



Communiqué
AGOA Civil Society Forum
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Presented to 12th AGOA Ministerial Session
On
12th August 2013
African Union Commission Conference Center
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The Civil Society Organization Session of the 2013, African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum took place on August 10-11, 2013, under the Theme “Sustainable Transformation through Trade & Technology”. The session took place at the African Union Commission Conference Center, in Addis Ababa.

The CSO session of the 12th AGOA Forum brought together over 100 delegates from the United States and across AGOA eligible countries to address the following issues, with the view of using AGOA provisions to expand trade and investment between Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the United States;

- Promotion of Micro and SMEs to boost African exports to USA;
- Diaspora’s role in Sub-Saharan Africa's sustainable transformation through trade and transfer of science and technology;
- Delivering appropriate technology and technical assistance to smallholder farmers in rural communities;
- Strengthening Textile and Garment Manufacturing Industries to Improve African Exports to US; and
- Achieving an African Green Growth Trade and Technology

Furthermore, the group discussed the best way to engage policy makers in the U.S and in AGOA eligible countries on:

1. Seamless extension of the AGOA legislation to September 2027 from current expire date of September 30, 2015.

2. Timely reforms to specific elements of the AGOA legislation to improve AGOA effectiveness and efficiency as a Preferential Market Access tool, for SSA eligible countries.

In all the five sessions, knowledgeable and experienced speakers shed light by sharing their experience on what has worked and what has not with corresponding factors behind in the respective subject matters; identified tangible gaps and recommended practical measures to be taken if both sides have to maximize the benefits from AGOA. The participants, drawn from different segments of the societies in SSA and the US, comprising civil society organizations, network members, small and medium enterprises, young professionals and others have thoroughly debated over the issues and expressed their commitments to join efforts towards really effective and meaningful AGOA up-to 2015 and based on the results to materialize extension of AGOA beyond 2015 to 2027.

Therefore;

We call on the Obama Administration to unveil its legislative and policy “Road Map” for the seamless extension of AGOA beyond 2015. We further call on the Obama Administration to share its lists of specific reforms to the AGOA legislation. We ask that the Obama Administration share the requested information before the closing of the 12th AGOA Forum in Addis Ababa on August 13, 2013. We look forward to taking action to promote the extension of AGOA to see continued success of bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

We congratulate U.S Trade Representative Michael Forman on his appointment by President Barack Obama. We call on the Obama Administration, to constructively engage and consult with CSO’s, regarding the AGOA reform agenda, on a regular basis.

We welcomed President Obama on his recent trip to Africa and the Administration’s sensitivity and reaction to CSO’s prior recommendations including:

- * OPIC increased investment in Africa, including financing renewable energy projects;
- * Administration campaign to encourage more Americans to do business in Africa, including a major trade mission to Africa to be led by Commerce Secretary, Penny Pritzker;
- * Dramatic increases in financing and support for trade and investment via EXIM;
- * AGOA reform to focus on empowerment of small and medium sized companies, entrepreneurs, including women;
- * AGOA eligible country-led plans, to support small farmers.

- * Support for regional integration;
- * Negotiation of regional investment treaty,
- * Reducing tariffs and pursuing a customs union with EAC;
- * Customs and trade facilitation;
- * Skills training and access to capital for young Africans to reduce youth unemployment rate;
- * Providing educational exchanges for African youth.

We hereby pledge CSO's support for stronger and bolder US-Africa Trade and Economic cooperation.

We congratulate the AGOA Ambassadors working Group; under the leadership of the co-chairs ; H.E. Girma Birru, Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and H.E. Mr. South Soborun, Ambassador of the Republic of Mauritius. We thank the Group for their re-authorization recommendations with respect to AGOA.

We congratulate, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the Brookings Africa Growth Initiative (AGI), for their report on “The African Growth and Opportunity Act: An Empirical Analysis of the Possibilities Post-2015” and welcome discussions of the analysis and findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- We call for coordinated approaches, common position, cooperation and transparency by all stakeholders; Government, Private Sector, Civil Society, working on the Re authorization and Reform of AGOA from both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.
- We call on the 113th Congress to re-authorize AGOA, together with the Third Country Fabric Provision, beyond the current expire date of September 30, 2015, to a new date of September 30, 2027.
- We call on the Obama Administration to give a date and venue, for the 13th AGOA US-Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, to be held in Washington DC during 2014, and elevate the Forum to a Summit Level meeting with heads of state and governments.
- We commend the administration for the Power Africa Initiative, a critical missing piece of the developmental puzzle in achieving market competitiveness by African manufacturers. This will afford millions of people across Africa the opportunity to obtain a decent standard of living.

- We further call on the Obama Administration to work across party lines and closely with Congress to support pending legislation with regard to Power Africa.
- Call on the Obama Administration to fast track the implementation of the Trade Africa initiative beyond the EAC. Using regional investment treaties and providing expertise through a network of facilitative and topical agreements, such as Trade, Investment, and Development Cooperative Agreements (TIDCA's); Bilateral Investment Treaties, and investment and development friendly double taxation agreements, to facilitate trade by focusing on moving goods across borders faster and cheaper, and modernizing customs regime.
- Call on all AGOA eligible countries to Develop National AGOA Export Strategies, like Ethiopia and put in place policies and interventions to mitigate supply side constraints, in order to optimize the preferential benefits of AGOA.
- Call on African governments, empower women, promote gender equity, support Micro and SME's to Boost exports to USA under AGOA
- Call on AGOA eligible countries to strengthen textile and Garment Manufacturing industries to improve exports to the US under AGOA.
- Call on African countries to develop Aviation Corridors between important markets/hubs in Africa and the United States to facilitate direct air transportation linkages and enhance prices competitiveness.
- Call on both sides to give due attention to climate resilient, ecologically sustainable consumption and production based economic development strong enough to generate and benefit from sustainable trade, as the physical environment we are living in and natural resources we exploit are what we borrowed from next generation and demand sustainability.
- Call on both sides to start from addressing supply side constrains and exploring rich experiences in USA in enhancing competition and consumer protection in SSA towards competitiveness among enterprises who can easily meet the demands by American consumers and boost demand to maximize the expected benefits from AGOA;

We thank the government and the people of the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for their hospitality and for co-hosting the 12th AGOA Forum.