



March 10, 2015

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Chairman, House of Representatives  
Committee on Ways and Means  
United States House of Representatives  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin  
Ranking Member, House of Representatives  
Committee on Ways and Means  
United States House of Representatives  
2462 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Ryan and Ranking Member Sander Levin,

We, the members of the AGOA Civil Society Network, are writing to urge you to support a seamless and expeditious renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), slated to expire on September 30, 2015. Passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in 2000, with successive amendments by President George W. Bush in 2002 and 2004, AGOA now provides duty-free access to 40 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa for 6,800 products. This first-ever trade measure has historically benefited from bipartisan support in addition to strengthening U.S. relations with African nations and fostering vital economic growth both here and on the continent.

We specifically request the following actions:

1. **Reauthorize AGOA for 15 years until 2030.** Currently, African countries are losing momentum as a result of the uncertainty for American corporations across sectors, but especially in the manufacturing of apparel. For African economies to benefit fully from AGOA and in order for both imports and exports to grow significantly, a strong and stable foundation has to be built which requires sufficient time for major investments to be amortized. The renewal of AGOA should also include extension of the third-country fabric rule for the full term of the renewal.
2. **Reauthorize AGOA for all AGOA eligible countries.** In order for African economies to continue to grow, individual nations must not only thrive, but regions must grow stronger and collaborate. Economic integration requires strong alliances and partners. Withdrawing AGOA from certain economies will only weaken existing linkages, thus thwarting gains that have materialized or may materialize in the future.
3. **Act now for a timely renewal.** It is time to demonstrate that economic partnerships with African nations are important to the U.S. by not waiting until hundreds of thousands of jobs are lost to renew AGOA. In Lesotho alone, tens of thousands of jobs will be lost this month by primarily women due to the uncertainty of the reauthorization of AGOA.

4. **Fight for a democratic and stable Africa to counter terrorism.** There is no doubt that the scourge of terrorism is threatening countries in Africa with Boko Haram, Al Shabab and Al Qaeda in the Maghreb. Supporting sound, democratic economies is far less costly and far more productive than fighting the contagion of terrorism in many instances exacerbated by poverty, unemployment and hopelessness.

Prompt renewal of AGOA also protects jobs in America that are dependent upon trade with Africa. According to the U.S. Commerce International Trade Administration, “While U.S. exports to the world grew by 2.8 percent, U.S. exports to Sub-Saharan Africa (mostly composed of machinery and aircraft) increased by 6 percent, reaching \$25.4 billion.” AGOA encourages export led economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa and also serves as an incentive for African governments to liberalize trade policies and to engage in financial and fiscal restructuring.

Now is the time for the United States to be more proactive in promoting its business interests on the continent and in safeguarding the trade relationships we already have in place. Delay in renewing AGOA will cost hundreds of thousands of jobs in both Africa and the United States.

We call on you to vote on reauthorizing AGOA. In doing so, you will support not only the economic and security interests of 40 African nations, but the short and long-term economic and security interests of the United States.

Thank you, in advance, for consideration of this request and for your support.

Sincerely,

The AGOA Civil Society Network Secretariat

To add your name/ your organization name as signatory to “**AGOA CSO NETWORK  
CAMPAIGN TO RE AUTHORIZE AGOA**”

Email us @:agoacsonet@democracy-africa.org

Please put ***Add My Name/Organization*** in the subject line, and provide your ***First and Last Name, Title, Organization, Telephone Number*** along with any comments