

SECOND US – SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA TRADE
AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION FORUM

REPORT ON THE NGO FORUM

NGO Perspective

On

Implementation, Progress

And

Future Objectives

January 13 – 15, 2003
Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture
Phoenix – Mauritius

NGO Perspective
on
Implementation, Progress and Future Objectives

JANUARY 2003

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**NGO Perspective
On
Implementation, Progress and Future Objectives**

Presented in Cooperation with

The African Union

Convened by:

The Foundation for Democracy in Africa
Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS)

In partnership with:

The Atlas Foundation for Economic Research
The Africa America Institute
ACDI-VOCA
Bread for the World
The International Leadership Institute
The International Foundation for Education and Self Help
Opportunities Industrialisation Centers International
American Bar Association – Africa Section

OPENING CEREMONY

During the opening ceremony of this prestigious event, Dr Satish Boolell, had the privilege to be the first speaker to address the assistance in his capacity as President of the Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS), the umbrella organisation of more than 150 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

The other speakers were Mr. Anthony Okonmah, Executive Director of the Foundation for Democracy in Africa (US); Ambassador Robert Perry, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa; Ambassador Vijay S. Makhan, African Union Interim Commissioner for Trade, Industry and Economic Affairs, and the Honourable, Minister Mrs. Arianne Navarre-Marie, Mauritius Minister of Women's Rights, Child Development & Family Welfare.

All the speakers were unanimous in recognising that civil society has a distinguished and vital role to play in the context of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). As Mr. Anthony Okonmah rightly put it, using the motto of AfrICANDO, "I can do. We can do. Africa can do. Civil Society can do."

Dr. Satish Boolell viewed the forum as "a reasonably healthy exercise to promote the relationship between the state and civil society, between the state and its people in a context of what is perceived by many as being suspicious globalisation." His speech was mainly centered on the problem of poverty and its devastating effects on the African population. In his opinion, poverty in Africa is not 'a natural disaster but man-made, the product of alien cultures being imposed during the early days of colonization, the lack of respect for cultural specificities."

Dr. Boolell went on to say that, according to him, poverty is not merely the absence of life's basic necessities, but is also about the lack of opportunity, of facilities for a good and happy life, of unrestricted access to education, of equal opportunities, of gender equality, of possibilities for individuals to achieve their cultural or spiritual potential, of the right to life and to produce life.

Rounding up his speech, Dr. Boolell referred to the words of the Mahatma Gandhi as food for thought to the assistance: "Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny?"

Mr. Anthony Okonmah, the Executive Director of the Foundation for Democracy in Africa, was the second speaker to address the participants. He expressed his pleasure to have members of the civil society in America and Africa present at the forum, not only those who were physically present but also those who were able to see the entire forum through streaming video and via the internet.

According to Mr. Okonmah, “the trade totals of the last two years demonstrate that AGOA has been a success.” In 2002, Sub-Saharan African producers sold \$8.2 billion more in goods to America under AGOA, representing a 61.5% increase. At the same time, US exports to sub-Saharan Africa also have increased, rising by 17.5%, even as US exports elsewhere in the world fell by 6.3%. Hence, United States is trading more with African countries than with the nations of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe combined.

He emphasized the fact that AGOA is a tool that can help small and medium African and American businesses to become more competitive. But he reminded the assistance that “AGOA is only a tool which will be effective only to the extent that we use it well and identify and correct any flaws.”

For U.S. Ambassador Robert C. Perry, ‘the acceptance of the Mauritian invitation to host the Forum demonstrates the American commitment to the partnership between the US and Sub-Saharan Africa to realize the opportunity that trade and investment offer for growth and development in Africa.’

Ambassador Robert Perry brought to the attention of the participants the fact that “the authors of the African Growth and Opportunity Act had listened to the concerns of the civil society in drafting the legislation, and included an institutional role for civil society representatives to offer their advice on AGOA’s implementation. Your insights have helped inform the US Administration’s anti-corruption initiatives that seek to promote transparency in governance to create natural checks and balances between government, the business community, and broad civic interests.”

He cited Mauritius as “an example of how a multi-party democracy can create the environment to attract investment that creates jobs that enable parents to earn decent livings to educate their children for social and economic advancement. Transparent governance creates the opportunity for cane cutters and factory workers to educate their children to become the engineers and information technicians who use technology to improve the quality of our lives.”

The benefits of development are not limited to the shores of Mauritius, whose commitment to democracy and education had created the conditions for growth. These benefits, according to Ambassador Perry, are within the reach of all countries, whose leaders commit themselves to equitable development, and “civil society has a key role in shaping and implementing that commitment.”

Ambassador Vijay S. Makhan informed the audience that “the African Union is committed and indeed bound by its Constitutive Act to interact with the African civil society, including the Non-Governmental Organizations, in the furtherance of its objectives.” He stressed on ‘the connection between the conflicts that plague the African continent and the problems of democratization. Indeed, the African Union holds the view that there is a close link between democratization in its larger sense and development which underscores the resolve of the African Union to create a political space within which the democratic aspirations of the African people can be realised and harnessed to

attaining the broader objective of socio-economic and political development on the continent.

In the Union's strategic programmes, he said priority has been given to the promotion of "peace, security, democracy and good political, economic and corporate governance as necessary conditions for the eradication of poverty, the foremost challenge facing the continent in the quest for sustainable development."

In her speech, Hon. Minister Mrs. Arianne Navarre-Marie focused on the status and roles of women in Africa in general. "We all have some common images of the African woman – the woman with the hoe, and or the woman with the child on her back. Indeed, a dynamic woman, fully involved in the processes of life. This has been so for generations. African women have always been the pillar of the family and society, assuring the economic subsistence of their families in the agricultural sector."

Mrs. Navarre-Marie also talked about the anxious need for "African Women to know how AGOA is going to provide the necessary support for making cheap antiretrovirals available to their brothers, sisters and children who are dying of AIDS because they cannot afford the price of such drugs." She underlined the commitment of the Mauritian Government to the empowerment of NGOs through the establishment of an NGO Trust Fund. Some achievements of this Trust Fund are appropriate training programmes, hosting of lectures, targeted funding and allocation of scholarships to volunteers with a view to strengthening voluntarism.

The concluding remarks of Mrs. Navarre-Marie showed her genuine faith in the worth and future of NGOs which "have their outreach where formal institutions do not because they have their roots at the heart of civil society."

WORKSHOPS DISCUSSIONS/PLENARY SESSIONS
Day 1 – Monday, 13 January 2003

BRIEFING ON AGOA

After the official opening ceremony, a briefing on the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was presented by Mr. Gregory Simpkins of the Foundation for Democracy in Africa. He outlined the elements of AGOA and the issues that still needed to be addressed. Besides presenting the participation requirements for a country to be eligible under AGOA, Mr. Simpkins also elaborated on the question of technical assistance, financing under AGOA, market accessibility and textiles under AGOA.

A. The key Participation Requirements are as follows:

1. Private Property Rights

It is understood that without clear and legal entitlement rights, entrepreneurs will not invest.

2. Rules-based trading system

A set of understandable rules should be established to encourage small and medium investors.

3. Government interference/ownership

As far as possible, there should be minimum government interference.

4. Rule of law/democracy

Rule of law and democracy should prevail. Human rights should be respected. There is a need for governments, as well as opposition parties, to be credible.

5. National Treatment

Foreign investors should have the rights to move their money around like local investors in order to encourage foreign investment.

6. Intellectual property rights

In the new global economy, foreign businesses are developing computer programs, medicines and other products that require licenses to use. They will not make these products available if people in target countries can take their formulas or other plans to produce goods without paying them.

7. Workers' Rights

The way you treat workers is extremely important. Unfair labour practices, such as illegal child labour, are prohibited.

8. National Security

National Security is not restricted to the question of terrorism. Issues like international crime, drugs, transmission of deadly viruses such as Ebola and HIV/AIDS need to be addressed.

B. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Simpkins also talked about the technical assistance required by qualifying African countries if AGOA is to be a success.

1. Funding for technical assistance in Africa should increase.
2. There must be training for Africans and Americans on how to do business in their respective regions.
3. There must be training on creating effective business plans. Basic management strategies also should be taught.
4. Training on complying with international product standards will be necessary to maintain competitiveness.

C. FINANCING UNDER AGOA

1. AGOA created two equity funds. A \$350 million fund to provide investment in African Enterprises and a \$500 million fund for infrastructure projects.
2. Modern Africa Fund Managers are managing the US \$350 million equity fund, which is totally committed.
3. The US \$500 infrastructure fund was recently moved to the Millennium Fund Managers and is not yet operational.
4. There is money in Africa, but banks are reluctant to provide loans. Many of them do not have the expertise to know whether an entrepreneur is loan- worthy or not.

D. MARKET ACCESSIBILITY

1. There are more than 4600 items eligible under the regular GSP.
2. Near 1900 more items are duty-free under the enhanced GSP in AGOA.
3. No other region in the world has as many duty free items available.

Regarding market accessibility, Mr. Simpkins emphasized the fact that qualifying countries should, in the first instance, target those items which are more simple to make such as socks, T-shirts, tablecloths and then build their way up to those items requiring higher technology. They should start small and move up and be able to broaden the scope of what they can manufacture.

E. TEXTILES UNDER AGOA

1. Under AGOA, participating African nations can export into the United States duty free apparel cut and assembled in beneficiary countries from (i) American fabric, (ii) fabric from the exporting country and (iii) regional fabric from another African country.

An African country importing its raw materials from Asia, for example, would violate the provisions of AGOA. As importing from America itself could prove to be very expensive, African countries should do their best to import their raw materials from other regional countries or else produce their own raw materials. But consistency of production should be established to meet the requirements of the American market.

2. Benefits under AGOA began in October 2000 and will end in September 2007. During this period, the percentage of African textiles and apparel originally was not to exceed 3.5% of all textile and apparel imports into the United States by the end of the eligible period, but the US Congress has doubled this quota.

QUESTION TIME

It is interesting to note that during the plenary session following the briefing on AGOA by Mr. Simpkins, the main concern of the participants was not to question the *raison-d'être* of AGOA, but to seek further explanations regarding its eligibility criteria as well as its practical implementation.

1. Regarding infrastructure development and its financing, Mr. Simpkins pointed out again that the US \$500 infrastructure fund was recently moved to the Millennium Fund Managers and that it is not yet operational. However, there was agreement as to the need for investments in infrastructure (communication systems, power, roads etc.) to be encouraged so that the local entrepreneurs can make direct contact with prospective buyers. Moreover, local investment in infrastructure (water, electricity, airport, seaport etc.) also must be envisaged. Everyone should be able to play a role to enable benefits to be more broadly realized.
2. Another fear that was voiced time and again was that after 2007, when the World Trade Organisation rules will be fully operational, the African countries may not be in a position to face worldwide competition. It was answered that this period before 2007 should be taken as an opportunity to become competitive – on a level-playing field with the rest of the world thereafter. One should be ready for this kind of tremendous competition. Here again, the need for capacity-building was emphasised.

Note: The declaration of President George W. Bush that he would recommend to the U.S. Congress the extension of AGOA beyond 2008 had been met with a feeling of relief and great satisfaction by the participants of the AGOA Forum.

BRIEFING ON AGOA – RELATED AU POLICY AND CSSDCA PROGRAMMATIC COMMITMENTS

This briefing was presented by Dr. Jinmi Adisa, Senior Coordinator, Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA), African Union Commission.

Dr. Jinmi Adisa declared that “the CSSDCA process was initiated by an African NGO, the Africa Leadership Forum, through a series of meetings that culminated in its May 1991 Kampala Forum in Uganda. The Forum articulated the vision of a prosperous Africa based on vibrant connection with civil society and recommended the CSSDCA initiative as an appropriate continental or institutional forum for realizing this objective. He pointed out that the African Union (AU) distinguishes itself from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in several ways and two aspects are of special significance in this context. First, the AU stresses the need for economic integration and development as defined in the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, whereas the OAU was, during most of its existence, consumed with the resolution of political problems such as decolonization, ending apartheid and conflict management resolution. The advent of the African Union was informed by the need to redress the balance between economic and political agendas and to integrate them in a meaningful fashion. Hence, the adoption of major programmes such as the New Partnership for Development in Africa (NEPAD) and the Conference for Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa or CSSDCA. This vision asserts the need for Africa to be an essential actor in the development of the continent.

Second, the Constitutive Act of the African Union emphasizes the need to build partnerships between governments and all segments of civil society in its vision of popular participation of African people as a condition for development. The Act includes clear provisions for the observance of human rights, the rule of law, gender issues, etc., as a context for strengthening popular participation and democracy. The Act also makes provisions for the creation of institutional structures to support this process such as the Pan-African Parliament, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), the Human Rights Commission and the African Court of Justice.

More significantly, the AU has defined its two new programmes – NEPAD and the CSSDCA – as anchors for its project of economic and social reconstruction. NEPAD is conceived as a plan for adding momentum to the development efforts of the continent within the framework of partnership between the governments and private sector on one hand and between Africa and the international community on the other.

Dr. Adisa highlighted the shared objectives and aspirations of the African Union and AGOA. “Indeed, AGOA authorizes a new US trade and investment policy towards Africa,” he said. “It promotes increased trade and investment cooperation between the United States and African countries and offers eligible African countries duty free and quota-free US market access for a great number of products including textile and apparel articles. Furthermore, its criteria for eligibility, which places emphasis on promoting

good governance, human rights, labour rights and open markets provides incentives for political reform and progressive economic and commercial regimes”.

The economic agenda of the African Union goes along the same line as that of AGOA inasmuch as it seeks to promote trade, foster high level dialogue on trade and investment, attract foreign economic and technical assistance and to create appropriate conditions for stimulating economic growth and social development.

More significantly, the CSSDCA process, as a programme commitment of the African Union, share certain notable attributes with AGOA as follows:

- a) Emphasis on a model of social inclusiveness as a condition for rapid development. Both the CSSDCA and AGOA emphasize the necessity for a broad based strategy of mobilization among stakeholders that embraces partnerships between and among governments, the private sector and civil society. It is this similarity of emphasis that has enabled the convening of this workshop as a common concern.
- b) A human centered approach to development that derives impetus from the people and acknowledges the centrality of their role as the fulcrum of development.
- c) Highlighting the requirement of enabling conditions for economic growth and social development, with emphasis on the need for economic and political reforms.
- d) Promotion of the need for self-scrutiny through constant self evaluation and monitoring mechanisms.
- e) Underscoring the critical role of civil society in the attainment of these various objectives.

Ending his presentation, Dr. Adisa expressed the view that the challenge that confronted the NGO Forum was to enable a closer alignment of interests that seek to overcome the constraints that have impeded progress so far and to identify what more needs to be done to create appropriate conditions for achieving rapid economic growth and social development on the African continent.

WORKSHOP ON CIVIL SOCIETY AND CHALLENGES TO AFRICAN SOCIETIES

The objective of this workshop was to have an insight into the many challenges that face African nations to progress in health, education, governance, conflict, debt and other areas in which society has a prime role in monitoring conditions and providing effective recommendations for corrective action. It was chaired by Mr. Anthony Okonmah of the Foundation for Democracy in Africa. The other panelists were Dr. Prega Ramsamy of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Mr .Richard Tren, director of Africa Fighting Malaria (South Africa).

Dr. Prega Ramsamy talked about the role of the civil society in the process of economic development. He expressed his concern about the alarming situation of the population of the African population: 340 million persons are living on less than \$1 dollar a day; the mortality rate is 140 per 1,000 children and the life expectancy at birth that had been 54 years has fallen to 47 years in many countries because of HIV/AIDS.

According to Dr. Ramsamy, there is a great challenge on our hands to redress the situation, but he showed his confidence that this new millennium has the opportunity to end poverty. As he said, “We’ve got the determination, We’ve got the resources, We’ve got the people.” Decision-making should not be the privilege of a group but there should be shared responsibility and mutual trust among the different stakeholders coupled with a new change of attitudes, according to Dr. Ramsamy, who said he was optimistic about the future of Africa.

Mr. Richard Tren of Africa Fighting Malaria gave a very interesting presentation on the different barriers to health care. A list of these barriers follows:

1. Regulatory & Bureaucratic Barriers
 - Medicines Control Council, for example, in South Africa and Namibia
 - Excess regulation of health insurance
 - Private purveyors/distributors of drugs and healthcare products
 - Taxation of drugs/ITNS & other related healthcare products
2. Corruption
 - Inappropriate procurement of insecticides
 - Accountability and responsiveness, e.g malaria
3. The misguided agendas of donor agencies
4. Lack of health care infrastructure
5. Ignorance and stigmatization as in the case of HIV/AIDS
6. No advertising of products and technologies
7. Intellectual property rights and barriers to health care

Mr. Tren also indicated the policy challenges that Africa must face up in its struggle against poverty. These are:

1. Increased trade, open markets, protection of property and rule of law;
2. Increased involvement of private sector (medicines for malaria venture, TB alliance, ACHAP, Mozal, KCM);
3. Bureaucratic and government reforms, and
4. Accountable aid based on science and medicine, not “green” pressure.

QUESTION TIME

Participants to this workshop showed their concern as to the need for the benefits of AGOA to reach the poor.

1. Does AGOA give anything to the fully democratic countries? In this context, the role of the civil society as a monitoring mechanism to ensure that the average people get all the benefits from AGOA was emphasized. In this context, civil society has a critical role to play so that the average people get the benefit of AGOA and to ensure that money trickles down to the needy. There is a need for the monitoring of these countries that meet the conditionalities of AGOA and who are entitled to humanitarian aid and assistance.
2. The question of American investment in African countries was also raised as a means to increase the growth rate. Here the importance of partnership was underlined. It was also felt that there are three areas of critical importance that need to be given ample consideration:
 - (a) (a) Diversifying trade, i.e. increasing the assets of Africa is essential
 - (b) (b) Debt relief
 - (c) (c) An advocacy role civil society
3. The perception that NGOs receiving fund could disrupt government action also was voiced. Indeed, in some countries trade union movements transform themselves into political parties. Trade unions in Zambia have assumed power. On the other hand, such as in Zimbabwe, government stepped in to prevent NGOs from distributing food aid. A right balance should be struck out between NGOs actions and government intervention.
4. One participant stated that women's organizations were not receiving the appropriate budget. Indeed, she described the allocation of African budgets to women entrepreneurs as "peanuts." While women in most African countries kept the household budget and have given ample proof of their know-how in this field, it is a matter of utmost concern that women need collateral to get finance and that the laws and customs in many African countries affect the possibility of women to get access to credit to establish their businesses. It is unfortunate that these customs are deeply entrenched in the rural and urban societies and that it will take a little more time to redress the situation. There is a need to tap all the talents in Africa, including from women.

WORKSHOP ON AFRICAN TRADE TRADITIONS AND THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The panel composed of Mr. Leon Louw (South Africa) in the chair; Mr. Thompson Ayodele, Institute for Public Policy Analysis (Nigeria); Mr. James Shikwati, Inter

Regional Economic Network (Kenya), and Mr. Temba Nolutshungu, Free Market Foundation (South Africa) examined how civil society could help Africa to enhance its ability to compete in the 21st century, especially in the field of labour rights and training of workers.

Mr. Thompson Ayodele's speech was devoted to the importance of the institution of the rule of law in African countries. Indeed, he said, property owners should be protected from seizure of their property. A free market economy gives incentives to those who want to invest, and price acts as a signal to producers. Hence, the question of price fixing is an area that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Ayodele also talked about the role of civil society in the building of these institutions of rule of law and how civil society could offer advice as to how to meet these requirements. Civil society could act as an information clearing house and creates the conducive environment for a free economy, which is equal to a free society.

Mr. James Shikwati outlined the areas that we need to focus upon:

1. The need of the industry.
2. The involvement of local communities in environment issues.
3. The creation of an Africa Freedom Network.
4. Sensitization of the media on trade issues.
5. Sensitization of the people to the fact that aid should not be seen as a solution to all their problems. Shikwati said, "People should ask themselves: 'How best can we solve our problems?' We are not a termite colony, we are human beings who have to exploit our potential and our talents fully. Aid as both positive and negative effects: quite a number of dictators benefit from aid, which should go to the poor."
6. The need to give basic freedom to people, for which NGOs can create this environment.
7. The question of child labour should be revisited, as in some countries, children are actively involved in working.
8. The need to reorient the mind of the African people, who must ply their way between political freedom and economic freedom. For so long, African people have been made to think that the pathway to wealth is to join politics. "Although one does not want to downplay the role of politicians, it is high time for African people to change their frame of mind to achieve economic freedom through trade," Mr. Shikwati said. "Politicians don't produce goods, businessmen do. It is through production that one gets wealthy. Free trade is supposed to enhance the importance of human dignity: One can deny to buy a good from whoever one does not want to trade with."
9. The need for civil society to show that it is not the enemy of government, but must work as partners with governments.

A plea for African nations to take up the challenge of productivity based on economic freedom instead of relying upon aid also was made. They should make theirs the fate of

the one who dreading poverty comes to lose his valuable jewel: freedom. Those three words were more than once repeated: "Trade not Aid". Aid is like champagne: in success, you deserve it; in failure, you need it," Mr. Shikwati said.

QUESTION TIME

1. Participants showed a keen interest about the correlation between economic growth and economic freedom. The question was raised as to whether price-fixing should be advocated to protect the poor. A note of caution against price-fixing was voiced, as it is obvious that if producers feel their profits are being limited and are not enough, they will go elsewhere. To out-compete his competitors, a producer must be able to produce good products at competitive prices.
2. Once again, the question of the banishment of child labour was taken up. Indeed, it was recognized that children are those who are going to replace the leaders of today. However, in many African countries, children are contributing to the African economy. For example, in South Africa, many children were selling newspapers prior to AGOA. Now that child labour has been banned, they are completely devastated: they are now seen begging, sniffing glue, giving themselves to child prostitution. Hence, in view of such a situation, one could say that these children were better off selling newspapers. On the other hand, one cannot adhere totally to this simplification of the problem, as it is necessary for children to be in schools, since the long-term benefits of proper education cannot be minimized.

WORKSHOP ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN BENEFITING AFRICAN SOCIETY

Ms. Kauna Ndilula, of the Namibia Development Foundation, Mrs. Vidula Nababsing of Mauritius, Mrs. Alice Mungwa of the African Union and Ms. Colleen Dyble of the Atlas Foundation for Economic Research (US) were the panelists of this workshop, chaired by Mrs. Anne T. Gebhardt of Women in Enterprise and Business (Namibia).

Mrs. Vidula Nababsing made a comprehensive exposé on AGOA and its prospects for women, during which she covered such issues as women's contribution to the economy, women as a new industrial force and female energy and competence: An under-utilised force.

Talking on women's contribution to the economy, Mrs. Nababsing stressed the fact that women have always played an extremely important role in the world's economy, most notably in Africa. However, women's contributions have not been documented or recognized due to lack or inadequacy of data collection techniques, which till now do not take into consideration the unpaid subsistence work done by women.

“As early as the 1970s, it became recognized that women played a significant role but were often invisible to development planners. For a long time, the dominant view remained that women’s participation in development was outside the economic mainstream and the “natural role” of women was within the sphere of the family and child welfare and was therefore not of an economic nature. This situation began to change with the modernization process in developing societies. With the dismantling of the traditional agricultural and craft sectors, women became marginalized from the production process and some were forced into the reproductive sphere of family welfare while maintaining some subsistence production activities, while others were forced into the newly emerging industrial labour force.

In her final remarks, Mrs. Nababsing spoke of her conviction that women have the capacity and energy and motivation to make an invaluable contribution to society. Opening new markets for African economies can become a formidable springboard for women’s emancipation and for social development provided

- Women are given the same educational and training opportunities as men for their emancipation and self fulfillment,
- There bare more support services for families to alleviate the double burden of working women,
- There is greater equality in gender relationships, in the home, at work and in society as a whole, to allow women to reconcile their work and home responsibilities and
- Women are able to participate effectively in decision making in the home, at work and at higher administrative and political levels

Mrs. Nababasing referred to the message of the Human Development Report of 1995 which was wholly dedicated to women and which said: “Human development, if not engendered, will be endangered.” Translated more simply, it means that “without women’s participation and the appropriate conditions for effective participation, there will be no development.”

Ms. Alice Mungwa of the African Union told the participants about some of the development initiatives of the AU regarding participation of women. Indeed, she said, one of the major changes from the Organisation for African Unity to the African Union is that the latter lays greater emphasis on the participation of women at all the levels of the activities of the African Union. According to her, women should take the place that they deserve.

The speech of Ms. Colleen Dyble was meant to cast aside all the doubts that could exist in the minds of many people concerning AGOA and free markets and the removal of trade barriers. “Many people feel overwhelmed by what all that means and how it will affect them, their businesses, their families and their lifestyles,” she said. “Sometimes thinking about trade on a global scale can be very daunting and can make people feel powerless because it involves many continents, nations, cultures and sectors.”

Ms. Dyble gave some very basic lessons and ideas about what free trade amounts to and about how open markets can create opportunities in the private sector that can be harnessed through sound property rights and the rule of law to enhance wealth creation for women and their families. She informed the assistance that free trade is not based on highly sophisticated arguments. Indeed, she said, the case for free trade is based on the virtues of voluntary exchange, the division of labour and individual freedom.

After defining those basic principles of free trade and its role in eliminating barriers, Ms. Dyble put the notion of free trade in the context of AGOA to show how it provides opportunities for women through private property and rule of law. “Free trade not only allows for greater economic prosperity, but combined with sound rule of law and respect for private property, it provides women the ability to harness an increase number of options for wealth creation and creates structures necessary for them to harness those opportunities,” she explained. “If Africa has been marginalized, it is because of a lack of opportunity, a lack of rule of law, respect of private property and the means to trade freely in markets.”

Mrs. Anne Gebhart, a successful woman entrepreneur from Namibia, delivered a very enthusiastic speech concerning the role of the business women and women entrepreneurs. She qualified the women present at the workshop as a group of successful people, being mothers of children who are growing up and/or are grown up.

Women have not been trained to be mothers, yet they do a splendid job in this field while shouldering other responsibilities, Mrs. Beghart said, adding, “Mothers are recognized to be good managers in the household; therefore, they should get the required and proper support in the business world.”

Women need finance but finance alone is not enough. Women need training, she said, but what kind of training? It is unfortunate that most of the time, training is given in alien languages, which native women cannot really understand. Training should be given in local language or translated to meet the level of understanding of the rural women. In the field of information technology, appropriate computer training software should be used to translate training materials in the local language.

Successful women achievers should be identified as role models. Women should not only indulge in social activities, but must be able to translate their full potential into reality. Mrs. Gebhart ended by saying that women should be compared to tea-bags: Women need to get right into challenging situations (the boiling water) to give out the smell, the taste and the flavour. **What about Ms. Ndilula?**

QUESTION TIME

1. From the floor, the issue of the budget for women was once again raised. If women should have a 50% representation at top level, it should be accompanied by an appropriate budget. The perception was that the question of budget to

women entrepreneurs is being paid lip service. Mrs. Mungwa stated that this question of budget is actually being taken up by the African Union at Addis Ababa.

2. Another participant spoke of the fate of some women regarding employment. They are found to be either too young, not qualified enough or even too old to secure employment. It would seem that there is always a good reason for refusing a job to women. The issue of gender equality should be deep rooted in the minds of people.
3. Other questions were put concerning the benefits of AGOA to women at grass-root levels, the eradication of poverty in societies where polygamy exists and the need for African countries to be able to decide what they do not want to lose under AGOA, what shall be retained and what shall not. The answer to these questions was linked to the fact that there is the necessity for civil society to play a strong role to monitor the benefits of AGOA and to see to it that the right persons get the right benefits.

OPENING PRESENTATION, WORKSHOPS AND PLENARY SESSIONS
Day 2 – Tuesday 14 January 2003

OPENING PRESENTATION

On 14th January 2003, the second day of the NGO Forum, the opening presentation made by Hon. Rep. Jim McDermott, US House of Representatives, who spoke to a very attentive audience.

Rep. McDermott's words went right to the heart of all those present as he talked about his deep-seated concern about the well-being of Africa's people for a very long time and his faith that the great continent has an enormous potential it has yet to unleash.

He said his feelings that U.S. trade policy toward Africa was doing nothing for Africa at the time when the U.S. Congress was considering agreeing to the Uruguay round of the GATT, which created the World Trade Organization, led him to set out to ensure that the legislation would require that President Bill Clinton to develop a comprehensive trade and development policy for African countries. Hence, AGOA was born by the insertion of one sentence into the legislation: "The President should develop and implement a comprehensive trade and development policy for the countries of Africa."

Rep. McDermott believed and still believes that Africa has an absolute capacity to take care of itself and AGOA is an excellent opportunity for the African continent. "The bottom line is that AGOA is contributing to profound economic and political reforms throughout the region," he said. "For example, anti-corruption activities have been launched in many of the nations of the sub-Saharan Africa. In just the past year or so, 21 AGOA-beneficiary countries have ratified ILO Convention 182, which eliminates the worst forms of child labor. And nine countries have strengthened laws on child trafficking and worker rights."

Rep. McDermott also talked about the restrictive conditions that had been imposed on the terms of market access – the most important of these conditions being the rules of origin with which African exporters of textile and apparel exports must comply to benefit from duty-free access. According to Rep. McDermott, these rules of origin restrictions are too onerous and should be modified.

He proposed that participants should think about diversification to make sure that African countries have an array of goods for export. Currently, exports under AGOA are predominantly energy-related products, which account for more than 75% of AGOA exports. For AGOA to be more successful and for Africa to realize its full potential, sub-Saharan nations must continue to diversify their economies. Rep. McDermott linked the destiny of the United States and Africa by saying that he believes that "as Africa flourishes, so does America."

Some of the areas of concern, according to Rep. McDermott, are:

1. The need for Africans to get their agricultural goods to markets, including foreign markets, to begin an immense economic transformation. “African ministers should pressurize the Americans and the Europeans to address and curtail the reckless subsidies given to our farmers,” he explained.
2. The very strict sanitary and phyto-sanitary requirements of the United States, which act as barriers to African products to be approved for import into the U.S. The amount and quality of technical assistance to Africans who are trying desperately to get their products into the States should be dramatically increased.
3. Poor transportation infrastructure, which, on the one hand, causes many difficulties for Africans to get their goods to markets and on the other hand, makes it difficult to get American products into African markets. Ways to improve transportation infrastructure in AGOA nations should be sought to encourage direct air and sea transportation between Africa and the United States.
4. A sound trade policy coupled with a sound development policy. The United States, as the most affluent nation on earth, and its government must play a substantial role both in African development and in African trade. Together with hundreds of Congress members, Rep. McDermott, “knows that the fiscal situation of the United States cannot be an excuse to avoid recommitting ourselves to reduce poverty, disease, and famine throughout Africa and the rest of the developing world.”
5. AIDS, which is no longer just a health crisis but an economic catastrophe. In all of Africa, there are more than 13 million children who have been orphaned by AIDS, and the parents of millions are ill and dying. According to Rep. McDermott, as a world leader, the United States must be in the forefront of the fight against HIV and AIDS.

To conclude, Rep. McDermott imparted his belief that “the most imperative investments do not seek to acquire silver, gold, or petroleum. The most fruitful investments are in people. Only a free and healthy society can lead a nation and a continent to prosperity. I hope the United States will play a central role in ensuring that Africa’s potential which resides in its people, is fully unleashed.”

AGOA is not an answer, he told the audience, it is simply a way to go, and Africa has a long way to go.

ROUNDTABLE ON AGOA

During this roundtable on AGOA, the discussions concerned what AGOA is today and what it could become.

The speakers were Mr. Amédée Darga of StraConsult (Mauritius), Mr. Thompson Ayodele of the Institute for Public Policy Analysis (Nigeria), Mr. James Shikwati of the Inter Regional Economic Network (Kenya) and the moderator was Mr. Anthony Okonmah of the Foundation for Democracy in Africa.

At the outset of his speech, Mr. Darga could not help saying how much he had appreciated and been overwhelmed by the opening remarks of Rep. Jim McDermott, whom he qualified as being the father of AGOA. “If a curtain was put in front of Rep. McDermott, one could have mistaken his voice as being an African voice,” Mr. Darga said

For Mr. Darga, AGOA is a promise, a bag of opportunities, but we have to look at it and understand that AGOA is not a negotiated trade agreement as were the Lomé and the Cotonou Agreements. It is a trade agreement initiated by the United States and offered to the African continent. “You take it or you leave it, you cannot say that you were roped in against your will,” Mr. Darga explained.

Some argue that AGOA is an important trade off: The national interest of the African country versus its national sovereignty subjected to U.S. interests.

Some of the conditionalities of AGOA are as follows:

- (i) Good governance, which is something that all citizens want.
- (ii) Anti-corruption laws. The blame for corruption cannot be laid at the door of someone else. Both the corrupt and the corrupted must shoulder the blame.
- (iii) Human Rights. We do not have any qualms about that though we may differ and argue about the decisions taken.

Speaking about the textile industry, Mr. Darga said that it is a low-level entry industry for many countries, which involves little capital and creates lots of jobs. “We have been given the market access so why is it that US is making it so difficult by imposing that countries should abide by the laws of origin?” Mr. Darga asked. “We do not quite understand the US in its generosity towards Africa. It would seem that it is less generous towards Africa than it is towards such countries as Jordan and Israël. Are Africans the secondary friends?”

The civil society is also concerned about what is perceived as being double standards of measurement of eligibility. “Who is democratic, who is not? There is the case of Zimbabwe, which is said to be less democratic than Uganda where there is a no opposition party situation. It would seem that there are other reasons dictating the decisions to say who is democratic and who is not,” Mr. Darga said.

The simple concern of the small producer, entrepreneur is: How do I sell my products to the US.? What must I do to have products that are absolutely healthy to meet the sanitary conditions of entry to the U.S.?

What are the expectations from the civil society? Civil society should not be only institutionally stronger, but should be able to show the way. That's what is needed, according to Mr. Darga.

“Let's turn to the World Trade Organisation. There is agreement to liberalise and to open the market wide. Small entrepreneurs should be given the required support to get stronger. The furniture industry in Mauritius is dying because we cannot compete with the Asian countries. This is a reason to be anxious,” he said

“Mauritius feels a bit pained that, while AGOA is being implemented, the U.S. is negotiating a trade agreement with SACU, why not SADC?” he asked. “We do not quite understand. The message is that a few countries will have more advantages than others. Giving access to the market is not enough, we must also be given the necessary support.”

South Korea has become today this big giant because of preferential market access and large amounts of capital to support the emergence of industries, but the indigenous bourgeois society was helped to rise with the initial support from the U.S.

“We need the capital from the United States to support the emergence of the African bourgeoisie, such as the new Zambian bourgeoisie that carries the movement. There should be a sustainable process to support the emergence of a new class of entrepreneurs in African countries,” Mr. Darga said

To be able to compete, Mr. Darga said Africans need to identify areas where we are strong, where we can produce with a labour force at cheaper rate. We must find a product, which we can best produce, where the quality is best. “Be the best at what you are doing,” he said. We must protect Africa interest and not be pessimistic at all.

Mr. James Shikwati qualified AGOA as a win-win kind of strategy. Although under the WTO, Australia has opened its borders for the least developed countries, but when we look at it critically, we may come to the conclusion that African countries do not have the capital to carry, for example, its bananas to Australia. This is why AGOA should address these areas which can constitute barriers to free trade between the United States and America.

1. Sanitary and Phytosanitary conditionalities.

This is an indirect trade barrier. It is very difficult for African nations to meet the sanitary conditions to enter the U.S. Arguments based on “good science” simply do not hold. The EU uses “good science” to bar Genetically Modified goods. It uses “good science” to bar commodities from countries whose industries supposedly cause global warming. Poor countries should be given the opportunities to learn how to meet the standards.

2. Eligibility arguments

They go against the basic concept of trade being a voluntary people-to-people interaction. Trade is not between governments, but between people. There should be institutions where people should be able to exchange goods freely. AGOA should not be a government legislation barring access to the U.S., but should allow the citizens of Africa to trade with the citizens of U.S. without much interference from their respective governments. U.S. citizens may be interested in goods that are not included in AGOA. They may be interested not only in textile and thread industries but may also want to exchange such goods as wood carvings and high-tech products. The “eligibility excuse” will make AGOA benefits less sustainable given the fact that the objective is to empower the poor and not governments. Governments change after five years and this may destabilize the momentum set in place. Therefore, the arguments of eligibility should be reviewed as this goes against the virtue of free trade.

3. Movement of People.

Africans have great difficulty to get into the U.S. Security issues make the movement of people a more complex matter. However, we want the people from the U.S. to be able to choose the products, to tell us how we shall format our goods. U.S. visa restrictions go against the virtue of free trade. People must move; goods must move. Trade where only goods move without permitting people to move will not be sustainable. Africans must have an equal opportunity in terms of travel similar to that enjoyed by the U.S. citizens. Is it possible to get AGOA visas?

4. Inter-Africa Trade

Trading with our neighbours should be looked into. There should be free movement between African nations.

In conclusion, Mr. Shikwati said Africans should not be scared about AGOA because we have got the capacity to think

Mr. Thomas Ayodele highlighted some salient points on the best way to make Africa more prosperous and a region to be reckoned with in the global economy.

He brought to the attention of the audience the puzzling situation in which Africa is. the richest of the seven continents in natural resources ,but in spite of these abundant resources, Africa remains mired in serious problems. Poverty, violence, hunger, disease, crisis in leadership, endemic corruption, gender discrimination, religious strife and illiteracy continue to plague the African continent.

Mr. Ayodele attempted to highlight the reasons for Africa’s various problems:

1. Poverty

According to Mr. Ayodele, poverty in Africa is wrongly attributed to Western colonialism as many countries previously colonized have experienced economic

prosperity and rising standard of living. Africans should accept the blame for Africa's current economic quagmire rather than laying the blame elsewhere since from independence most African countries have experienced some form of war and/or conflict. It would seem, he said, that the culture of violence has been seen as the only solution for conflict resolutions.

2. Corruption

The rate of corruption has continued to soar, the consequence of which is that it makes Africa unattractive to investors.

3. Trade Policies

For a very long period of time, it had been believed that progress and prosperity could only be achieved through the elimination of market based economic activity and that the intervention of government was necessary to create economically equal citizens. Control on wages and prices, protecting local industries from competition, tight foreign exchange controls, strict import/export quotas were some of the interventionist measures of African governments. These policies had serious consequences:

1. It produced a poor level of economic development.
2. It drastically helped to perpetuate misery and poverty.
3. It sacrificed citizens and their interests for the benefits of the leaders.
4. It permitted politically powerful elites to use the state for their own purposes.
5. It stifled the discovery process of the competitive market and consequently precipitated corruption.
6. It prevented countries from diversifying their export base.
7. Incentives to farm were destroyed because of low price for farm produce.

Economic success and development of Africa can be attained through these solutions:

1. The liberalization of industrial countries trade barriers.
2. The reform of inappropriate domestic policies that hinder competitiveness of the region.
3. The creation of a coherent policy that encourages and supports Africa's efforts to increase economic growth and competitiveness of its goods.
4. The elimination of tariffs on goods produced in Africa, as well as reduction of subsidies to farmers in industrialized countries.
5. The elevation of domestic policies that constitute stumbling blocks should be discarded. Liberalization of internal economic policies should rank high.
6. Adherence to domestic policies that promote economic freedom through property right, rule of law and ability of the individual to trade freely.
7. The need for civil society not only to vigorously campaign and expose unfair trading policy against Africa, but must also to proffer ways in which those unfavorable policies can be expunged and cushioned. Civil society should monitor trade agreements or international trade related laws with a view to highlighting the

implications for Africa, bearing in mind the region's inability to compete and increase its exports.

He added that African governments must be able to introduce policies that can enhance the income and wealth of Africans and the region's ability to compete in trade in the 21st century.

QUESTION TIME

1. There was agreement as to the homage paid by Mr. Darga to Rep. Jim McDermott, who has given a very good profile of Africa. However, it was felt that the biggest problem of the moment is not terrorism but HIV/AIDS; instead of concentrating on how to fight terrorism, efforts should be increased in the area of HIV/AIDS.
2. The fate of small entrepreneurs was again addressed. Very often, big businessmen exploit the artisans through trade.
3. AGOA gives us the opportunity to discuss such issues as global competition. We need to focus on the goods and services that can be sold on the world market when the World Trade Organisation becomes fully operational. Another area of assistance under AGOA is providing the capacity for African companies to be able to take off.
4. The need is felt to raise the minimum qualifications for people to be able to manage machinery.
5. Civil society has a critical role in making concrete proposals that can be submitted for consideration. Red tape must be avoided as it is known that NGOs interact internationally more rapidly than government institutions.
6. Dissemination of information is important; currently many NGOs have not had prior information about the provisions of AGOA.
7. The different systems of trade should be revisited. The benefits of high-tech, electronic-trade and franchising should be investigated. Franchising could be a very good strategy in hotel and tourism industries.
8. There was concern about the absence of workers to this forum, since without workers' participation AGOA cannot be successful.
9. People-centered development should be the aim under AGOA. People should not be allowed to live in so poor conditions.

WORKSHOP ON CIVIL SOCIETY, DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

The panel composed of Hon. Rep. Ed Royce, U.S. House of Representatives; Mr. Navin Beekharry, Commissioner, Independent Commission Against Corruption (Mauritius), and chaired by Mr. Gregory Simpkins examined civil society's watchdog role on the operations of government and business.

Rep. Ed Royce talked about the importance given to civil society by the Congress and how they have been trying hard to aid its development in Africa. With AGOA, civil society in Africa has been given an important tool to push for more accountable government, which is a key challenge in Africa.

"This forum itself was written into AGOA in the spirit of treating Africa like other regions of the world, with which the U.S. has annual discussions of economic issues," Rep. Royce said. This is an opportunity for governments, the private sector and civil society to come together and discuss issues of trade, but also government accountability."

Rep. Royce referred to the case of Zimbabwe, which was not represented at the forum, in regard to its government's systematic attack on the rule of law. By taking the decision to exclude Zimbabwe from this forum, Americans and Africans together have decided to send an important signal of support to those many Zimbabweans in civil society who are bravely struggling for democracy and the rule of law in their country.

"AGOA is a tool to use; use it responsibly but use it. Little good comes from isolation," Rep. Royce said.

Mr. Navin Beekharry of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) expressed his appreciation to the organizers of the workshop for having invited him to talk about governance in the context of economic development. He gave a presentation of the ICAC, which is committed to fight corruption through effective law enforcement, education and prevention to help keep Mauritius fair, just, stable and prosperous. He talked about the role of the ICAC, which acts as a watchdog against corruption and money laundering activities in Mauritius. ICAC promotes a coalition and partnership with different sectors of society, including civil society, in the fight against these two evils that are taken to be specific expressions of the broader concept of governance.

Mr. Beekharry gave an in-depth description of corruption and its negative effects. According to him, there is general consensus that corruption undermines fair play, justice, and equal opportunities, equity and non-discrimination, which are underpinning principles of human rights. This is clearly demonstrable in its violation of economic rights, as it:

- leads to misallocation of resources meant for the enrichment of the majority for the benefits of a few;
- leads to production and distribution of defective and sometimes harmful products and services;
- results in low levels of investment, thus directly affecting sustainable development;

- makes products and services unnecessarily more expensive and out of the reach of the poor, thus threatening their right to nutrition and well being, and
- deny people the right to participate in governance and demand for accountability and transparency.

In Mr. Beekharri's view, corruption can lead to substantial economic damage, impair the integrity and efficient functioning of public administration, frustrate the trust of the public in organs of the state, undermine the rule of law and democracy, distort fair economic competition and impede economic development. He quoted the statement of James Wolfensohn, the President of the World Bank Group, who expressed his concern about the issue of poverty: "The core of the incidence of poverty is the issue of equity. And the core of the issue of equity is the issue of corruption. What this means is that the issue of corruption is not just the focus of some interest group....It means that we have got to change things if we are going to have a peaceful world, and if we are going to have a better world."

For Mr. Beekharri, corruption is like an invisible thief robbing a nation of well-deserved services and hard earned resources, and therefore, becomes like a virus that attacks the basic principles of human rights and democracy, thus weakening the component system of sustainable development.

Turning to the crucial role of the civil society and NGOs in the fight against corruption, Mr. Beekharri quoted Dr. Satish Boolell, who during a workshop in 1996 made the following statement: "To achieve transparency and integrity after a fight or, should I say a war against corruption, it is clear that the involvement of all the components of the nation will be needed."

Through the provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act 2002, the ICAC has the means to develop partnership with all sectors of the population to engage in the fight against corruption and to guarantee their participation, and civil society is one of the sectors.

Mr. Beekharri gave a very good description of what civil society is. Civil society includes those organisations and networks that are separate from the legislative, administrative and judicial power of the state, but interact with it in a variety of ways. It can be referred to as the sum total of those organisations and networks which lie within the outside the formal state apparatus....Civil society encompasses the expertise and networks needed to address issues of common concern, including corruption."

A triangular relationship exists between government, business and civil society. As corruption can take root in all three parties to the relationship, it is evident that it is both theoretically and in practice impossible for one of the parties to address the issue of corruption without the other two, and arguably impossible to tackle the issue effectively without the participation of all three.

"The success or failure of any anti-corruption strategy will depend to a very large degree on the extent to which it mobilises popular concern about the true costs associated with

corruption,” Mr. Beekharry said. “Mobilising public opinion in support of strong anti-corruption measures also entails mobilising popular support for high standards of integrity and performance in public and private administration and opposition to corrupt practices wherever they occur. If this is done, anti-corruption strategies are unlikely to fail.”

QUESTION TIME

1. It was asked why the eligibility criteria are reviewed annually. Since most democratic organisations/governments have a lifespan of five years, this annual review could be seen as a Damocles sword over the heads of organisations and governments. It was answered that some sort of compromise has been worked out and that the annual review allows governments to demonstrate that they are moving faster towards economic reforms.

2. Once again, the role of Rep. McDermott in the formulation of AGOA was emphasised and appreciated. He was qualified as a true democrat, who has gone to Africa, has seen and has been conquered completely.

3. Participants wanted to know how AGOA could eradicate poverty, to which it was replied that with the advent of AGOA, jobs have been created in many African countries, such as in Nigeria and Madagascar, for example, thus curtailing poverty. However, AGOA should not be regarded as the only answer to eradicate poverty. Moreover, people are looking to Africa for investment possibilities. Consensus was reached that Africans should be given the same opportunities as Asians within a framework that would help them import duty-free items. “Let us create the momentum for AGOA,” Mr. Beekharry said. “AGOA will bring economic reform; it will fight against corruption and help in fighting against corruption. AGOA gives a chance to bring successful economic evolution.”

4. The benefits and pre-requirements to join AGOA were also investigated into. The fear that African countries under AGOA must support the American external policy and that there are political requirements for a country to be eligible under AGOA was voiced. This fear was cast aside. It was reiterated that, to be eligible, a country must be democratic and must adhere to the principles of property rights, rule of law and good governance. It is a choice for the African countries whether to accept AGOA or not.

5. Corruption was seen to be the direct result of government legislation and to have a direct correlation with the discretionary power of governments, i.e. the power of discretion in some legislatures is closely linked to corruption. Some were of the opinion that the power of discretion is not necessarily linked to corruption. However, an accountability mechanism should be built in the system for the checks and balances to monitor this discretionary power. The more freedom a country has, the less control government has, and the less opportunity for corruption exists.

At the end of the day, there are no corruptive actions. Corruption should be exposed and pressure placed on governments. It was contended that many countries do not have the structures to allow civil society to report acts of corruption. In this context, NGOs should be able to use the media (radio, TV and newspapers) as effective tools against corruption. More focus should be placed to expand the ability of the average African citizen to denounce corrupt practices. African countries should find ways and means to better disseminate information concerning corruption as economic development cannot exist without the elimination of corruption.

US CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING ON AGOA

This panel composed of the Members of the Congressional delegation – Hon. Bill Thomas, who was chair, Hon. Rep. Jim Nussle, Hon. Rep. Jim McDermott, Hon. Rep. Phil English and Hon. Rep. Ed Royce – outlined what AGOA is supposed to achieve and what enhancements are being discussed in the US Congress for next year.

Rep. Bill Thomas described AGOA as an act of faith, worked out with the idea of creating something significant for Africa. The other panelists emphasized the role of AGOA and its efforts to combat Africa economic marginalisation, to give Africa a boost through direct foreign investments and through creation of jobs.

NGOs have a watchdog role to play, the Members of the U.S. Congress agreed, and every year AGOA reviews the input of NGOs on corruption, rule of law, governance in their respective countries.

QUESTION TIME

1. For NGOs to carry out their watchdog role, the question was asked about what mechanism should be put in place to monitor the situation. At times, there are politically correct NGOs, which are on government's side and cannot be relied upon to give a true picture of the situation. To monitor the real success of the government policies, NGOs should be able to go directly to the U.S. Congress or to the U.S. embassies with their findings. It is incumbent on the U.S. Congress to produce results. NGOs should be part of the solution by putting pressure on government and see to it that there is real progress, real change for real people in Africa.
2. One participant wanted to know whether priority will be given to countries that follow criteria laid down in AGOA, to which it was answered that most of the benefits go to the country that adopts the criteria. At this stage, no prioritising (favouring one country) is contemplated as it would be a detriment rather than an asset.
3. The fear of the existing possibility of the United States to try to favour its military interests in Africa also was voiced.

4. The question of HIV/AIDS was one of the major concerns, specifically questioners wanted to know what could be specifically be done by the U.S. to help Africa in this problem area. It was advocated that there is a need to train young people to live a decent quality of life by reaching people at grassroots level in local languages. Although the U.S. can provide Africa with all the necessary drugs and condoms, it was said, ultimately the responsibility and power of one African talking to another African about HIV/AIDS and the methods of prevention cannot be underestimated.

5. A participant from Lesotho wanted to know about the criteria used to invite people to this forum. He said that in the future a larger of representatives of workers should be invited to attend. He also complained that Section 104 of AGOA is not being complied with in his country, and he said was informed that he may contact the U.S. for this section of the law to become enforceable.

6. The issue of child labour was raised once again. To those who argue that the question of the abolition of this clause of AGOA needs to be revisited because of the realities of life in some African countries, where the children contribute to the family budget, it was replied that children's place is to be in schools. Hence, there is a real need to reconsider the economic development policy in Africa to include some aid packages. As Rep. Jim McDermott put it, trade alone is not sufficient; both aid and trade should be considered. The proper infrastructure for education should be sought so as to provide the skills necessary to the workforce and the necessary education to the people.

WORKSHOP ON CREATING LINKAGES BETWEEN AGOA AND EFFORTS TO REDUCE RURAL HUNGER AND POVERTY IN AFRICA

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have a long history of assisting African farmers to increase agricultural production. They also lobby governments to remove trade barriers and make agricultural trade fair. This panel explored opportunities for linking AGOA with the NGO movement to cut hunger and poverty in Africa, as well as discussing opportunities for African smallholder farming in agricultural exports.

The panel was chaired by Mr. Ray Almeida from the Bread for the World (US) and included Mr. David Beckmann of Bread for the World (US), Mr. Josh Walton of ACDI-VOCA (US) and Mr. Erastus Mwencha of the COMESA (Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa).

The organisation Bread for the World was presented to the audience as an American Christian citizen movement against hunger that has made a long-term commitment to reduce hunger in Africa. This organisation believes that trade has the potential to lift African people out of the cycle of hunger and poverty.

Mr. Almeida spoke of the level of enthusiasm and readiness to cooperate that exists in Washington regarding AGOA, which is a mixed bag qualified by some as a half loaf but it is better than no loaf at all. It has been an important first step between U.S. and African businessmen.

Mr. David Beckmann, President of Bread for the World, said, “The Bread for the World Institute has gone through a careful process of listening to divergent views and developing what we think is a balance position on the potential of crop biotechnology to help reduce hunger in Africa. We have concluded that biotechnology can help to improve agriculture and reduce hunger in Africa. But I noted some concerns about biotechnology that had not been mentioned by other panelists.”

“I said that the US government is, in my view, pushing too hard to get other countries to embrace agricultural technology. They seem to be serving the interests in US agriculture and agribusiness, which makes people who have doubts about biotechnology all the more nervous that powerful interests may get their way on this issue without due consideration to environmental and health risks,” Beckmann said, adding, “Strong, objective assessment by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the US Environmental Protection Agency would do more to convince the world than hard-driving State Department advocacy.”

Mr. Erastus Mwencha of COMESA enumerated the challenges that Africa must face as follows:

- low income levels
- poor infrastructure
- poor health services
- high illiteracy levels
- high child mortality rates
- lack of access to water and sanitation
- disease and rising incidences of HIV/AIDS

But, perhaps the greatest challenge Africa has to face today, Mr. Mwencha said, is her inability to feed her ever-increasing population. In 2002 alone, more than half of Africa’s population (+300 million) was confronted with a critical famine situation. Moreover, more than 300 million Africans went to bed hungry on less than US \$1 per day.

Mr. Mwencha depicted a very vivid and moving picture of the African women who, said he, need to have five hands to be able to cope with all her responsibilities as wife, mother and breadwinner.

QUESTION TIME:

1. During the question time of this workshop, opportunities for small farmers of Mauritius to sell their fruits and vegetables on the U.S. market were discussed. A specific answer could not be given without any prior assessment of the specific situation.

2. It was said that excess of wealth can create violence. However, every effort should be made to tackle the problems of poverty and hunger in Africa. The U.S., through AGOA, is giving this kind of opportunities to Africa, and people should react to be able to live a sustainable life style.

3. The micro-finance issue was raised, emphasising the need for women to be provided with micro-credit facilities. The whole micro-credit issue was cited as an example of how civil society has lead the world in an important way as NGOs have been in the forefront to lend money to poor women for their small enterprises. The micro-credit summit convened by NGOs objective recommended the extention of micro-credit worldwide.

4. Another participant was of opinion that Africans should be able to decide by themselves and to make their own judgements. They must be able to make their own balance judgement and the rest of the world will follow.???????????

5. As more than 70% of the African population derive their livelihood from agriculture, it was suggested that justice should be done by improving this sector. Given that AGOA is not a multi-lateral agreement, its design should be reviewed to give more importance to agriculture. The U.S. should stop subsidising their own farmers and should rather support the African agricultural sector to give a chance for AGOA to become more successful.

WORKSHOPS/PLENARY SESSIONS
Day 3 – 15th February 2003

WORKSHOP ON ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF TRADE ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

The success of AGOA or other trade initiatives is currently judged solely on their economic impact but this panel's objective was to begin the process of devising a measurement tool that would look at how trade impacts a society's development in a broader sense.

In the chair was Ms. Colleen Dyble of the Atlas Foundation for Economic Research (US), and the panelists were Mr. Raj Makoond of the Joint Economic Council (Mauritius), Mr. Brett Schaeffer of the Heritage Foundation (US) and Dr. Julie Howard of the Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa (US).

Mr. Brett Schaeffer talked of his belief that the central pillar of development is increased economic growth. The focus on growth should not be interpreted as a dismissal of the importance of investment in education, health or other worthy efforts. Investment in those areas, in a manner appropriate to the individual situations, is prudent. But the bottom line is that without economic growth, governments and the private sector would soon lack the resources to support those efforts.

According to Mr. Schaeffer, there is a dire need for increased economic growth in African countries as illustrated by the figures regarding the average per capita GDP in sub-Saharan Africa, which was \$568 in 2000. To reach middle-income status at \$1,500 in GDP per capita, average growth in African GDP per capita must be more than five percent a year for the next 20 years, and the average per capita GDP in sub-Saharan Africa of \$568 must grow at five percent for more than 80 years to become as wealthy as the U.S. was in 2000.

But Mr. Schaeffer is optimistic that achieving high per capita economic growth is possible. The way to achieve that growth is for countries to adopt policies that promote economic freedom, the rule of law, which are measured in the Index of Economic Freedom. The Index measures economic freedom by analysing 50 economic indicators in 10 independent factors: trade policy, fiscal burden of government, government intervention in the economy, monetary policy, capital flows and foreign investment, banking and finance, wages and prices, property rights, regulation and black market activity. Those 10 factors are graded from 1 to 5 with 1 being the best and 5 being the worst score. Those scores are then averaged to give an overall score for economic freedom. Countries are designated as "free," "mostly free," "mostly unfree" and "repressed" countries based on these overall scores. Figures show that the more free a country is, the higher its per capita income.

Trade openness is a key piece in the puzzle, said Mr. Schaeffer. Increased economic freedom in trade involves lower trade barriers in developing and developed countries alike, leading to lower costs and greater efficiency as entrepreneurs determine the activities in which they have a global or regional competitive advantage. In fact, for him, the path to African prosperity is economic freedom and the important lessons are plain: The economic futures of developing countries lie predominantly in their own hands through the policies that they choose to adopt and enforce. If countries want to increase per capita GDP, they should adopt policies that are most likely to achieve that result: economic freedom and rule of law.

On the other hand, developed countries can take such actions as removing barriers to trade to aid development in poor nations. The US has taken some impressive first steps through the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which appears to have increased trade and investment between eligible nations and the U.S. But efforts to open developed country markets to developing country goods and services must increase, particularly through the WTO negotiations, if developing countries are to maximise their potential for growth.

What about other presentations? I have sent some presentations to you, specifically that of Ms. Dyble and Dr. Howard.

WORKSHOP ON THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF YOUTH IN BENEFITING AFRICAN SOCIETY

The presenter was Mr. Fred Oladeinde of Foundation for Democracy in Africa (US) and Hon. Rep. Ed Royce, US House of Representatives; Ms. Laurette Koellner, Vice-President, Boeing Inc. (USA), and Hon. Ravi Raj Yerrigadoo, Minister of Youth and Sports (Mauritius) addressed the audience.

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Oladeinde contended that youth is the future, the biggest investment we have. “Your lives are in your hands, because you are the doctors and lawyers of tomorrow,” he said.

Hon. Ravi Yerrigadoo stated that Mauritius has been hailed as one of Africa’s economic success stories. The economy has undergone profound structural changes during the last 20 years. This success was due to a massive investment in our people. Mr. Yerrigadoo stated that the rapid developments occurring in the world affect everyday life. The speed of development is not equal around the earth and inequalities and injustices create social tensions and economic migrations. One of the prerequisites to success is the capacity to understand situations and the ability to regularly update one’s knowledge, therefore requesting a high level of flexibility and availability.

Sport teaches us some of the basic skills that are required, for instance, to manage victory, to overcome defeat, to become team players and to be reliable, to gain the other

team members' confidence, to respect one's opponents and the rules, to learn that learn good results need regular training and to know your limits and yourselves better.

Today, many countries are faced with a more complex international situation that calls for an adjustment to an entirely different set of circumstances and challenges, Minister Yerrigadoo said. In a time when words such as "globalisation" are strongly criticized by parts of civil society, sport must be seen by all concerned as a way to come closer to those who need development most and integrate those otherwise excluded. This is the spirit of AGOA.

In the era of interdependence, it is no longer possible to think solely in terms of national or regional interests," Minister Yerrigadoo explained. "The world has become a village, and we are all citizens of one world. Mother Africa is courageous and knows how to persevere and get the better of situations, and AGOA gives such an opportunity."

Ms. Koellner said that she was in Mauritius as the Boeing representative. She made a brief overview about the activities of the company. Like the founders of the Boeing Company, she said, employees are asked to be innovative and find "new ways of making the impossible possible." Boeing's achievements were results of hard work, dedication and strong commitment to education and lifelong learning. She stressed the importance of lifelong learning. The Boeing Company also fulfills its social responsibility by offering the equivalent of Rs6.5 million rupees everyday and by doing voluntary work.

The way to achieve success, she argues, is through the setting up of goals, which can be long term or smaller milestones. She said it is important to learn lessons from failures. Each and every one of us has the ability to become leaders. Leaders are ambitious, confident, have strong self-esteem and a strong will. Of importance is that they set goals and develop a plan for success.

"In many ways, Mauritius is part of the reason why we've seen a double appeal from the U.S. since the passing of the AGOA," Ms. Koellner said. "Mauritius is the gateway to Africa like Singapore is to South Asia."

Asking the question how can youth play a role in investment relationship through the future, Ms. Koellner said Mauritian culture is highly responsible for its economic success. It embraces the market economy system, understands the benefits of trade liberalisation. It is democratic, and there is rule of law. Mauritius has taken up the fight against corruption and encourages transparency. Corruption is a cancer that eats away at a country, she said. A country can be involved in capacity building, but as long as there is corruption there will be no economic growth. There is a vibrant free press whose role is to get information to people in order to question government for change. It is a factor which many African government lacks, it is a check on power, and pressure to bear in governments for reform.

Ms. Koellner said there is also cultural diversity where many races and religions live together and there is a sense of identity and purpose regardless of background. The role

of the family and values. The youth need to take on responsibility of passing on these values and this is an absolute requisite for society. Parents also respect education. Many countries struggle because they have no resources in education. Mauritian youth play a role of bridge. They help encourage other Africans to take advantage of programmes put into place by the US to go overseas to have different perspectives.

“The part of responsibility we have is to make reforms about human rights. Personal responsibility to play role in making certain the next generation has types of opportunities we have here and in the US,” Ms. Koellner said.

What about Rep. Royce?

QUESTION TIME

One participant said she was impressed by the presentation of Ms. Koellner, and asked if she could later tell the audience about ways and means of achieving success.

A young man said that the title of the workshop was about the “crucial” role of youth. But he could not say what the “crucial” part of the address was about. Rep. Ed Royce answered that human rights are crucial, for instance, the ability of Africans to actually start a business without going to the central government to have economic freedom is crucial. “Mauritius can impart value systems to other African societies, but until there is a collective will to work with people, with countries fighting for human rights, we are not going to see justice,” he explained. These are fundamentals and young people need to take lead in these fields and have concerted action.

Eligibility conditions of AGOA, clause in the AGOA which stipulate that countries willing to qualify should follow US policy and that the adherence to the AGOA is at the discretion of the President. The president can actually choose which country actually qualifies for the AGOA but based upon criteria. Actually there are 34 countries that are eligible. Similarly, democracy is the greatest challenge for many African nations. AGOA is a one –sided agreement, which benefits the US. Economic reform however, will bring in more prosperity and productivity. There is a humanitarian interest also in the AGOA.

One questioner asked Ms. Koellner whether she honestly believes in the leadership skills of the Mauritian compared to the U.S. youth. She replied that the impression of youth that the Boeing branches of Africa have is that there is a great devotion to productivity and entrepreneurship, and she firmly believes African youths are the leaders of the future. It is important, she said, that African youth get involved in any way they can include working for companies that are global and express concerns so they can be heard.

Plenary session: Ambassador Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., Deputy US Trade Representative –The Impact of AGOA on US- Africa Trade.

Ambassador Huntsman opened his speech by stressing the importance of NGO involvement. AGOA is a unique piece of legislation, he said, which will bring in a new paradigm for US trade: north-south dialogue and partnership between government, NGOs and private sector.

One of the participants said that at the initial stage of the AGOA process, it is impossible because the NGOs have no mechanism for the civil society to evaluate the impact of the AGOA. Ambassador Huntsman reassured the NGO representatives that the U.S. government is interested in hearing what NGOs have to say because it is a humanitarian issue. The perception of NGOs is perhaps narrowed.

Another Mauritian participant expressed his concern about the “watchdog” role of the civil society. How can the civil society be a watchdog if it is not involved in a continuous way? The U.S. government has opened centres in Africa where experts on AGOA can answer questions. The possible ways to get information are through embassies and websites.

What about the follow up of the AGOA? There is an active coalition of AGOA, and the FDA has a continuing interest in the impact of such agreements.

Does the AGOA offer opportunities for collaboration or allocation of funds/concrete provisions for NGOs? A delegate from Namibia expressed concerns about AGOA being large and complex and not really understood. There is a need to educate and highlight small and medium enterprises about AGOA.

CLOSING SESSION: Forum Report

The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act NGO Forum ended late in the afternoon of Wednesday 15th January 2003 with the presentation by Mr. Gregory Simpkins of the Foundation for Democracy in Africa of the recommendations arrived at during the three-day workshops. The mere fact that more than 50 recommendations had been made gave a very good idea about how much the debates had been very intense and fruitful.

After the recommendations had been read, there was another session of discussions thereon and other suggestions were voiced.

1. All training and capacity building should be devised in such a way as to give the African countries a capacity to be sustainable beyond 2008.
2. A poverty line should be defined by every government joining AGOA so that all actions to eradicate poverty are effective and that capacity building goes to those people below that poverty line.
3. There was a consensus for the establishment of a secretariat comprised of the Foundation for Democracy in Africa and the MACOSS as the main partners, together with the civil society component of the African Union.

First AGOA Civil Society Forum Ends with Creation of Network

Phoenix, Mauritius, 17 January 2003 – The AGOA Civil Society Network was approved by participants at the first African Growth and Opportunity Act Civil Society Forum, held at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture. After three days of deliberations, participants from the United States, Mauritius, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Namibia, Mali, Congo-Kinshasa and Lesotho agreed that civil society organizations (CSOs) have a vital role to play in the AGOA process. More than 500 participants were present at parts of the program, and the network was inaugurated with more than 100 initial participants.

The mission of the network will be to empower African people through their civil society organizations, working with governments and businesses to fully take advantage of the benefits of AGOA by utilizing civil society organizations to monitor eligibility and compliance issues and to track the impact of AGOA trade on African nations. The relationship between CSOs and the government and business sectors is intended to be cooperative rather than adversarial.

“This network is an important bridge that allows civil society to influence U.S. policy on trade through AGOA,” said Fred Oladeinde, President of the Foundation for Democracy in Africa (FDA).

The Foundation and the Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS), the other co-convenor of the forum, were asked by participants to form a secretariat to continue the work of the network. A link with the African Union (AU) was established through the AU’s civil society component.

The first step of the program plan calls for establishment of membership in all 48 sub-Saharan African nations eligible for inclusion in AGOA. The CSO members would then be trained on AGOA elements, eligibility and compliance issues and trade related matters. Following training, the network members would be enabled to conduct research on trade and commerce in individual countries, the regions of Africa and the continent as a whole. Armed with information on how trade and commerce are being conducted under AGOA, network members would then be able to offer technical assistance to governments and businesses, especially small and medium enterprises. This research and technical assistance would provide the basis for an annual report on AGOA eligibility, compliance and trade and commercial trends in individual countries.

“I think this forum has given people the opportunity to learn the role that AGOA can play in bringing prosperity to Africans,” said Dr. Satish Boolell, President of MACOSS, who added, “The mandatory element of getting civil society on board will reinforce the process.”

Among the 52 recommendations from forum participants was a call for a more explicit role for CSOs in the AGOA process. One function of CSOs would be to monitor whether

AGOA nations comply with the participation requirements, which include adherence to rule of law, respect for worker rights and observance of international standards on issues ranging from democracy, human rights and gender equity. However, CSOs could perform just as useful a service in determining whether eligibility issues are being appropriately applied to African nations seeking AGOA inclusion and help applicant nations reach eligibility through technical and other assistance. Moreover, should disagreements arise between an AGOA nation and the United States, which is the provider of AGOA, CSOs could work with governments and businesses to correct problems that have been identified and forestall a U.S. decision to end the AGOA relationship with that nation.

The U.S. government already has taken up three recommendations by network participants. On 15 January, U.S. President George W. Bush announced his intention to seek an extension of AGOA benefits beyond 2008. President Bush also pledged to help African nations expand their access to drugs to fight HIV-AIDS and to provide an additional \$200 million in funding for education and teacher training in African nations.

Communiqué

From the First Africa Growth and Opportunity Act Civil Society

Forum

**“An NGO Perspective on Implementation, Progress and Future Objectives”
Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture, Phoenix, Mauritius
13 – 15 January 2003**

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The first African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Civil Society Forum was convened by the Foundation for Democracy in Africa, in partnership with the African Union, The Atlas Foundation for Economic Research, The Africa America Institute, ACDI/VOCA, Bread for the World, The International Leadership Institute, The International Foundation for Education and Self-Help, Opportunities Industrialization Centers International, the American Bar Association-Africa Section, The Mauritius Council of Social Service (MACOSS) and in collaboration with the Government of Mauritius.

There were 150 participants attending the Event. These included representatives from US, the different Regions of Sub-Saharan Countries and Mauritius.

Recommendations were made by the Participants for further action to promote active, participatory civil society with a view toward making the benefits of AGOA more accessible to all members of society.

1. That AGOA be not restricted to trade but be made an integrated package that also caters for human development in terms of better access to education, health care, sanitary conditions, etc.
2. That certain eligibility criteria like labour standards be relaxed to fit the particular realities of some African countries.
3. That trade alone is not the solution for Africa, but some aid also should continue to be given to do away with problems such as child labour.
4. That sustainable development be human-centered, one that is bottom-up in its approach, that derives its impetus from the people, and that involves the active participation of NGOs.
5. That trade be not be between governments but between entrepreneurs and that there should be institutions where entrepreneurs are enabled to exchange goods freely.
6. That since Africans face great difficulties to get into the U.S., there must be a reevaluation of security procedures to remove barriers to the movement of Africans into the U.S. market.
7. That proper dissemination of information is instituted so that people at the grass root level should be aware of all the elements of AGOA.
8. That there should be more youth and women involvement in the AGOA process including exchange between people in Africa and the U.S.
9. That there should be a pre-NGO AGOA event prior to the next AGOA meeting in U.S.

10. That preparations need to be started (as early as possible) to assist African governments in their negotiations at WTO in 2005 and beyond through NGO involvement.
11. That while AGOA has helpfully drawn US Government and business attention to Africa and provided some additional market access, this access is limited, temporary and vulnerable to unilateral US decision. Therefore, AGOA should be a step toward much broader, permanent access to US and other industrial markets through multilateral agreement of the WTO.
12. That, to the extent possible, the protection under AGOA be extended beyond 2004 to allow the African countries to build capacity to withstand global competition.
13. That since child labour is considered as a complex issue of concern to the US (as demonstrated by the clause about child labour in the AGOA), there should be investment in infrastructure for education.
14. That amendments in any new AGOA legislation be brought about so that provisions be made to encourage research among African countries to improve their quality products.
15. That civil society be given a well-defined role in AGOA so that it can bring the required balance in development, and that NGOS be encouraged and facilitated to participate and contribute during the next AGOA forum.
16. That the U.S. Government should press the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the Export-Import Bank to bring significant new resources to help African countries attract more capital, and the U.S. government should reduce the risks for commercial bank lending to joint US-Africa ventures, provide

training in market and loan facilities, establish loan guarantee funds, defray supervisory costs and promote an increase in the number of U.S. financial firms doing business in Africa.

17. That the U.S. should support AGOA eligible countries in:

- technical training and capacity building in product production, trade, processing, research and market development, especially for institutions serving smallholder producers, small-scale rural businesses, cooperatives and transport organizations;
- specialized technical training to increase African capacity to negotiate in the World Trade Organization;
- infrastructure development, including the creation of modern packaging plants, increased investment in storage plants, regional bulk commodity management facilities and value-added processing, as well as enhancement of export product quality and phyto-sanitary standards;
- improvement of transport and communication networks to reduce transaction and marketing costs related to agricultural trade, including support for efficient ocean freight and air freight systems, direct port-to-port linkages and incentives to reduce handling charges for AGOA commodities;
- market product and price information gathering, delivery and access to farmers, traders, processors and policymakers, and
- creation of a comprehensive information database on U.S. and African agribusiness to serve as a clearinghouse for specific inquiries regarding international trade, laws, contacts, etc.

18. That the U.S. government should establish an AGOA product advisory team to facilitate communications between African and American stakeholders, including designees of the U.S. and African governments, educational institutions, the private sector, smallholder producer organizations and NGO representatives.
19. That the U.S. government should provide tax incentives for U.S. companies to make trade, product and infrastructure investment in Africa.
20. That the U.S. government should provide technical assistance for eligible countries to identify and access niche product markets, especially for those from smallholder producers.
21. That the AGOA process must encourage and support African countries in the establishment and enforcement of effective rules and regulations governing international trade and marketing in international forums such as the WTO.
22. That civil society becomes a vital link between the people, the government and the business community in shaping the investment environment to promote broad prosperity. Civil society should play a vital role in demanding transparency in government regulations that will provide the predictability and stability that investors seek, including drafting investment codes, the equitable application of regulations, profit sharing for workers and benefits for local communities.
23. That NGOs have the responsibility to ensure that their actions are at all times geared towards the interest, welfare and indeed well-being of the citizen.
24. That a monitoring mechanism be established in each AGOA nation in Africa, involving a representative union, employers organizations and other civil society

- elements to address the breaches of minimum standards included in Section 104 of the AGOA.
25. That a mechanism be developed to measure the benefit to people from AGOA specifically and trade generally, and that the reports are taken into consideration in the eligibility evaluation of AGOA nations.
 26. That without worker participation, AGOA cannot be successful, and therefore, workers should be involved in AGOA forums.
 27. That since discretionary government power has been linked with corruption, there should be an inbuilt accountability mechanism for the checks and balances to monitor this exercise of discretion and that civil society play a role in this mechanism.
 28. That civil society organizations need to take a proactive role to ensure the involvement of particularly the small and medium enterprises.
 29. That there be more effective communication and cooperation between AGOA nation business communities and NGOs to help combat existing socio-economic problems.
 30. That the three partners (government, private sector and NGOs) ensure that all countries benefiting from AGOA contribute financially in maintaining a network grouping NGOs from different countries of Africa to ensure the fundamental independence of the role of civil society in ensuring the benefits of AGOA.
 31. That there must be a better mechanism for American and African business people to facilitate their understanding and identification of markets in their respective countries and to help them find likely business partners.

32. That African and American entrepreneurs have access to the capital necessary to allow joint ventures to take place.
33. That there is technical assistance provided so that African and American entrepreneurs communicate effectively through business plans.
34. That technology be made more widely available to businesses in Africa and America so that commerce in the 21st century can take place as it does elsewhere in the world.
35. That small and medium African and American businesses become more competitive through entrepreneurial training, which includes training on meeting international product standards. All entrepreneur training should include women.
36. That women play a pivotal role in the development processes and should rise up to the challenge of playing more forefront roles in the economic and social spheres, including through better access to science and technology in general and ICT in particular.
37. That a network for gender issues be created with the goals of reviewing the laws discriminating against women and generating projects, such as micro-credits, at a much higher percentage, including middle-aged women whose lack of finance prevents them from so doing
38. That technical assistance be provided for gender capacity building, creating an enabling environment for women to get engaged in trade.
39. That Inter-African trade should be encouraged and all barriers to trade and movement of people and funds be eliminated.

40. That investments in infrastructure (communication systems, power, roads etc...) should be encouraged so that the local entrepreneurs can make direct contact with prospective buyers.
41. That more franchising be developed in African countries in various sectors, including pharmaceuticals, tourism, hospitality etc.
42. That red tape, which could kill entrepreneurship, must be eliminated.
43. That trade should be conducted in as neutral a manner possible, with no limitations based on ethnicity, gender or any other factor.
44. That the question of HIV/AIDS, which is causing devastation among African people, be addressed through more diligent dissemination of information about HIV/AIDS and how to prevent it in indigenous languages.
45. That AGOA facilitates the free access to inexpensive generic drugs for HIV-AIDS under franchise, given the ravages being done by this pandemic in African countries.
46. That agriculture be pursued as the best way to improve economies in African countries because it is labor-intensive, requires less capital investment, utilizes abundant land, and provides food security and income from exports.
47. That trade missions to Africa involve NGOs as well as businesses.
48. That businesses devote a percentage of their profits for training and capacity building for workers and local communities.
49. That African-based equity funds may be the best solution in the long run to find funding for U.S.-Africa joint ventures under AGOA, and therefore, African banks and investors must begin to put together such funds.

50. That since AGOA requires that African nations either buy such products from America or other African countries, African textile producers should consider targeting other AGOA countries for sales of cotton and other similar materials, fabric, yarn and thread.
51. That NGOs should make concerted effort to encourage and assist women to be prepared to take up decision making positions. The AU is looking at 50/50 participation. This should be encouraged for AGOA countries, and women role model should be showcased.
52. That African and American NGOS work to actualize a Memorandum of Understanding to implement recommendations of the Conference.

At the end of the forum, participants comprising all organizations present at the forum agreed to establish the AGOA Civil Society Network. A secretariat has been established with Mauritius Council of Social Service and the Foundation for Democracy in Africa as co-leaders. The African Union's Civil Society Provisional Working Group will be a member of the network.

LOCAL - PARTICIPANTS

SN	NAME OF ORGANISATION	NAME OF PARTICIPANT
1.	ACIM	Mr. O Dev Cowreea
2.	Action Familiale	Mr. Marcel Marie
3.	Adventist Development and Relief Agency	Mr. Mahen V Neeliah
4.	Ahmadiyya Muslim Association	Mr. Azize Taujoo
5.	Anou Diboute Ensam	Mr. Beedianand Hulman
6.	Association de Parents d'Enfants Inadaptés de l'Ile Maurice	Mr. Yves Giraud
7.	Association des Consommateurs de l'Ile Rodrigues	Mr. Francis Clair
8.	Association Père Laval des Sans Abri – Maison de la Passerelle	Mr. Franco Rock
9.	Association pour le Bien Etre des Rodriguais (ABRO)	Mr. Alex Perrine
10.	CARITAS	Mr. Armand Rivet
11.	Carrefour - Rodrigues	Mr. Christian Raboude
12.	CEDEM	Mr. Jocelyn Amadis
13.	Century Welfare Association	Mr. Fouad Uteene
14.	Cercle des Dames Mourides	Mrs. Allia Syed Hossen Gooljar
15.	Comité Bien Etre de Stanley, Trèfles et Camp Levieux	Mr. Waheed Nubee
16.	Commissioner Rodrigues	Mr. Robert Speville
17.	Craft Aid	Mr. Paul Draper
18.	Dr Idrice Goomany Centre	Dr. Fayzal Sulliman
19.	Educational Development Youth Consultancy Services	Mr. Youssouf Noormamode
20.	Enfance Espoir	Ms. Sonia Xavier
21.	EPCO – Environment Protection and Organisation	Mr. K Beeharry Panray
22.	Fellowship First Aiders Association	Mr. Lutchmee Gungabissoon
23.	Flacq Disabled Centre	Ms. Vishwanee Aukhey
24.	Fondation Georges Charles	Mr. Roger Travailleur
25.	Foyer du Bon Pasteur	Sr. Françoise Mestry
26.	Fraternite de Grand Baie	Mr. L. Baby Botte
27.	Human Service Trust	Mrs. Chandravedee Bauhadoo
28.	Indo Mauritian Catholic Association – IMCA	Mr. Camille Moutou
29.	International Institute for Peace Through Tourism	Mr. Maga Ramasamy
30.	Islamic Centre for Disabled Children	Mrs. S Alleemudder
31.	Jeune Chambre Economique	Mr. Clyde Thomas
32.	Lions Club	Mr. Mike Benoît
33.	LIZIE DAN LA MAIN	Mr. Georges Antoine Félicité
34.	Loïs Lagesse Trust Fund	Mr. Deeljore
35.	LUPUS Alert	Ms. Babs Venkatasamy
36.	MACOSS - Deputy - Chairman	Mr. Paramasiva Chengan
37.	MACOSS – Honorary President	Mr. François de Grivel, CBE
38.	MACOSS - Vice-Chairman	Mr. Mooneelall Ramphul, OBE
39.	MACOSS -Chairman	Dr. Satish Boolell, OSK
40.	Mauritius Alliance of Rural Youth Movement	Mr. Bissoon Mungroo
41.	Mauritius Alliance of Women	Mrs. Indranee Nath Varma
42.	Mauritius Andhra Maha Sabha	Mr. Ramdass Gooriah
43.	Mauritius Arya Ravived Pracharini Sabha	Mr. Daneswar Babooa
44.	Mauritius Arya Sabha	Mr. Jaychand Lallbeeharry
45.	Mauritius Council of Agricultural Club	Mr. Mekraj Baldowa

46.	Mauritius Family Planning Association (MFPA)	Ms. Vidya Charan
47.	Mauritius Girl Guides Association	Ms. Myriam Narainsamy
48.	Mauritius Islamic Mission	Mr. A. Peerbocus
49.	Mauritius Scouts Association	Mr. Mahmud Jangeerkhan
50.	Mauritius Society for Environment & Conservation	Mr. Indurdeo Balgobin
51.	Member of Regional Assembly	Mr. Robertson Mercure
52.	Mothers' Union	Mrs. Kamla Ernest
53.	Mouvement Civique de la Baie du Tombeau	Mrs. Rozy Khedoo
54.	Mouvement d'Aide à la Maternité	Mrs. Monique Dinan
55.	Mouvement pour le Progrès de Roche Bois	Mrs. Edwidge Dukhie
56.	Muslim Youth Federation – Ladies Wing	Mrs. Mariam Goodur
57.	National Federation of Young Farmers Club	Mr. Soondar Bagha
58.	National Women Council	Mrs. Geeta Virah Sawmy Mootien
59.	National Women Entrepreneur Council	Mrs. Y Padaruth
60.	NATReSA	Mr. Jai Pottaya
61.	NGO Trust Fund	Dr. Dawood Oaris
62.	NGO Trust Fund	Mr. Oopmanew Chumun
63.	Old Age People's Association	Mr. Vidhianund Dewkurun, OSK
64.	Organisation pour l'Unité	Mr. Geeanduth Gangaram
65.	Presidential Committee on Poverty	Mrs. Homa Mungapen
66.	Prévention Information et Lutte contre le Sida	Mr. Nicolas Ritter
67.	Probation Home for Girls	Mrs. Marie Josée Baudot
68.	Rodriguan Council of Social Service	Mr. Karl Allas
69.	Rodrigues Special Needs Association	Mr. Jean Christian Agathe
70.	Save the Children	Mr. Veenace Koonjal
71.	Senior Citizens Council	Mrs. Wong Kam Venpin
72.	Service Volontaire International – SVI	Mr. Ayle Duval
73.	Services Sans Frontières	Mr. Meghanaden Naghen
74.	Shelter for Women & Children in Distress Trust Fund	Mrs. Sheela Baguant
75.	Shivopasack Mahila Sabha	Mrs. K Devi Soundur
76.	Soroptimist International – IPSAE	Mrs. Manda Boolell
77.	SOS Children's Village	Mr. Louis Amédée Dabeecharun
78.	SOS Poverty	Mr. Yousouf Dauhoo
79.	Special Olympics	Mr. José Luximon
80.	SPES	Mrs. Hélène Langlois
81.	Trust Fund for the Social Int. of Vulnerable Groups	Mr. Ishwarlall Hurbungs
82.	Union Pour le Progrès	Mr. Roland Karles Calotte
83.	United Way	Mr. Ravindraduth Poonie
84.	Women's International Association	Mrs. Churmawtee Sewgobind
85.	Youth for Christ	Mr. Cyril Palan

LIST OF FOREIGN DELEGATES TO NGO FORUM

SNO.	NAME OF ORGANISATION	NAME OF DELEGATE
1.	Foundation for Democracy in Africa (US)	Mr. Fred Oladeinde
2.	Foundation for Democracy In Africa (US)	Mr. Gregory Simpkins
3.	Foundation for Democracy In Africa (US)	Mr. Anthony Okonmah
4.	African Union	Dr. Jinmi Adisa
5.	African Union	Mrs. Alice Mungwa
6.	Common Market of Eastern And Southern Africa	Mr. Erastus Mwencha
7.	Bread for the World (US)	Mr. David Beckmann
8.	Bread for the World (US)	Mr. Ray Almeida
9.	Atlas Foundation for Economic Research (US)	Ms. Colleen Dyble
10.	Heritage Foundation (US)	Mr. Brett Schaeffer
11.	ADCI-VOCA (US)	Mr. Josh Walton
12.	Africa Fighting Malaria (South Africa)	Mr. Richard Tren
13.	Free Market Foundation (South Africa)	Mr. Leon Louw
14.	Free Market Foundation (South Africa)	Mr. Temba Nolutsongu
15.	Inter Regional Economic Network (Kenya)	Mr. James Shikwati
16.	Institute For Public Policy Analysis (Nigeria)	Mr. Thompson Ayodele
17.	Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa (US)	Dr. Julie Howard
18.	Women in Enterprise And Business (Namibia)	Mrs. Anne T Gebhart
19.	Namibia Development Foundation	Ms. Kauna Ndilula
20.	Namibia Development Trust	Mr. P J Dempers
21.	Mozambique	Mr. Vitorino Xavier
22.	Mali	Mr. Michel Diawara
23.	Mali	Ms. Dembele Oulematou Sow

OBSERVERS

1	Comesa	Ms. Katherine Ichoya
2	Comesa	Dr. Chingu Mwila
3	Comesa	Mr. T.Asfan
4	Lesotho Clothing And Allied Workers	Mr. Daniel Maraisane
5	Congo	Ms. François Dillou