p>Mistress of Ceremonies: Shirley Rivens Smith, President, US Africa Sister Cities Foundation, Inc., DC-Dakar</p> <p>Luncheon Speakers: Commissioner Fatima Haram Acyl, Department of Trade and Industry African Union (invited)</p>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2015

<p>14:30 -16:00</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PANEL III: <i>Mentoring and Leadership Development for Women and for Young Entrepreneurs</i></p> <p><i>This Panel will address the importance of mentoring and leadership for women and young entrepreneurs in successful implementation of AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act of 2015.</i></p> <p>Chair: Bernadette Paolo, President and CEO, The Africa Society of the National Summit on Africa</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geoffroy Fouboula Libeka, General Manager, Bird Consulting, Gabon • Kelley Page Jibrell, President and CEO, Sachem Global, LLC • Abigail Burgesson, Special Programmes Manager, African Women Development Fund, Ghana <p>Q&A</p>	<p>Andgondje Friendship Stadium</p>
<p>16:00 –17:15</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel IV <i>Strengthening Micro Small Medium Enterprise Value Chain</i></p> <p><i>The AGOA objective to promote export led economic development has been limited, and countries are not taking full advantage of AGOA benefits. Most of the AGOA-eligible non -oil firms are micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSME's) and Small Holder Farmers. Many however, remain inefficient and constrained in their productive capacities due to lack of skills, capacity and other restraints. This panel will provide information on solutions and opportunities from AGOA Extended and Enhanced Act of 2015</i></p> <p>Opening Remarks: Jeffrey L. Jackson, Senior Advisor, USAID</p> <p>Chair: Kim Ward, Regional Director, U.S. African Development Foundation</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S'khulumi Ntsoaole, Former Minister of Trade and Industry, Lesotho • Colette Moudhouma, President, Association Tumanguianu, Gabon • William Massawe, Executive Director, Centre for Sustainable Development Initiatives (CSDI), Tanzania <p>Q&A</p>	<p>Andgondje Friendship Stadium</p>

TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2015		
17:30 – 18:45	<p>Panel V <i>Recommendations, Review and Communiqué Drafting /Press Conference</i></p> <p><i>During this session, members will review the draft recommendations and Communiqué from the Secretariat for adoption to be followed immediately by a Press Conference.</i></p> <p>Chair: Fred Oladeinde, AGOA Civil Society Organization Network Secretariat Co- Chair: Chantal Paraiso, Chair, AGOA Civil Society, Gabon</p>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium
19:00 -21:00	<p>VIP Reception and Business to Business(B2B)Networking Hosted by Private Sector <i>(Invitation only)</i></p>	Pele Hall
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015		
8:00 – 9:00	<p>Registration and Continental Breakfast & EXHIBIT FLOOR OPENS</p>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium
8:45– 10:15	<p>Ministerial Opening Ceremony -Invitation Only</p>	
10:45 -11:05	<p>Read out for Ministerial Forum from African Members Consultative Group, Civil Society, AWEP, and Private Sector- Invitation Only</p>	
11:15 -12:30	<p>PANEL VI:</p> <p>Chair: Fred O. Oladeinde, AGOA Civil Society Network Secretariat Co-Chair: Chantal Paraiso, AGOA Civil Society, Gabon</p> <p>Video Presentation: <i>Tax Citizenship and budget Efficiency</i> Amadou C. Kanoute, Executive Director, CICODEV, Senegal</p> <p>Discussion: <i>Secretariat planned post Forum in- country consultations on recommendations from the 2015 Forum.</i></p> <p><i>The Secretariat will present a list of post forum activities and events to achieve the recommendations from the Forum in collaboration with country chapters.</i></p>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium
12:30 – 14:00	<p>Buffet Lunch</p>	Lunch Tent

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015		
14:15- 15:15	<p>Workshop 3 <i>Doing Business under AGOA for Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises</i> Module A: Trade Assistance; and Technical Capacity Building</p> <p><i>Opening Plenary</i> <i>What are the different opportunities and programs available to African businesses for technical assistance and capacity building for trade under AGOA?</i></p> <p><i>Opening Welcome:</i> Fred Oladeinde, Chair, AGOA CSO Network Secretariat- Chantal Paraiso, Chair, Co-Chair, AGOA Civil Society Gabon – Rachel Ebaneth, President, AWEP Gabon (invited)</p> <p><i>Panelists:</i> Mathew Rees, Deputy Coordinator Trade Africa (East Africa),USAID Andre Brice Boubendje, Director General of Pension Plan and Investment of Defense Forces, Gabon Charles A. Harwood, Director, Northwest Regional Office, U.S. Federal Trade Commission Abigail Burgessson, Special Programmes Manager, African Women Development Fund, Ghana Caroline Sack Kendem, President, AWEP Cameroon Chapter <i>Chair: Ana Guevara</i>, AGOA CSO Advisory Board</p> <p><i>Q&A</i></p>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium
15:30 -18:30	<p>Workshop 4 <i>Doing Business under AGOA for Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises</i></p> <p>Module B: Doing Business Best Practices Financing and Payment Terms; Marketing, Competitiveness and Culture; and Distribution & Logistics</p> <p><i>What are the options and best practices for African businesses to use for access to U.S. credit, financing and payments when they are shipping goods to the U.S? Why is it important to do market research and know about cultural and customer service practices when building a brand and finding a U.S. partner? How can you find distributors and options for logistics and transportation providers to move product from Africa to the United States?</i></p> <p><i>Experts:</i> Cosmas Mamhunze, Trade & Investment Specialist, USAID Southern Africa, Trade Hub Jeffrey L. Jackson, Senior Private Sector Advisor, Africa Bureau, USAID Erik Watremez, Managing Partner Francophone Africa, Ernst & Young Fred Oladeinde, Chair, AGOA CSO Network Secretariat Abou Fall, AGOA & Value Chains Coordinator, USAID West Africa Trade Hub</p>	

	<p>Brian Glancy, Director, Trade Facilitation, USAID Southern Africa Trade Hub, Botswana Pascale Ayitebe, AWEP, Benin (invited) Comfort Sakoma, Executive Director for Nigeria, WEConnect International <i>Chair: Ana Guevara</i>, AGOA CSO Advisory Board</p>	
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2015		
18:30 -20:30	<p><i>U. S. Government Reception</i> Hosted by U. S. Ambassador Cynthia Akuetteh</p>	Lunch Tent
THURSDAY, AUGUST. 27, 2015		
08:00 -09:00	<i>Continental Breakfast / Exhibit Floor OPENS</i>	Andgondje Friendship Stadium
10:00 –13:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Workshop 5 <i>Doing Business under AGOA for Micro Small Medium Enterprises</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Module C: Regulatory Requirements <i>Consumer Protection & Fair Marketplace Competition; Packaging, Labeling & Trademark; and Customs, Agriculture and other Compliance</i></p> <p><i>Why is it important to comply with U.S. policies and programs that promote consumer choice and encourage consumer confidence in the international marketplace? What are the rigorous branding, marketing and packaging regulatory rules that businesses importing to the U.S. must comply with to avoid possible refusal of the products into the country, product detention, monetary penalties, seizure, or even recall after the importation is completed? How can you ensure compliance with the rules and documentation required by U.S. import agencies?</i></p> <p>Experts: Deon Woods Bell, Counsel, U.S. Federal Trade Commission Anthony Carroll, Pragma, USAID Fred Oladeinde, Chair, AGOA CSO Network Secretariat Erik Watremez, Managing Partner Francophone Africa, Ernst & Young Gladice Constance, AWEP (invited) Evans Chinembiri, Trade & Investment Specialist, USAID Southern Africa Trade Hub <i>Chair: Ana Guevara – AGOA CSO Advisory Board</i></p>	
16:45– 17:15	<i>Closing Ceremony</i>	
17:15 – 19:00	<p><i>Closing Reception</i> Hosted by Government of Gabon</p>	Nomad Hotel

Summary: H.R.1295 — 114th Congress (2015-2016)

For full text of HR 1295 visit <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1295/text>

Public Law No: 114-27 (06/29/2015)

Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015

TITLE I--EXTENSION OF AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act of 2015

(Sec. 103) This bill amends the Trade Act of 1974 and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) to extend through FY2025 the duty-free treatment of the products of beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries under those Acts.

The extended period also applies to:

- the preferential treatment of apparel articles wholly assembled, or components knit-to-shape and wholly assembled, in one or more beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries from yarns originating in the United States or one or more beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries or former beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries, or both; and
- the third-country fabric program granting duty-free treatment of apparel articles wholly assembled, or knit-to-shape and wholly assembled, or both, in one or more lesser developed beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries, regardless of the country of origin of the fabric or the yarn used to make such articles.

(Sec. 104) This bill amends the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) to revise rules of origin for duty-free treatment of articles of beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries.

(Sec. 105) The President must not terminate the designation of a country as a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country unless, at least 60 days before termination, the President notifies Congress and the country of that intention.

The President, instead of terminating the designation, may withdraw, suspend, or limit the duty-free treatment for any article that is the growth, product, or manufacture of a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country if that would be more effective in promoting the country's compliance with certain requirements, including a market-based economy and the rule of law, the protection of human rights and internationally-recognized worker rights, elimination of trade barriers to the United States, and non-engagement in activities that undermine U.S. national security or foreign policy interests or support acts of international terrorism.

The President may not withdraw, suspend, or limit the duty-free treatment before notifying Congress and the country in question of that intention at least 60 days in advance.

The President shall:

- publish annually in the Federal Register a notice of review and request for public comments on whether beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries are meeting the eligibility requirements for preferential treatment under AGOA and the Trade Act of 1974, and
- establish a process for interested persons to file a petition with the United States Trade Representative (USTR) regarding the compliance of sub-Saharan African countries with such requirements.

The President may also, at any time, initiate an out-of-cycle review of whether a beneficiary sub-Saharan African country is making continual progress in meeting preferential treatment eligibility requirements.

(Sec. 106) To be eligible for preferential treatment a sub-Saharan African country must make progress toward establishing a market-based economy that protects the private property rights of women as well as those of men.

(Sec. 107) It is the sense of Congress that beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries should develop strategies biennially for more effective utilization of AGOA trade benefits.

It is further the sense of Congress that the biennial AGOA utilization strategies should:

- review potential exports under AGOA and identify opportunities and obstacles to increased trade and investment and enhanced poverty reduction,
- set out a strategy to promote small business,
- eliminate obstacles to regional trade and promote greater utilization of AGOA trade benefits and establish a plan to fully implement the Agreement on Trade Facilitation of the World Trade Organization, and
- be published on the appropriate websites of each sub-Saharan African country and the USTR.

(Sec. 108) It is U.S. policy to continue to seek to deepen and expand trade and investment ties between sub-Saharan Africa and the United States through specified actions.

(Sec. 109) This bill amends the AGOA Acceleration Act of 2004 to direct the President, now through the Department of Agriculture, to identify any eligible sub-Saharan African country (currently only 10) having the greatest potential to increase marketable exports of agricultural products to the United States and the greatest need for agricultural technical assistance, particularly with respect to developing food safety standards. The President must also assign 30 (currently 20) fulltime personnel to provide this assistance to these countries to ensure that their exports of agricultural products, particularly from businesses and sectors that engage women farmers and entrepreneurs, meet U.S. requirements.

The President shall take any measures necessary to ensure adequate coordination of federal agencies relating to agricultural technical assistance for sub-Saharan Africa.

(Sec. 110) The President shall report biennially to Congress, starting not later than one year after enactment of this Act, on trade and investment between the United States and sub-Saharan African countries and implementation of this Act.

The USTR shall report every five years to Congress, starting not later than one year after enactment of this Act, on sub-Saharan African countries that have expressed an interest in entering into a free trade agreement with the United States.

TITLE II--EXTENSION OF GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES

(Sec. 201) The duty-free treatment under the GSP is extended under the Trade Act of 1974 through December 31, 2017.

This bill requires the liquidation or reliquidation (refund of duties) on duty-free articles that entered into the United States after July 31, 2013, and before the 30th day after enactment of this Act.

(Sec. 202) The President may designate certain cotton articles as eligible for duty-free treatment only for least-developed beneficiary developing countries.

(Sec. 203) The competitive need limitation and waiver requirements under the GSP shall apply to certain import-sensitive articles exported (directly or indirectly) from beneficiary developing countries to the United States during calendar 2014.

(Sec. 204) The President may now designate certain luggage and travel articles as eligible articles from all beneficiary developing countries.

TITLE III--EXTENSION OF PREFERENTIAL DUTY TREATMENT PROGRAM FOR HAITI

(Sec. 301) This bill amends the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act to extend through December 19, 2025, the duty-free entry of apparel articles, including woven articles and certain knit articles, assembled in Haiti and imported from Haiti or the Dominican Republic to the United States.

The special duty-free rules for Haiti shall now extend through September 30, 2025.

TITLE IV--EXTENSION OF TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015

(Sec. 402) This bill amends the Trade Adjustment Assistance Extension Act of 2011 to repeal the declaration that trade adjustment assistance (TAA) program requirements in effect as of February 13, 2011, under the Trade Act of 1974 shall apply to petitions for certification to apply for TAA for workers, firms, and farmers that are filed before January 1, 2014.

(Sec. 403) This bill amends the Trade Act of 1974 to extend through June 30, 2021:

- the TAA program, and
- the reemployment trade adjustment assistance (RTAA) program.

Funds are made available for FY2015-FY2021 for training of adversely affected workers as well as (through June 30, 2021) reemployment and case management services.

This bill reauthorizes appropriations:

- through June 30, 2021, for the TAA program for workers; and
- for FY2015-FY2021 for the TAA program for firms and farmers.

(Sec. 404) Primary indicators of performance replace core indicators of performance, and now include among other factors the percentage and number of workers receiving TAA benefits who are in:

- unsubsidized employment, and
- an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary schooling credential or employment and who are achieving measurable gains in skills toward that credential or employment.

Mandatory reporting of data on training must now include:

- the average cost per workers of receiving training, and
- the percentage of workers who receive training as well as obtained unsubsidized employment related to it.

(Sec. 405) The Department of Labor must use specified criteria to determine the eligibility of workers to apply for TAA if no determination has been made, upon enactment of this Act, as to whether to certify a group of workers or firms as eligible pursuant to a petition filed between January 1, 2014, and enactment of this Act. The Department must reconsider any determination made before enactment of this Act not to certify such workers or firms, and to certify them as eligible if they meet the specified requirements.

(Sec. 406) This bill increases from 52 to 65 additional weeks of TAA payments in a 78-week period the length of additional time permissible to complete training.

(Sec. 407) This bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to extend the tax credit for health insurance costs of a taxpayer and qualifying family members through 2020. The tax credit for health insurance costs is a refundable tax credit equal to 72.5% of the cost of qualified health coverage paid by an eligible individual (defined as one who is receiving a trade adjustment allowance, is eligible for the alternative trade adjustment assistance program, or is over age 55 and receives pension benefits from the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation [PBGC]).

A taxpayer shall make an election to have the tax credit apply for any eligible coverage month during a taxable year. An eligible coverage month is one in which an eligible individual is covered by qualified health insurance, does not have other specified coverage, and is not imprisoned.

The Departments of the Treasury, of Health and Human Services (HHS), and of Labor and the PBGC shall conduct a public outreach, including on the Internet, to inform individuals eligible for the tax credit for health insurance costs on the extension of such credit and the availability of the election to claim such credit retroactively for coverage months beginning after December 31, 2013.

TITLE V--IMPROVEMENTS TO ANTIDUMPING AND COUNTERVAILING DUTY LAWS

American Trade Enforcement Effectiveness Act

(Sec. 502) This bill amends the Tariff Act of 1930 with respect to the administration and enforcement of antidumping (AD) and countervailing duty (CVD) orders.

Neither the administering authority (the Secretary of Commerce, or another U.S. officer given the responsibility by law) nor the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC), as the case may be, is required to determine, or make any adjustments to, a countervailable subsidy rate or weighted average dumping margin based on any assumptions about information the interested party would have provided if it had complied with a request for information.

The administering authority and the USITC, when relying during an AD or CVD proceeding on secondary information rather than on information obtained in the course of an investigation or review, shall not be required to corroborate any dumping margin or CVD in a separate segment of the same proceeding.

The administering authority may use a countervailable subsidy rate or dumping margin meeting specified criteria, including the highest rate or margin, when making an inference adverse to a party's interests.

(Sec. 503) The USITC may not determine that there is no material injury or threat of material injury to a domestic industry from imports merely because that industry is profitable or its performance has recently improved.

This bill includes gross profits, operating profits, net profits, and ability to service debt among the relevant economic factors the USITC must evaluate in examining the impact of imports of merchandise on a domestic industry in material injury determinations.

The USITC, in determining market share and the factors affecting financial performance when domestic producers internally transfer significant production of the domestic like product for the production of a downstream article and sell significant production of the domestic like product in the merchant market, may no longer need to find that the production of the domestic like product sold in the merchant market is not generally used in the production of that downstream article.

(Sec. 504) The administering authority shall consider to be outside the ordinary course of trade any particular market situation that prevents a proper comparison with the export price or constructed export price.

The administering authority may use another calculation methodology than the ordinary one in determining the constructed value of subject merchandise being imported at less than fair value if a particular market situation exists where the cost of materials and fabrication or other processing of any kind does not accurately reflect the cost production in the ordinary course of trade.

(Sec. 505) This bill revises requirements regarding administering authority determinations as to whether there are reasonable grounds to believe or suspect that a foreign like product is being sold at less than cost of production in AD investigations or reviews. Information supplied by an interested party, based upon observed prices or constructed prices or costs, may no longer constitute a reasonable ground to believe or suspect such a sales condition. The administering authority in making its determinations, however, shall request information necessary to calculate the constructed value and cost of production of subject merchandise in such investigations or reviews.

The administering authority, in valuing the factors of production to determine the normal value of merchandise exported from a nonmarket economy country, may disregard price or cost values without further investigation if it determines that broadly available export subsidies existed or instances of subsidization occurred with respect to those price or cost values or if they were subject to an AD order.

(Sec. 506) Certain factors are specified for the administering authority to consider when deciding whether it would be unduly burdensome in CVD or AD investigations and reviews to examine voluntary responses from exporters or producers which are not the subjects of the investigation or review.

TITLE VI--TARIFF CLASSIFICATION OF CERTAIN ARTICLES

(Sec. 601) This bill amends the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States to provide for the duty-free treatment of certain recreational performance outerwear as well as of certain protective active footwear.

TITLE VII--MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

(Sec. 701) The President shall report to Congress on the contribution of U.S. trade preference programs to reducing poverty and eliminating hunger.

TITLE VIII--OFFSETS

(Sec. 801) This bill amends the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1958 (COBRA) to extend customs user fees for the:

- processing of merchandise formally entered or released into the United States through July 7, 2025, and additionally for the period from July 29, 2025, through September 30, 2025; and
- charging of other specified customs user fees through FY2025.

The United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act is also amended to extend through June 30, 2025, and for the additional period between July 15, 2025, and September 30, 2025, the increase from 0.21% ad valorem to 0.3464% ad valorem in the customs user fees for the processing of merchandise formally entered or released into the United States which is scheduled to begin on December 1, 2015.

(Sec. 803) The required installment of corporate estimated tax payments for a corporation with assets of at least \$1 billion which is otherwise due in the third quarter of 2020 shall be increased by 8%.

(Sec. 804) The Internal Revenue Code is amended to disallow the American Opportunity, the Hope Scholarship, and Lifetime Learning tax credits and the tax deduction for tuition and related expenses unless the taxpayer receives a payee statement containing the tax identification number (TIN) of the individual claiming such credits or deductions.

(Sec. 805) An educational institution shall be exempt from tax penalties for failure to provide the TIN of an individual who is claiming a tax credit for tuition and related expenses if the institution makes a sworn certification that it has complied with standards promulgated by the Internal Revenue Service for obtaining the TIN.

(Sec. 806) Tax penalties are increased for failure to file correct information returns and correct payee statements and for intentional disregard of filing requirements for them.

(Sec. 807) The requirement making a portion of the child care expense tax credit refundable shall not apply to a taxpayer that elects to exclude foreign earned income from gross income.

(Sec. 808) Title XVIII (Medicare) of the Social Security Act is amended to require Medicare payment of renal dialysis services furnished on or after January 1, 2017, by a renal dialysis facility or provider of services paid to an individual with an acute kidney injury. This payment must be adjusted by any applicable geographical adjustment factor, and HHS may also adjust it by any other adjustment factor. [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)



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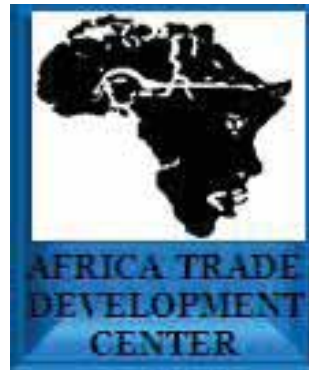
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