



8th | ANNUAL AGOA CSO NETWORK SPRING CONFERENCE

Opening Remarks, by Fred Oladeinde

Chairman, The AGOA Civil Society Organization Network, April 13, 2023

Thank you very much, Jennifer, for the kind introduction and for the welcome remarks. Jennifer, as most of you know, is one of the foremost experts on US-Africa Engagement. We thank you for your support of the AGOA Civil Society Organization Network, and your contributions to strengthening US-Africa Relations.

Members of the AGOA Civil Society Organization Network, Excellencies Ambassadors, Distinguished Speakers, faculty, staff and students at George Washington University, ladies and gentlemen, all protocols observed - Good morning.

I am delighted to welcome you to our 8th Annual AGOA Civil Society Organization Network Spring Conference. The theme this year -- *Extending AGOA to 2035: Using Trade to Strengthen U.S.-Africa Strategic Alliances, is timely.*

We have some of the leading experts on US-Africa Trade, Investment, Commercial relations and Economic Cooperation from both sides of the Atlantic, from government; civil society; academia, and the private sector here today to share their wealth of experience and help chart the way forward on the future of AGOA.

AGOA was signed into law 23 years ago, by President Bill Clinton and has been the foundation of U.S. economic policy and business-related engagement with the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

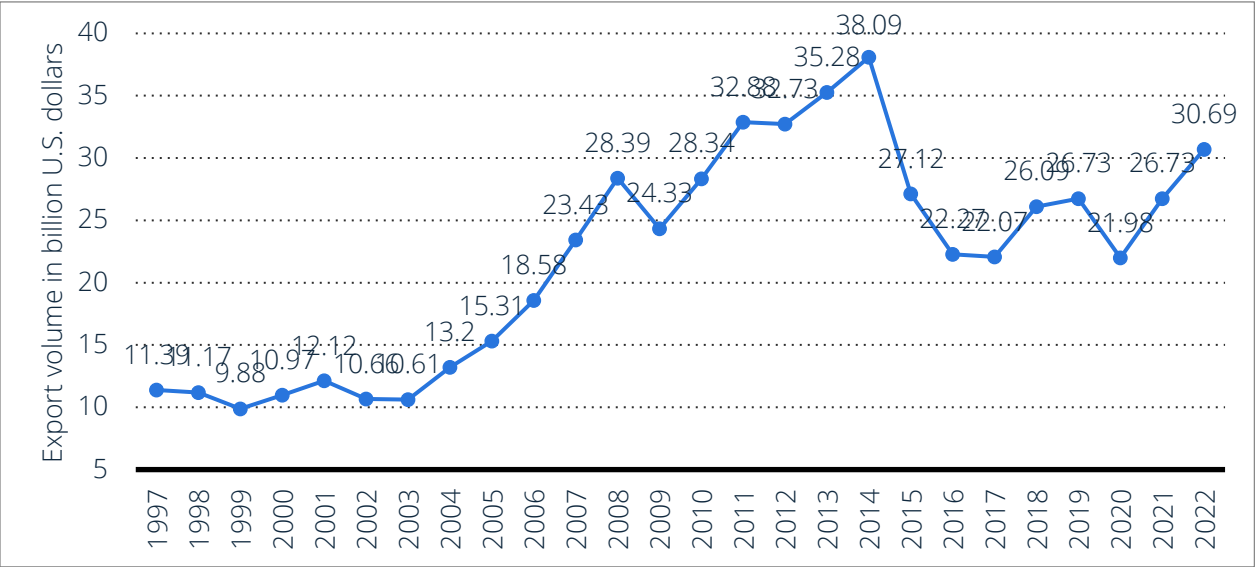
Since its enactment, AGOA provides eligible sub-Saharan African countries with duty-free access to the U.S. market for over 1,800 products, in addition to the more than 5000 products that are eligible for duty-free entry under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. In 2002, 2004, and 2006, Congress passed, and the Executive Branch implemented legislative enhancements to AGOA in 2015; Congress passed the Trade Preferences Extension Act (TPEA), updating and extending the program to 2025. Today 36 of 49 Sub Saharan countries are eligible.

MAP OF Sub Saharan Africa Countries

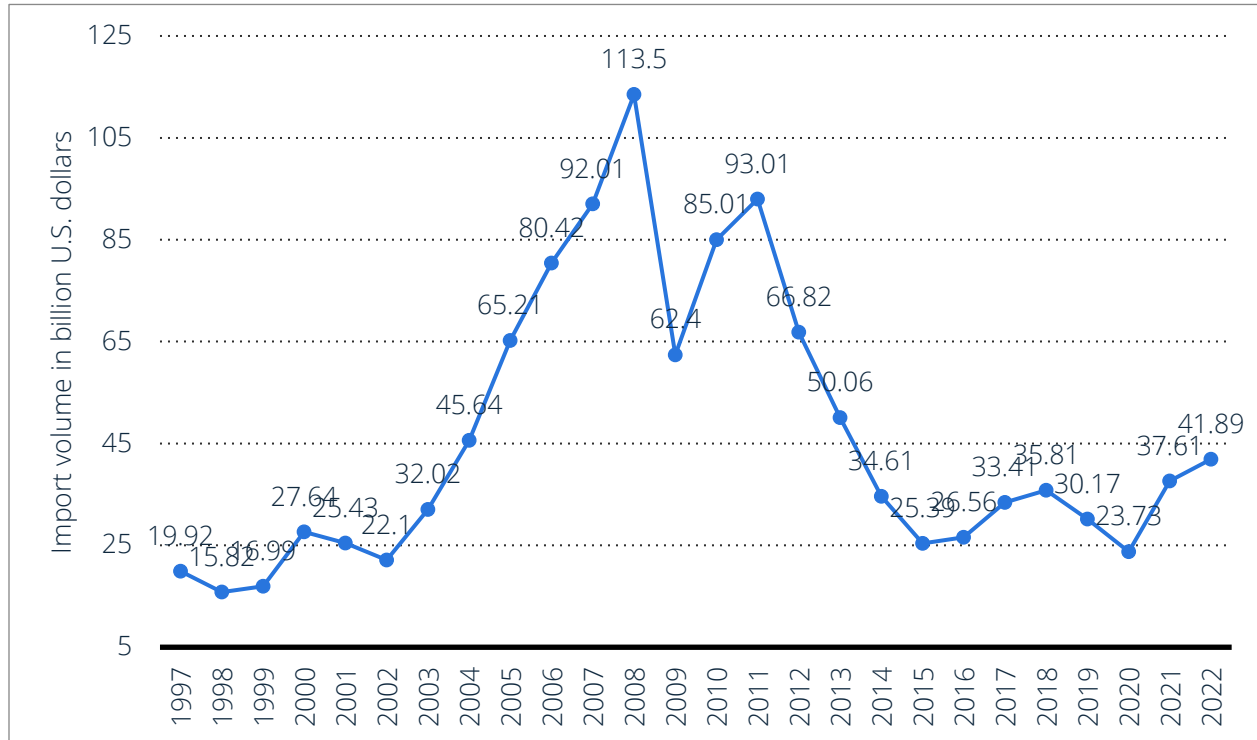
AGOA



Volume of U.S. exports of trade goods to Africa from 1997 to 2022 (in billion U.S. dollars)



Volume of U.S. imports of trade goods from Africa from 1997 to 2022 (in billion U.S. dollars)



Please let me share with you, AGOA Civil Society Organization Network's recommendations to 118th Congress and Biden-Harris Administration from our December 13, 2022, meeting during the margins of the U.S. Africa Leaders' Summit:

1. Extend/ Reauthorize/ Enhance the AGOA for a ten-year period, from 2025-2035 to support the African Union Agenda 2063 the AfCFTA, and Africa Customs Union.
2. Support the AGOA Civil Society Organization Network \$5 Billion (over five years) Special Purpose Investment Fund (SPIF) with tax incentives to support trade and manufacturing finance for U.S. SME's, particularly Diaspora owned companies to invest in targeted, countries/region and sectors in Africa, including Health; Climate adaptation and resilience; Food System Resilience value chains—Production and manufacturing, Food Security; and Tourism,- to help boost AGOA Exports and create millions of good-paying jobs for the youths across Africa and in the United States ---- The 10-years extension of AGOA benefits from 2025-2035 and the Special Purpose Investment Fund must be used by eligible AGOA countries to develop and implement comprehensive “Transition Plan” from an AGOA Trade Preference Arrangement (TPA) to other bilateral trade agreements with the United States— including ongoing discussion with current AGOA eligible countries on Bilateral and Free Trade frameworks.

We look forward to your contributions during the conference and look forward to working with you on extending AGOA to 2035.

Without much ado, please let me present our opening speakers-- Please join me in giving a warm welcome and applause for our distinguished Opening speakers.

Dr. Osvaldo Gomez Martinez, Deputy Assistant USTR, Executive Office of the President,

H.E. Albert Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and Industry Africa Union Commission (AUC)

and joining us from Accra Ghana, The Honorable Rosa Whitaker Duncan-Williams President and CEO The Whitaker Group, the First Assistant USTR for Africa and one of the primary architects of AGOA policy.

Each of our Distinguished Speakers have 10 minutes for remarks, and we will have ten minutes for Q&A.