



The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)

Thousands of U.S. jobs and billions in trade are at risk. Congress must act now to modernize and pass a long-term reauthorization of this vital program.

- For 26 years, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has been the foundation of U.S. trade and economic relationships with Africa, unlocking key African markets for U.S. companies, allowing them to diversify supply chains and better compete globally. **Unless Congress extends it, AGOA will expire on December 31, 2026.**
- Since its creation in 2000, AGOA has earned bipartisan support from multiple presidents and congresses – including when it was last reauthorized in 2015 – because of its strong economic benefits for the U.S. and Africa.
- AGOA has helped create hundreds of thousands of jobs, both in the U.S. and in African countries that meet its specific criteria (related to free markets, economic reforms, and eliminating barriers to U.S. trade). The Corporate Council on Africa estimates that more than [450,000 U.S. jobs](#) are linked to U.S.-Africa trade (150,000 from U.S. exports and 300,000 tied to U.S. imports).
- AGOA benefits the United States: U.S. exports to AGOA countries are nearly [300% greater than they were before AGOA](#).
- Secretary Rubio has [stated](#): “In Africa, America needs a policy of trade, not aid, and ... expanding opportunities for American companies.” AGOA is an essential tool for the administration’s “[Trade over Aid](#)” shift in global priorities.
- Allowing AGOA to lapse would cede America’s strategic, diplomatic, and economic interests to adversaries who continue their deliberate inroads into Africa. As of May 1st, [China has implemented a zero-tariff policy](#) on all but one African country, strongly signaling its desire for economic partnership with the continent.
- If AGOA is not renewed, American businesses and consumers will feel the consequences. The end of AGOA would mean that average U.S. tariffs on certain key supplier countries would more than double: from [10-15%](#) to [28% in Kenya](#), [32% in Lesotho](#), and [23% in Madagascar](#). For U.S. brands sourcing apparel from these countries, that will directly lead to higher costs: SanMar’s CEO has [warned](#) that African-made goods could increase in price by nearly a third if AGOA lapses.
- There is longstanding bipartisan support for extending AGOA. In January the House passed [a three-year AGOA extension](#) with broad bipartisan support ([340-54](#)), which the Senate has not acted on. Last Congress, Senators Risch (R-ID) and Coons (D-DE) introduced an [AGOA Renewal and Improvement Act](#) that included key reform proposals.

We urge Congress to reauthorize AGOA without delay, and submit the following recommendations to modernize and improve the law:

- **Pass a Long-Term Reauthorization.** Reauthorize AGOA for at least 16 years, matching the length of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Predictable, multi-year market access gives U.S. companies the certainty to build supply chains, deploy capital, and form lasting partnerships with African producers.
- **Boost AGOA Implementation.** Most eligible countries still lack an "AGOA utilization strategy," a national plan to grow exports under the program. Countries that have one have seen exports rise sharply, in some cases by several hundred to several thousand percent. Provide U.S. trade capacity-building assistance to countries that develop and implement these strategies, so AGOA's benefits reach more sectors and more people.
- **Reform Graduation Rules.** AGOA's current rules end a country's eligibility the moment it crosses an income threshold. A single strong economic year shouldn't trigger automatic loss of benefits. Require countries to sustain high-income status for several years before graduating, and allow extensions for countries negotiating a free trade agreement with the U.S. This preserves the regional jobs and supply chains AGOA has helped build.
- **Strengthen Cumulation to Reward Regional Production.** Expand AGOA's cumulation provision so that materials and components sourced across Africa, including from North African and other African Union members that have ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), can count toward the threshold for duty-free entry into the United States. Stronger regional cumulation aligns AGOA with the broader integration goals of AfCFTA, reduces the dependency of African producers on Chinese inputs, and ensures AGOA preferences accrue predominantly to U.S. and African producers rather than third-country suppliers.
- **Streamline Eligibility Reviews.** Conduct AGOA eligibility reviews every three years instead of annually. This frees U.S. government staff and resources to focus on stronger oversight and enforcement of AGOA's standards on governance, human rights, worker protections, and market openness.
- **Strengthen Critical Supply Chains.** Direct the U.S. International Trade Commission to study adding processed critical minerals and other strategic goods to AGOA's covered product list. Pair this with tax credits for U.S. companies investing in mineral processing and refining facilities in AGOA-eligible countries, where China currently dominates global supply chains. This leads to stronger U.S. supply chains and higher-value jobs across Africa.
- **Cut Outdated Paperwork.** Eliminate "textile visa" filings that Customs and Border Protection no longer needs to monitor shipments. Right-size CBP's compliance visits to target real risks instead of meeting an arbitrary quota. These reforms speed African exports while freeing U.S. enforcement capacity for higher priorities.

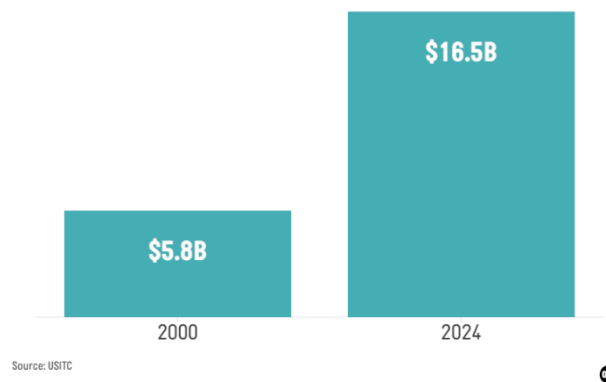
ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was enacted in 2000 to enhance U.S.-Africa trade and investment by granting eligible sub-Saharan African countries duty-free access to U.S. markets for over 6,500 products, beyond what is covered by the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). Countries must meet criteria related to market-based economy practices, rule of law, human rights, and economic reform, and country eligibility is reviewed on an annual basis. Currently, [32 sub-Saharan African countries](#) are eligible for AGOA. AGOA was reauthorized in 2015 until September 2025 by the Trade Preferences Extension Act (P.L. 114-27), with overwhelming bipartisan support. In January (as part of a [larger government funding bill](#)), Congress passed a one-year extension of AGOA that expires on December 31, 2026.

AGOA Matters for U.S. Businesses and Exports

- AGOA's eligibility conditions require beneficiary countries to reduce barriers to U.S. trade and investment, creating a virtuous cycle: the program builds African economic capacity while opening African markets to American exporters. **U.S. exports to AGOA countries have nearly tripled since the program's creation.**
- AGOA is a critical strategic asset to the U.S. apparel industry. SanMar, a supplier to household brands including Levi's and Walmart, reduced the share of apparel it sourced from China sourcing [from 46% to just 6%](#). [80% of executives](#) from leading U.S. fashion and apparel companies support renewing AGOA for at least another ten years.
- The U.S. uses AGOA to import refined [critical minerals essential for U.S. businesses](#), such as refined copper cathodes from the DRC and Zambia, as well as cobalt and manganese, critical for the batteries powering American electric vehicles.
- The program supports **thousands of U.S. jobs linked to trade with Africa**, including apparel companies that source their materials from AGOA countries, and companies like Boeing, with [aircraft being the largest U.S. export](#) to the region.

U.S. exports to AGOA-eligible countries are up nearly 300% since 2000.



AGOA Matters for African Development

- AGOA has led to a modest but meaningful increase [in U.S. imports of African products \(33%\)](#), which in a few countries has been transformational, with **hundreds of thousands of formal jobs created**. This helps people move from informal sector to more formal and

secure jobs, and increases tax revenue for governments which helps reduce aid dependency.

- AGOA has also encouraged African nations to move beyond exporting raw materials toward **high-value manufacturing** because it eliminates tariffs on some processed goods, and not just raw commodities, which helps African economies capture more of the value chain.
- The **apparel sector** has been AGOA's main success story:
 - In Kenya, the U.S. became by far the largest market for apparels, with exports growing from \$51.5 million in 2001 to \$531 million in 2024. Industry employment growing from 23,000 to 80,000 workers at its peak in 2018, as investors established factories to meet U.S. orders.
 - Lesotho's garment industry has boomed to become the largest private employer in the country, supplying U.S. megabrands like Levi's, Walmart, and Old Navy. 85% of factory workers are women, and for many this first opportunity to earn money outside of agriculture has increased their agency and ability to provide for their families.
- AGOA has also encouraged **greater value-added in agri-food**:
 - Kenyan exports of macadamia nuts to the U.S. grew from just \$72,000 in 2000 to \$52 million by 2018, a more than 700-fold increase. The sector now supports approximately 200,000 smallholder farmers and over 34 agribusinesses.
 - Mauritius has developed a thriving seafood processing sector including canned tuna, frozen fish fillets, and fish oil, alongside apparel, thanks to AGOA's duty-free access providing a competitive margin.
 - In Ghana AGOA has supported the growth of processed agricultural exports such as cocoa derivatives and other non-traditional products, with exports to the U.S. increasing from \$ 3 million in 2000, to \$ 62.5 million in 2024.
 - In Senegal, AGOA contributed to the initial entry of horticultural exports (such as green beans) into the U.S. market in the early 2000s. Fisheries also became one of the country's largest export sectors – a key market relied on by US-based companies like Starkist – and in 2024 the U.S. was the top destination for prepared and preserved fish from Senegal, reaching \$86 million.
- To stay eligible for AGOA, countries must make continual progress toward the **rule of law, human rights, and market-based reforms**. This makes AGOA a powerful tool for promoting stability and democracy across the continent.