



**Remarks by
Fred O. Oladeinde, Chairman AGOA Civil Society Organization
Network Secretariat
2020-2022 Inaugural Advisory Board Meeting
September 24, 2020**

First, thank you for accepting the Secretariat's invitation to serve on the 2020-2022 AGOA Civil Society Organization (CSO) Network Advisory Board, despite disruptions to our way of life both at home and at work because of the COVID-19 virus.

Unlike any economic downturn we have faced since the end of World War II, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is felt in real-time by every citizen and every country across the globe. COVID 19, has resulted in emergency lockdowns and almost brought global economic activity to a standstill, as public health experts, policymakers, and civil society struggle to put in place programs and legislation to curtail the spread of the disease and reduce the loss of life.

As we all look forward to a post-COVID-19 pandemic era, those of us that were selected to serve on the 2020-2022 Advisory Board are tasked with guiding the AGOA CSO Secretariat with addressing the current challenges of COVID-19 as related to U.S. engagement with Africa. Specifically, we (the AGOA Advisory Board) will be devising policies and an action plan to assist the next U.S. Administration in reversing the current slowdown in trade, commerce, and cultural exchange between the United States and Africa that has resulted in high unemployment and threatens the gains we have made over the last two decades using the benefits of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

The AGOA CSO Network Secretariat was established by 102 member organizations from the United States, Mauritius, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Namibia, Mali, Lesotho, and the Democratic Republic of Congo on January 17, 2003 at the conclusion of the AGOA Civil Society Forum in Phoenix, Mauritius, The Foundation for Democracy in Africa (FDA) and the Mauritius Council of Social Services were selected as co-chairs and empowered to establish and manage the secretariat for the AGOA Civil Society Network. Additionally, the secretariat was authorized to make all the necessary preparations for subsequent AGOA Civil Society Sessions of the Forum.

According to the 2020 Biennial Report on Implementation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) submitted by Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, Office of the United States Trade Representative to Congress:

The current list of AGOA eligible Countries includes 38 African nations, they are: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of Congo, Cote D Ivoire, Djibouti, Eswatini (Swaziland), Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi,



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Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia.

Countries Not eligible for AGOA, today, includes 11 countries: Burundi, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Mauritania, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia Zimbabwe.

Countries that have graduated from GSP, thus are not eligible for consideration for AGOA benefits are Equatorial Guinea and Seychelles.

According to Ambassador Lighthizer's report, U.S. exports and imports from 49 sub-Saharan African countries, and AGOA imports from the sub-Saharan African countries eligible for AGOA benefits are as below:

Total goods trade (exp + imp) in 2018 was \$40.9 billion, declined to \$36.7 in 2019

Total U.S. goods exports in 2018 was \$15.9 billion declined to \$15.7 billion in 2019

Total U.S. goods imports in 2018 was \$25.1 billion declined to \$21.0 in 2019

Trade balance in 2018 was \$-9.2 billion in 2018 declined to \$-5.3 billion in 2019

AGOA imports including GSP in 2018 was \$12.00 billion declined to \$8.4 billion in 2019

AGOA oil imports in 2018 was \$8.0 billion declined to \$4.6 billion in 2019

AGOA non-oil imports (incl. GSP) in 2018 was \$4.00 billion declined to \$3.8 billion in 2019

AGOA apparel imports in 2018 was \$1.2 billion increased in to \$1.4 billion in 2019.

The economic impact of COVID-19, will be reflected in 2021 Biennial Report to be presented to the next Congress on the implementation of the African Growth Opportunity Act by the next Administration. The Secretariat must remain focused and come up with policy recommendations and action plan for the next US Congress and Administration on how to reverse the current trend, expand AGOA benefits across Sub Saharan Africa and expand economic prosperity and cultural ties between the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa.

I take this opportunity to thank all past advisory board members for their support and contributions, and looking forward to working with you in better serving our members.

Again, I thank you.

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