THE 2011 AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT FORUM

BUILDING ON INCREASED U.S.- AFRICAN TRADE

DOS Photo

USAID PHOTO

USAID PHOTO

"We believe in Africa's promise and we are committed to Africa's future."

– Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

The 2011 U.S.-sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum (AGOA Forum) will take place on June 9-10, 2011, in Lusaka, Zambia. The Forum's theme is "Enhanced Trade through Increased Competitiveness, Value Addition and Deeper Regional Integration."

The AGOA Forum

The AGOA Forum is the only annual U.S. government ministerial meeting with sub-Saharan Africa. The 2011 Forum will bring together over 1,600 participants, including senior U.S. government officials, African government ministers and officials from the 37 AGOA beneficiary countries, African regional organizations, as well as U.S. and African business and civil society representatives. In addition, there are private sector and civil society activities, as well as youth and women's entrepreneurship events

AGOA History

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was signed into law in 2000 as part of the U.S. Trade and Development Act. It promotes economic development and expedites the integration of African economies into the world trading system. AGOA provides a framework for government-to-government, private sector, and civil society to work together to build trade capacity and to expand business links between the United States and Africa.

AGOA Results

Increased trade is one of the fastest ways to spur economic growth and development, and reduce poverty. In 2010, AGOA eligible countries exported $44 billion in products to the United States. Although petroleum products continued to account for the largest portion of AGOA imports, with a 91 percent share of overall AGOA imports, the program also has helped promote new, non-traditional, and value added exports from Africa. This includes products such as apparel, footwear, processed agricultural products, and manufactured goods.

AGOA also helps support regional economic integration and provides incentives for beneficiary countries to improve their investment climates; reduce corruption; improve infrastructure; and harmonize trade standards to help them become more competitive in the global marketplace.

AGOA Benefits for American Business

- Stronger commercial ties between Africa and the United States
- Better market opportunities and stronger commercial partners in Africa for U.S. companies
- Harmonized intra-regional trade, expanding Africa's potential as a U.S. trading partner
- Lowered African trade barriers, making the continent an easier place for U.S. companies to do business

In a short time, AGOA has helped increase two-way trade between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa to $82 billion, and greatly diversified the range of products being traded.

Trade Preferences For Eligible Countries

AGOA gives trade preferences to sub-Saharan African countries provided they meet the program's eligibility criteria, including those related to economic, legal, and human rights issues. Currently, 37 sub-Saharan countries meet AGOA's eligibility criteria. Eligible countries can export products to the United States duty-free – including nearly 6,500 products from apparel to automobiles, and footwear to fruit. AGOA also provides a framework for technical assistance to help countries take advantage of the trade preferences.