

The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is a trade mechanism that was passed by the US Government in 2000 to encourage US-Africa trade.

AGOA currently provides the 37 AGOA-eligible countries with:

- \* Most liberal access to US markets for any country or region without a free trade agreement
- \* Reinforced Africa reform and development efforts
- \* Access to US credit and technical expertise
- \* High-level dialogue on trade and investment in the form of an annual U.S.-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum

Eligibility for AGOA was designed to reward and provide incentives for Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries that are making progress in political and economic reforms. Each SSA country's performance is assessed using the following criteria:

- \* Establishment of market based economies
- \* Development of political pluralism and the rule of law
- \* Elimination of barriers to US trade and investment
- \* Protection of intellectual property rights
- \* Efforts to combat corruption
- \* Policies to reduce poverty and increase access to health care and education
- \* Protection of human rights and worker rights
- \* Elimination of certain child labor practices

By creating tangible incentives for African countries to implement economic and commercial reform policies, AGOA contributes to better market opportunities and stronger commercial partners in Africa for US companies. AGOA should help forge stronger commercial ties between African countries and the United States, while it helps to integrate Africa into the global economy. US firms may find new opportunities in privatizations of African state-owned enterprises, or in partnership with African companies in infrastructure projects. US firms can also benefit by forming joint ventures with African or other firms to take advantage of AGOA benefits.

Map of Network Membership in Africa



Support the AGOA Civil Society Network Secretariat—The Foun-



CFC #10720

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*Building Relationships to  
 Expand the Reach of AGOA in  
 Africa and the United States*

[www.democracy-africa.org/  
 agoacsonet.html](http://www.democracy-africa.org/agoacsonet.html)

## Who We Are

The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Civil Society Network was established on January 17, 2003 at the end of the AGOA Civil Society Forum in Phoenix, Mauritius, with 102 member organizations from the United States, Mauritius, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Namibia, Mali, Lesotho and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Foundation for Democracy in Africa and the Mauritius Council of Social Services



Participants during the Opening Ceremony of the First AGOA Civil Society Session in Port Louis, Mauritius

were elected as co-chairs and empowered to establish and manage the secretariat for the AGOA Civil Society Network. The Secretariat also was empowered to make all necessary preparations for the next AGOA Civil Society Forum

The AGOA Civil Society Network is a consortium of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), small-to-medium sized business representatives, chambers of commerce and other groups in the United States and Af-

rica that are interested in the successful application of AGOA for the benefit of the US and African peoples.

This focus is with an eye towards improving the ease and understanding of US-Africa trade and to fully utilizing the benefits of AGOA, thus securing a place for African countries in the global economy and raising the standards of living of the masses of Africa.

## Mission

In keeping with the spirit of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the mission of the network is to empower African people through their civil society organizations to work with governments and businesses to take maximum advantage of AGOA benefits on behalf of the citizens of their countries.

The network will accomplish this mission through three means:

1. Monitoring compliance with AGOA eligibility requirements,
2. Providing technical assistance where feasible for public and private sectors on AGOA compliance and trade capacity; and
3. Tracking the impact of AGOA specifically and trade generally on African societies

## Objectives

Objectives of the AGOA Civil Society Network include:

- increased US-Africa trade,
- economic development; and
- the establishment of—
  - \* good governance
  - \* transparency

- \* sustainable democracy and
- \* human rights throughout the countries of Africa

## Ongoing and potential projects

- \* Annual report on eligibility requirement compliance of AGOA nations and assessment of compliance by non-AGOA nations compiled by national network affiliates
- \* Ongoing training by network member NGOs on trade capacity for African and American businesses to support and expand AGOA trade by small and medium enterprises
- \* Ongoing training by network member NGOs on trade, economic, political and social policy issues for African governments to enhance AGOA eligibility and compliance
- \* Annual report on the impact of trade on African societies that measures the impact beyond commercial statistics and offers recommendations on broadening the benefits of trade.



Participants of an AGOA training seminar run by the AGOA Civil Society Network Secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria

**JOIN THE AGOA CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK!**

**For an AGOA Civil Society Network Membership Form, email or fax your request to:  
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