

**Communiqué**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> AGOA Spring Conference**  
April 13, 2015  
Washington, DC U.S.A

**AGOA Civil Society Organization Network Secretariat**  
**Washington, D.C. U.S.A.**  
**April 22, 2016**

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> AGOA Spring conference under the theme “*The Role of Civil Society in AGOA Trade Expansion and Inclusive Development in Africa*” kicked off with the Chairman’s Advisory Board Meeting on Wednesday, April 13, 2016, from 10 am -12:30 pm, followed by a Town Hall Meeting in the afternoon from 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm for the purpose of discussing the planning for the Civil Society Session of the 2016 U.S.-Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, also known as the AGOA Forum; and concluded with a panel discussion on Trade and Private Sector Expansion: A Vehicle for Increased Economic Growth and Improved Standard of living in Africa at the World Bank on Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 pm -5:30 pm.

**Chairman’s Advisory Board Meeting –Wednesday, April 13, 2016**

The advisory board meeting started with welcome remarks by Mr. Fred Oladeinde, President, The Foundation for Democracy in Africa and Chair, the AGOA Civil Society Organization (CSO) Network. In his opening remarks, Mr. Oladeinde welcomed invited participants to this closed door session, and provided an overview of some of the major challenges that faced the passage of AGOA, during the prior year’s (2015) advisory board meeting, such as:

- Passage of the AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act of 2015 by the U.S. Congress and signing into law by President Barack Obama
- Planning for the 14<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum in Libreville, Gabon
- Issues raised by U.S. Congress regarding the export of U.S. poultry, pork and beef to South Africa, as well as, the requirement of an out of cycle compliance review request by the U.S. Congress of South Africa’s eligibility under the AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act (AEEA) of 2015

Mr. Oladeinde congratulated everyone in the meeting, which consisted of participants representing civil society, the private sector, members of the Obama Administration, Congress, the African Diplomatic Corp and the African Union for their work and for supporting the AGOA Civil Society Organization Network’s efforts on Capitol Hill and across Africa in getting AEEA of 2015 passed and signed to law; the successful organization of 14<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum that brought more than 500 CSOs, including members of the African Women Entrepreneur Program (AWEP) to Libreville to participate in and contribute to the recommendations presented to the Ministerial Session of the 2015 AGOA Forum. He applauded the Office of US Trade Representative (USTR) and the Government of South Africa and other stakeholders in the United States and South Africa for the amicable resolution of issues raised by Congress on poultry, pork and beef and the full participation of South Africa under AEEA of 2015. Mr. Oladeinde underscored the need for stakeholders in Civil Society, government and the private sector to: align programs and activities to support the successful implementation of AEEA and ensure that eligible countries take full advantage of the benefits of AGOA; educate stakeholders in Sub-Saharan Africa on the eligibility compliance and preventing the removal of their respective countries from the list of AGOA eligible countries; and work collectively

to remove supply side constraints currently limiting competitiveness of African products in markets across the United States, while addressing capacity gaps.

The Chairman reminded participants that the advisory board meeting was being guided by the Chatham House Rules which prevents attributions to speakers by name and affiliation for contributions made during the advisory board meeting. Next the Chairman requested that advisory board members introduce themselves and provide short opening remarks; then he read the names and affiliation of members not in attendance, followed by invited partners; after which he read the bio of speakers that were invited to address the advisory board, the speakers are as follows:

- Ms. Oren Shaw-Wyche, Deputy Assistant Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Mr. Scott B. Ticknor, Acting Deputy, Office of Economic and Regional Affairs, Africa Bureau, U.S. Department of State
- Mr. Bill Jackson, Acting Assistant Deputy U.S. Trade Representative for Textiles, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR)
- Mr. Eric Biel, Associate Undersecretary, Bureau of International Labor Affairs, Department of Labor
- Mr. Mamadou Kane, Minister Counsel, Embassy of Republic of Senegal to the United States

Noting that there is less than ten years left for the implementation of AEEA, the Chairman expressed the need to ascertain the best way for the Secretariat to harmonize its programs and activities to support government and private sector agencies on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean in ensuring the success of AEEA, while addressing the challenges and opportunities posed by the recent passage of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) between the United States and countries in South Asia. Hence, each speaker was given the opportunity to take the floor and advise the Secretariat on the most effective way AGOA Civil Society Organization Network members could best support them in their efforts to implement AEEA and achieve their respective goals and objectives, while preparing for post AGOA - beyond 2025.

### **Discussion Highlights**

Focusing on: The Role of Civil Society in AGOA Trade Expansion and Inclusive Development in Africa through 2025 and beyond:

#### **1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA & ANNUAL COMPLIANCE**

AGOA remains the cornerstone U.S. - Africa trade policy, and since its inception in 2000, AGOA has resulted in quadrupling exports from Africa to the United States and tripling U.S. investment in Africa.

**AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act of 2015** - This bill amends the Trade Act of 1974 and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), extending the bill through FY2025, and 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 lesser developed beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries, regardless of the country of origin of the fabric or the yarn used to make such articles.

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.

## **2. ANNUAL US- SUB SAHARAN AFRICA TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION FORUM – AGOA FORUM**

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)<sup>0</sup> states that the President, in consultation with the Congress, shall encourage United States nongovernmental organizations to host annual meetings with nongovernmental organizations from sub-Saharan Africa in conjunction with the annual meetings of the Forum for the purpose fostering close economic ties between the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Conclusions from the 2016 Advisory Board Meeting on the role of CSO Network members in trade expansion and inclusive development in Africa include:

- a. Provide education and technical support on compliance with the eligibility criteria to prevent loss of benefits
- b. Work with eligible countries to initiate Early Warning System to mitigate removal from eligibility list
- c. Support Civil Society engagement and participation in the development of AGOA Country Strategy Plans to ensure ownership and address capacity gaps.
- d. Conduct training workshops in eligible countries on the Role of civil society organization in trade expansion and inclusive development in Africa
- e. Organize the annual civil society session of the AGOA Forum and present recommendation to the annual Ministerial Session on CSO inputs and contributions
- f. Work closely in eligible countries with AGOA Resource Centers; USAID missions and USAID Hubs to promote civil society outreach training and engagement.
- g. Conduct programs through workshops; seminars; webinar; teleconference year round to strengthen collaboration with Civil Society Counterparts in Africa including non-eligible countries to expand AGOA benefits across sub Saharan Africa.
- h. Establish a working group, within the Secretariat, on the impact of TPP on AGOA

In concluding, the Chairman thanked everyone for their valued contributions to the success of the advisory board meeting, and invited them to join him for the Town Hall Meeting that took place later that afternoon.

### **Town Hall Meeting - Wednesday, April 13, 2016**

Focusing on: Planning of the Civil Society Session of the 2016 AGOA Forum in the United States

The discussion was conducted by: Ms. Shirley Rivens-Smith, President, US-Africa Sister Cities Foundation; Mr. Henry Kamara, Managing Director, Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Company; and Fred Oladeinde, Chairman, AGOA CSO Network, and focused on the date, venue, length, theme and title of panel discussions for the Civil Society Session of the 2016 AGOA Forum. Because the United States Government Interagency Working Group has not decided on the dates and venue for the 2016 AGOA Forum, Town Hall participants agreed that it would be prudent to make an announcement regarding the Civil Society (CS) Session of the 2016 AGOA Forum at a later date. However, they did agree that the CS Session panels should focus on how civil society can best support AGOA trade expansion and inclusive development in a sustainable way. Participants also requested that the Secretariat work with the Interagency Working Group regarding getting the group's approval for Civil Society Organization members to participate on the Ministerial panels; CSO' participation in the Ministerial panels would underscore the importance of civil society, and the role they play in trade expansion and inclusive development, similar to how civil society invites speakers from government and the private sector to participate on panels during the CS Session.

During the Town Hall Meeting participants agreed to adopt the format from the Civil Society Session for the 14<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum which consisted of a half day panel the day before a full day that included a joint opening session and parallel panels for civil society, and the private sector. Information on the date, venue, and theme will be shared with members, as soon as, the information becomes available to ensure strong participation and to provide an opportunity to reflect on the challenges and achievements since the passage of AEEA of 2015, a year ago.

**Trade and Private Sector Expansion: A Trade and Private Sector Expansion: A Vehicle for Economic Growth and Improved Standard of Living in Africa** - Friday April 15, 2016 at the World Bank

The panel discussion was designed to present members with the opportunity to engage high level policy makers from the U.S. Government on AGOA; the United Nations on Sustainable Development Goals; the African Union on Agenda 2063; and other stakeholder governments on their programs, and the role and engagement of civil society organizations and citizens in the implementation of these initiatives. Speakers included:

- H. E. Fatima Haram Acyl, Commissioner for Trade and Industry, African Union Commission
- Mr. Eric Biel, Associate Undersecretary for Labor, Bureau of International Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor
- Ms. Nancy Donaldson, Chief Director, Washington Office, International Labour Organization
- Ms. Florizelle “Florie” Liser, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa (USTR), Office of the USTR, Executive Office of the President of the United States
- H.E. Mninwa Johannes Mahlangu, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to the United States

The session was moderated by Ms. Patricia Baine, President, The African Society and Mr. Robert Kirk, Senior Vice President, International Development Group.

Discussants for the session were Mr. Henry Yamba Kamara, Managing Director, Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Company and Ms. Temitope Illuyemi, Associate Director, Global Government Relations and Public Policy, Proctor and Gamble. After giving opening remarks, discussants asked the speakers questions concerning how their institutions are working with civil society organizations and other citizens’ groups on implementation of the three policy frameworks and how the AGOA Civil Society Organization can assist in using its Network to support implementation on the ground in Africa and advocating for support across the globe.

Recommendations from the speaker’s include:

- The need for partnerships with Civil Society in providing education, and training
- Identifying capacity gaps
- And assisting with program monitoring and evaluation and compliance

The recommendations from the 2<sup>nd</sup> AGOA Spring Conference are being distributed widely and used by the Secretariat as white paper for implementation of programs and events in its effort to support the implementation of AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act of 2015 through 2025 and beyond.