



# Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK



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## US Senate Is the New Focus of AGOA Efforts As Uncertainty Over Key Extensions Wanes On

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Washington, DC – While action on the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) looks positive in the US House of Representatives, Senate action on the bill is at a standstill. Even with rock star Bono's appearance at a reception celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of AGOA's signing into law (by Clinton in May 2000) on the Senate side of the US Congress, Senator Lugar's version of AGOA III (S.1900) has not seen much progress in the Senate Finance Committee (where it will be evaluated, before being placed on the Senate floor for a vote).

AGOA III advocates are encouraging all AGOA supporters and other friends of Africa to urge Senator Grassley to support the speedy movement of AGOA in the Senate, and also to write other US senators, encouraging them to remind Senator Grassley and other Senate Finance Committee members how important AGOA and its timely passage is to the people of Africa. Africans on the continent are also encouraged to send letters to President Bush through the US embassy in their country and to let the US ambassador know how important the bill is to the welfare of poor people in Africa. According to Kenyan Embassy Officials in Washington, approximately 2,500 jobs have been lost over the last month due to uncertainty over whether the key benefits will be extended and companies are laying off slowly - in hundreds - as orders continue to decrease; the Lesotho Textile Exporters Association reports over \$40 million worth of orders either cancelled or put on hold until AGOA III benefits are clearly extended.

The most important points to get across in communications with US Senators and President Bush are: (1) in order to allow Africa build its fabric manufacturing capacity, it is important to extend AGOA from 2008 to 2015 and its third country fabric provision for three years - as proposed by the House AGOA version; (2) it is critical to pass the technical assistance and capacity building provisions in S.1900 to strengthen and diversify Africa's trade capacity, and make it more competitive; and (3) it is vital that the Senate passes AGOA now, and not later, to avoid further loss of jobs and income as firms continue to close down and take their business to Asia because of uncertainty over AGOA's extension.

For more details on AGOA III or for assistance in writing letters, email [agoacsonet@democracy-africa.org](mailto:agoacsonet@democracy-africa.org) or call 202.331.1333.

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