

PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC  
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AGOA FORUM 2017  
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE  
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AGOA FORUM  
STRATEGIC COORDINATION UNIT  
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Togolese Republic  
Labor-Freedom-Homeland  
  
MINISTRY OF TRADE  
AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROMOTION



16<sup>TH</sup> AGOA FORUM

Lomé - Togo, August 8 – 10 2017

Theme: "The United States and Africa: Partnering for Prosperity Through Trade"

GENERAL REPORT

October 2017

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## ACRONYMS

AAG: African Ambassadors Group

AFNOC: AGOA Forum National Organizing Committee

AGET: Association of Large Enterprises in Togo (in French *Association des Grandes Entreprises du Togo*)

AGOA: African Growth and Opportunity Act

ASOZOF: Free-Trade Zone Company Association (in French *Association des Sociétés de la Zone Franche*)

AWEP: African Women Entrepreneurship Program

B2B: Business to Business

CCA: Corporate Council on Africa

CCIT: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Togo

CETEF-Togo 2000: Togolese Center for Exhibitions and Fairs (in French *Centre Togolais des Expositions et Foires de Lomé*)

CFTA: Continental Free Trade Area

COMESA: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

CSO: Civil Society Organizations

DTUSA: "Diaspora of Togo in USA" Association

EBID: ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development

ECA: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

ECOWAS-FEBWE: ECOWAS Federation of Business Women and Entrepreneurs

ETD: Enterprise Territory and Development

ETI: ECOBANK Transnational Incorporated

FAD: French Agency for Development

FDI: Foreign Direct Investment

FNGOTO: Federation of NGO in Togo

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GF2D/CRIFF: Reflection Group, Woman, Democracy and Development (in French *Femme, Démocratie et Développement*)

GITO: Grouping of Industries in Togo (in French *Groupement des Industries du Togo*)

ILO: International Labor Organization

IMO: Institute of Marketecology

IP: Intellectual Property

ITC: International Trade Center

ITRA: Togolese Institute for Agriculture and Research (in French *Institut Togolais pour l'Agriculture et la Recherche*)

MCC: Millenium Challenge Corporation

MSME: Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

MTR: Mid-Term Review

NCD: Non-Communicable Diseases

NIOTO: New Oilseeds Industry of Togo (in French *Nouvelle Industrie des Oléagineux du Togo*)

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OPIC: Overseas Private Investment Corporation

PPP: Public – Private Parntership

REC: Regional Economic Community

RFTA: Regional Free Trade Area

SACU: Southern African Customs Union

SADC: Southern African Development Community

SME: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

SMI: Small and Medium-sized Industries

SOTRAL: Lomé Transport Company (in French *Société des Transports de Lomé*)

TFA: Trade Facilitation Agreement

TWEA: Togolese Women Entrepreneurs Association

UNCTD: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UONGTO: Union of NGO in Togo (in French *Union des ONG du Togo*)

USA: United States of America

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

USD: US Dollar

USG: United States Government

USTDA: United States Trade and Development Agency

USTR: United States Trade Representative

WTO: World Trade Organization

YALI: Young African Leaders Initiative

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Togo and the United States of America co-hosted the 16<sup>th</sup> African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) forum on August 8-10, 2017 under the theme: “The United States and Africa: Partnering for Prosperity through Trade”. This important event brought together nearly one thousand (1000) delegates from Africa and the US and it was widely acclaimed as the best AGOA forum organized so far.

The 2 Février-Radisson Blu Hotel, ECOBANK Transnational Incorporated and ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) were the venues selected for the forum’s activities.

### The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum activities in Togo

Three (3) main forums made up the activities of the AGOA eligible countries and US meeting under the AGOA Act. These are the Ministerial forum, the Private Sector forum and the Civil Society forum.

The private sector and the civil society forums took place on August 8, 2017, preceded by a joint opening ceremony chaired by the Prime Minister of Togo, His Excellency Mr. Komi Sélom Klassou.

The Ministerial forum was held on August 9-10, 2017. It was marked by a solemn opening ceremony co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Komi Sélom Klassou , Prime Minister, Head of Togolese Government, representing the Togolese Head of State H.E. Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé and H.E. Mr. Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, US Trade Representative and personal Representative of the US President, H.E. Mr. Donald Trump, followed by activities in plenary and breakout sessions.

Her Excellency Mrs. Bernadette Essossimna Legzim-balouki, Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion, chaired the closing ceremony and gave

the closing speech of the Forum. The ceremony also concluded with remarks by H.E. Mr. David Gilmour, US Ambassador to Togo followed by an occasional address by H.E. Mrs. Dédé Ahoéfa Ekoué, Minister, Advisor to the President of the Togolese Republic, Head of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum organizing committee and AGOA 2017 Focal point.

#### The African Senior Officials and Experts meeting

As a prelude to the forum and to prepare the session of African Trade Ministers Consultative Group, a meeting of African Senior Officials, Experts and Ambassadors was held on August 7, 2017 in Lomé, Togo. The meeting provided an opportunity to consider, amend and adopt the conclusions and recommendations of the AGOA mid-term review held in Washington DC, on July 17-18, 2017.

The works were carried out by a Bureau comprising of the Ambassadors of Togo, Mauritius, Uganda, Lesotho and Congo. The meeting was co-chaired by the Economic Development Committee of the African Ambassadors Group in Washington DC, H.E. Mr. Frédéric Edem Hegbe, Ambassador of Togo to the US and H.E. Mr. Soorooj Phokeer, Ambassador of Mauritius to the US.

#### The African Trade Ministers Consultative meeting

Held on Tuesday, August 8, 2017 in Lomé, the purpose of the meeting is to present the conclusions and recommendations of the Senior Officials meeting and to discuss key issues to be addressed at the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum.

The opening ceremony was chaired by H.E. Mr. Lazare Sehoueto, Minister of Trade, Industry and SMEs of Benin.

At the ceremony, H.E. Mr. Albert Muchanga, African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry, Representative of the African Union Commission Chairperson, stressed on the issue of regional integration and stated that the AGOA eligible countries should create a win-win partnership with the US.



## Overall summary of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum

The objective of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum at the level of Sub-Saharan Africa eligible States and the US is essentially to identify strategies to optimize AGOA utilization as a lever for exports to the US in order to promote the prosperity of our people. Specifically, it is all about formulating relevant recommendations, building the capacities of the different actors in sub-Saharan Africa and fostering networking.

In addition to building capacities and fostering networking, the Forum was a useful opportunity to agree on suitable strategies to boost AGOA exports by 2025. African governments are called upon to implement recommendations on regional integration, logistics and transport, industry including agro-industry, standards and research, business financing, capacity building, technology, small producers inclusion, security and policy space.

The recommendations can be summarized as follows:

### To eligible countries governments:

#### Regional Integration and Transport

- ✓ Strengthen the African regional integration agenda through initiatives such as the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA);
- ✓ Ratify the WTO (World Trade Organization) Trade Facilitation Agreement (FTA) in order to enhance transparency, reduce trade costs and increase the competitiveness of African enterprises and exports.

#### Industry

- ✓ Support the continent's industrialization efforts in line with the African Union Agenda 2063 through trade and investment relationship with the United States;
- ✓ Promote clustering networks such as industrial parks and infrastructure financing that enable African companies to compete at the global level.

## Standards and research

- ✓ Enhance cooperation on standards as well as sanitary and phytosanitary measures;
- ✓ Invest in testing laboratories to get fair trade certification.

## Business Financing

- ✓ Adopt policies that attract foreign investment including that of the diaspora;
- ✓ Diversify sources of financing beyond banks to promote trade and investment.

## Capacity Building

- ✓ Build the capacities of civil society organizations in order to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises;
- ✓ Increase the support of civil society organizations (CSOs) to trade and to technical capacities building of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises so that they can better participate in global value chains;
- ✓ Continue to benefit from the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in overcoming non-tariff barriers.

## Technology

- ✓ Provide broad access to Information and Communication Technologies.

## Inclusion

- ✓ Promote policies that encourage the establishment of cooperatives.

To the US government, the following recommendations were formulated:

- Call upon the US government agencies to scale-up support to AGOA eligible countries, for the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), especially land-locked countries in order to lower trade costs, facilitate the free movement of goods across borders and promote Africa's integration in the global economy. The cooperation on the TFA should be on the basis of agreed programs at the Regional Economic Community level so as to promote regional integration.
- Encourage the US government not to cut budget to USAID in a bid to facilitate resources for countries in maximizing AGOA utilization strategies;
- Support the continent integration efforts in the global supply chains and distribution networks since Africa is currently making steady progress towards regional and continental integration;
- Call upon the US not to implement out-of-cycle reviews in a way that would be detrimental to the spirit of AGOA itself which is premised on predictability and certainty.
- Support the regional integration agenda in order to promote Africa's integration in the global economy.

### Success factors of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum

Several factors contributed to the perfect success of the forum. These are, namely:

1. The commitment of the Togolese State
2. The quality of the U.S – Togolese government cooperation
3. The strong mobilization and the quality contribution of the eligible countries and the African regional and sub-regional organizations.
4. The quality of the collaboration with the U.S technical partners

5. The effectiveness of the African countries Ambassadors Committee and the African Union in Washington
6. The strong mobilization and active participation of private sector delegates and non-governmental organizations from Africa and the US
7. The proactive leadership of the Togolese private sector and civil society in organizing the forum
8. The high professionalism of service providers

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT

The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum between the US and the eligible countries throughout Sub-Saharan Africa kept all its promises on August 8-10, 2017 in Lomé, Togo, under the theme: "The US and Africa : Partnering for Prosperity through Trade ".

In the opinion of the participants and all the observers, the AGOA 2017 Forum was the best of all the editions organized until then. This merit goes first and foremost to the highest authorities of the country who managed to provide the necessary dynamic and all the facilities around this great intercontinental rendezvous.

To this end, I would like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Head of State, President of the Togolese Republic, H.E. Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé for the confidence placed in the AGOA Forum National Organizing Committee and for the consistent supports to the organization of the forum.

The Organizing Committee expressed its gratitude to the Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Komi Sélom Klassou for his support throughout the process and to all the members of the Government who worked for the outstanding success of the forum.

Our thanks go to the US Government, to H.E. Mr. Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, US Trade Representative for his presence at the Lomé Forum and his commitment to facilitating trade between the United States and Africa, to the entire US delegation that accompanied him, and to H.E. Mr. David Gilmour, the US Ambassador to Togo. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the US inter-agency teams that supported us throughout the process. I particularly welcome Mrs. Connie Hamilton, Acting US Trade Representative for Africa, Mr. Peter Barlerin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Department – Africa Bureau, Mr. Harry Sullivan, State Department, Africa / Bureau of Economic and Regional Affairs Acting Director and Mr. Frédérique Stewart, Department of Commerce, Africa Bureau Director. I would especially like to thank Mrs. Tawanna Davidson, State Department, Africa / Bureau of Economic and Regional Affairs, AGOA Forum Logistics Lead

who worked closely with the National Committee and all stakeholders for a successful logistics preparation. The Government also thanks US technical partners, the Corporate Council on Africa, the AGOA Civil Society Network, the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program, the West Africa Trade Hub and AGOA.info of the Trade Law Center, which worked closely with the National Committee in preparing the forum.

My warmest congratulations and thanks to all the eligible countries government Delegations who took part in the Lomé Forum, to the Private Sector, Civil Society and the Diaspora actors as well as all the stakeholders who marked the event.

The gratitude of the Togolese Government is also addressed to the eligible countries Ambassadors Group and the African Union for their technical leadership which enabled the excellent preparation of the eligible countries. Special thanks also go to H.E. Mr. Frédéric Edem Hegbe, Ambassador of Togo in the U.S and H.E. Mr. Soorooj Phokeer, Ambassador of Mauritius to the US.

I would particularly like to congratulate the President of the AGOA 2017 Forum National Organizing Committee, Minister, Advisor to the President of the Republic, H.E. Mrs. Dédé Ahoéfa Ekoué, for her personal commitment and quality leadership in coordinating all activities related to the forum. We worked in good synergy and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of her team and that of the Ministry of Trade who worked together and in the same dynamic.

May all the members of the National Committee, the chairmen and members of commissions and technical committees, the private sector forum and the civil society forum, find hereby the gratitude of the Government and the people of Togo as a whole. The government thanks Mr. Ade Ayeyemi, Chairman and CEO of ECOBANK Transnational Incorporated Group for the outstanding contribution of this pan-African institution to the success of the forum. The Government expresses its deep appreciation to Mr. Olowo-N'djoTchala of the Togolese Diaspora in the US, Founder and Manager of ALAFFIA for all the commitment and investment made for the success of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum.

I salute Diaspora members who took the initiative to participate in and contribute to the forum and thank Mr. Victor Adoukonou, President of the "Togolese Diaspora in the USA" association. I would like to congratulate Mr. Fall Toure, Fashion designer and founder of the Fashion Academy of Lomé Togo (FALT) for the successful organization of the "Lomé AGOA Fashion Week".

May Mrs. Rachel Ebaneth, Focal point of the 14<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum in Gabon, Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade, SMEs, Crafts and Services Development in Gabon, be warmly thanked for her availability to exchange with the Togolese counterparts about good practices of the 14<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum.

I would like to thank all the service providers involved in the organization of the forum, the national and international media, all the good-wills and all those who contributed in a way or another to the successful organization of this forum.

Indeed, the Lomé Forum was a great success and led to important recommendations for a better AGOA utilization. During this important event, all stakeholders renewed their commitment to make AGOA, a more dynamic framework of win-win US – Africa partnership.

In this vein, the Government of Togo will work closely with the Private sector, the Civil Society and the Diaspora, whose contribution is essential to ensure the implementation of the Operational Action Plan for the AGOA utilization for an economic and inclusive development.

For the next eight (8) years that AGOA will last, I would like to express my heartfelt wish that the Sub-Saharan Africa eligible countries implement the Strategies and Operational Action Plans for the AGOA utilization and take maximum advantage of this opportunity for the benefit of our economies and our respective populations.

To accompany this process, a general report of the forum was prepared and is available on the official website of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum ([www.agoa-togo.tg](http://www.agoa-togo.tg)) and on the experience capitalization website ([www.agoatogo2017.info](http://www.agoatogo2017.info)) of the Forum's Strategic Coordination Unit.

Long live the AGOA, the foundation of the US – Africa economic partnership for prosperity through Trade.

Mrs. Bernadette E. Legzim-Balouki,  
Togolese Minister of Trade and  
Private Sector Promotion.

## INTRODUCTION

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was promulgated by the US Congress in 2000. It has allowed sub-Saharan African countries to export



nearly 6500 tax-exempt products to the United States. In June 2015, it was extended until 2025.

The AGOA Act is aimed at developing trade between the US and sub-Saharan Africa in order to foster economic growth and development as well as the integration of sub-Saharan Africa into the global economy.

This law is an opportunity for sub-Saharan Africa to enter the US market which is one of important and growing markets. The US market is one of the largest markets with one of the world's largest GDPs (\$ 18,569.1 billion or 1/4 of the world's GDP), it also has the highest GDP per capita among the major countries (\$ 57,254) with a population of 325,025,585 in 2016. As a result, AGOA is a real opportunity for the African continent.

Since 2000, overall export performance under AGOA has evolved positively.

However, there is a concern with the declines in exports of eligible countries under AGOA over the last five (5) years. In addition, there are several limitations to this evolution of exports under AGOA. These constraints are:

- Africa's exports to the world are little diversified and remain dominated by basic commodities, mainly hydrocarbons: fuels accounted for 55% of exports in 2010-2015, and manufactured goods only 18%;
- US – Sub-Saharan Africa trade accounts for less than 1% of US trade with the rest of the world.

This state of affairs demonstrates that AGOA has not yet been utilized to take full advantage of the potential in Sub-Saharan Africa to boost exports and increase the prosperity of its people.

In fact, Sub-Saharan Africa has real potential in the economic and demographic areas, among others:

On the economic front, growth prospects for Sub-Saharan Africa are relatively positive, even though there has been a slowdown in 2016 in comparison with 2015, i.e. 1.5% versus 3.5%. It is expected to reach a rate of 2.6% in 2017 and 3.2% in 2018. Investors have a more positive appreciation of Africa as evidenced by the evolution of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which stood at US \$ 56.6 billion in 2016 and projected at US \$ 57 billion by 2017;

The African population has the highest proportion of young people in the world. It also has the fastest growing. More than 20% of the African population is between 15 and 24 years old, and more than 40% of the African population is under 15 years old. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), young people reached 36% of the total working-age population.

To fully capitalize on the opportunities Africa offers through AGOA, it is important to address the following major challenges:

- Regional integration: In the year 2015, intra-African exports accounted for only a quarter (25%) of the total good exports of the African continent, a share that was clearly too low, especially compared with the one of the American continent. (58%), Europe (60%), or Asia (67%). Regional integration remains a key challenge, that is why the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) aims to create a single African market with more than one billion people and a GDP of more than \$ 3 trillion. This market is expected to achieve economies of scale and attract more investment in African countries. It should also stimulate the search for inputs and intermediate products on the continent, support the expansion of the manufacturing sector and improve the competitiveness and productivity of manufacturers of industrial goods in Africa.

- Agri-business: Agricultural products ranked last among the top 5 commodity categories imported by the United States from Sub-Saharan Africa under AGOA, corresponding \$ 488 million.
- Industrialization: Sub-Saharan Africa lags far behind in terms of industrialization, since manufactures account for 15% of GDP. The challenge of industrialization remains the key to capitalizing on the continent's demographic and agricultural opportunities for product transformation and access to other markets such as the US market, taking full advantage of AGOA.
- Transport and logistics: between 30 and 40% of the costs of exported products being linked to transport, trade between the USA and Africa would benefit from an improvement in logistics and services.
- Standards and qualities: mastery of issues related to certification, standards and quality are of great importance. Economic operators in sub-Saharan Africa are expected to better understand the standards and qualities required for their products in order to facilitate their export under AGOA.
- Product diversification: Statistics show that 80% of exports to the United States of America are for mining products. One of the challenges is to expand the range of products exported by capitalizing on competitive areas for Africa; It is observed that Africa's exports to the world are not very diversified and remain dominated by commodities, mainly hydrocarbons: fuels accounted for 55% of exports in 2010-2015, and manufactured goods only 18%.
- Funding sources diversification: it is important to adapt financing to the different needs of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

- **Technology:** e-commerce or electronic encompasses all commercial transactions that take place remotely via electronic and digital interfaces. E-commerce essentially encompasses business transactions via the Internet from different types of terminals (computers, tablets, smartphones, consoles, connected TV). E-commerce is a tool that can foster regional integration.
- **Inclusion:** Build the productive capacities and commercial capacities of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including youth and women, and integrate them into regional value chains for an impact of AGOA on a large number of Africans.
- **The challenge of social entrepreneurship, fair trade and small enterprises integration:** Meeting this challenge is necessary because the majority of micro and small businesses are not connected to export channels. However, the bulk of economic activity is concentrated in the non-formal sector and small and micro enterprises. This situation represents an opportunity to integrate these small and micro enterprises in the export circuit to increase exchanges between the United States and Africa. Developing effective strategies for the sustainable and beneficial inclusion of small firms and small producers in the international production and marketing channels helps increase business for large enterprises and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to increase the scale and quality of their production as well as their income.

The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum organized by the Government of Togo with the Government of the United States of America on August 8-10, 2017 under the theme "The US and Africa: Partnering for Prosperity through the Trade" has provided an opportunity for governments and economic operators to be better equipped to meet the major challenges identified for full utilization of the AGOA benefits.

The objective of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum at the level of the Sub-Saharan Africa eligible States and the US is essentially to identify strategies to optimize the use of AGOA as a driving force for exports to the United States, to promote the prosperity of our populations. Specifically, its' objective is to formulate relevant recommendations, strengthen the capacities of different African actors and foster networking to remove major barriers to the full utilization of AGOA.

This report presents the activities, the summary report and the success factors of this 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum.

## I. ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE 16<sup>TH</sup> AGOA FORUM

### 1.1. Pre-forum Activities

As a prelude to the work of the forum, several activities were carried out. These activities contributed greatly to the success of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum. The AGOA Forum National Organizing Committee of the (AFNOC) has taken all necessary steps to accompany the smooth running of these activities, which are of several types and whose most salient are: the meetings of trade ministers and experts from AGOA eligible countries, the workshop on the diagnosis of export-related issues to the US and the AGOA Operational Action Plan validation workshop.

#### 1.1.1. The African Senior Officials and Experts Meeting

A meeting of Senior Officials, African Experts and Ambassadors was held on August 7, 2017 in Lomé, Togo. The meeting considered and adopted, with amendments, the conclusions and recommendations of the AGOA Mid-Term Review, held in Washington DC on July 17-18, 2017. The work was carried out by a Committee comprising of the Ambassadors of Togo, Mauritius, Uganda, Lesotho and Congo. The meeting was co-chaired by the Economic Development Committee of the African Ambassadors Group in Washington DC, His Excellency Mr. Frédéric Edem Hegbe, Ambassador of

Togo to the US and His Excellency Sooroj Phokeer, Ambassador of Mauritius to the US.

### 1.1.2. The African Trade Ministers Consultative meeting

The African Trade Ministers Consultative meeting was held on Tuesday, August 8, 2017 in Lomé. Its purpose was to present the conclusions and recommendations of the Senior Officials meeting and discuss key issues to be addressed at the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum.

The opening ceremony was moderated by H.E. Mr. Lazare Sehoueto, Minister of Trade, Industry and Small and Medium Enterprises of Benin.

In her welcome remarks, H.E. Mrs. Bernadette Essossimna Legzim-Balouki, Togolese Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion of Togo, reiterated the appreciation of AGOA eligible countries regarding the extension of AGOA until 2025 highlighted the new legislation revolves around the following elements: improving US – Africa relationships, developing national AGOA utilization strategies; capacity building and promotion of agro-industries; strengthening infrastructure development in Sub-Saharan Africa; the development of regional strategies and value chains.

At the opening ceremony, H.E. Mr. Albert Muchanga, African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry, African Union Chairperson Representative, stressed on regional integration issue and indicated that AGOA eligible countries should create a win-win partnership with the US He said that countries from sub-Saharan Africa are still not fully benefiting from AGOA opportunities and hoped that the debate will lead to proposals that will boost AGOA eligible countries exports.

He mentioned that, in order to tackle the AGOA opportunities under-utilization issue, the African Union Commission in collaboration with United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has offered to host a workshop on

ways to maximize the AGOA utilization during the African Economic Platform meeting scheduled for March 2018 in Mauritius.

He concluded by saying that we should work on the post-2025 period to preferably obtain an US – Africa agreement rather than bilateral agreements between the individual African countries and the US.

The seminar for presenting the conclusions and recommendations of the Senior Officials meeting was moderated by H.E. Mrs. Bernadette Legzim-Balouki, Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion of Togo. The meeting considered and adopted with amendments the conclusions and recommendations of the Senior Officials meeting held on August 7, 2017. The Ministers decided to retain the current Bureau comprising of Togo, Mauritius, Uganda, Lesotho and Congo. In the discussions that followed, several amendments were proposed to the Senior Officials report and have been incorporated in the final version.

The challenges and solutions regarding the implementation of AGOA were discussed.

The key challenges facing African countries are mainly supply-side constraints, inadequate infrastructure and the uncompetitive business environment. There is therefore a need to promote inter-connectivity, infrastructure development and policy reform in order to reduce trade costs, increase industrial competitiveness and promote the development of regional value chains.

The UNECA was called upon to promote the exchange of AGOA best practices through the organization of regular workshops in collaboration with US Government agencies.

The setting up of a Consultative committee composed of representatives from the US Department of Commerce, US Department of Agriculture in Washington DC, the US Foreign Trade Representative Bureau and the African Ambassadors Group (AAG) to monitor all AGOA related issues.

It is recommended that each AGOA eligible African country does a complete mapping of the constraints associated with its AGOA exports.

AGOA eligible countries are encouraged to:

- Develop and publish their national AGOA utilization strategies and ensure implementation of the strategies in countries where they have already been developed;
- Provide a structured approach to exploiting AGOA preferences that have proven successful in countries like Ethiopia;
- Support planned programs and linkages with US institutions;
- Follow-up market analysis and stakeholder consultations to target key sub-sectors with high AGOA potential;
- Target AGOA trade bottleneck and incorporate investment promotion to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in priority sectors.

On Intellectual Property (IP), the African Union Commission (AUC) is encouraged to collaborate with relevant institutions such as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to ensure a development approach to Intellectual Property and build capacity within the continent.

As far as regional integration is concerned, the creation of the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to stimulate intra-Africa trade and promote the development of regional value chains was recommended with a view to better utilize AGOA preferences. In addition, there is a need for African countries to develop a common position on trade and investment relationships with the United States.



It is noted that the AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act introduces out-of-cycle reviews that have increased uncertainty regarding the eligibility of sub-Saharan African countries and hampers investment prospects, as well as the ability of countries to develop AGOA utilization strategies.

The US is urged to consider the legitimate public policy issues of Africa in the considering of petitions for out-of-cycle reviews.

Recommendations were made to the US, including:

- Scale-up support to AGOA eligible countries for implementation of the WTO TFA, in particular land-locked countries to lower trade and transport costs and promote the integration of Africa into the world economy. Cooperation on TFA should be on the basis of agreed programs at the Regional Economic Community level to promote regional integration;
- Not to cut budget to USAID so that the latter could help countries maximize their AGOA utilization strategies;
- Not to implement out-of-cycle reviews in a way that would be detrimental to the spirit of AGOA itself which is premised on predictability and certainty.

## 1.2. Flagship Activities of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum in Togo

Three major forums composed the activities of this meeting of the 38 AGOA eligible countries and the U.S under the AGOA Act. These are the Ministerial forum, the Private Sector forum and the Civil Society forum.

The Private Sector and Civil Society forums took place on August 8, 2017, preceded by an opening ceremony, jointly chaired by the Prime Minister of Togo, H.E. Mr. Komi Selom Klassou.

The Ministerial forum was held on August 9-10, 2017. It was marked by a solemn opening ceremony co-chaired by the Prime Minister representing the President of the Republic of Togo and followed by works in plenary and breakout sessions.

## 1.2.1. Opening Ceremonies

### 1.2.1.1. Joint Opening Ceremony of the Private Sector and the Civil Society forum

The joint opening ceremony of the Private Sector forum and the Civil Society forum took place on August 8. It was chaired by H.E. Mr Komi Selom Klassou, Prime Minister and Head of Government of Togo.

In his opening remarks, the Prime Minister said that the sessions of the Private Sector forum and Civil Society forum constitute the framework of discussions par excellence to remove the bottlenecks observed in the implementation of the partnership between the US and the eligible countries from Sub-Saharan Africa. He also said that the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum in Lomé was an opportunity for Sub-Saharan Africa to review and meet challenges of accelerated, sustainable and inclusive growth.

He also reaffirmed that the inclusion of small producers, young people and women in national and regional value chains constitute a key element in enabling people across Sub-Saharan Africa to fully benefit from AGOA opportunities.

The joint opening ceremony was also attended by H.E. Mrs. Bernadette Essossimna Legzim-Balouki, Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion, Mrs. Sylvie Benissan-Messan, Representative of AWEP-Africa, Mr. Fred Oladeinde, Chairperson of AGOA Civil Society Network and Leader of the AGOA Civil Society Forum, Mrs. Florizelle B. Liser, Chair of CCA-USA and Leader of the AGOA Private Sector Forum, Mr Ade Ayeyemi, Chief Executive Officer of the ECOBANK Group and Mr. Peter Henry Barlerin, State Department Representative / Africa Bureau.

### 1.2.1.2. The main official opening ceremony of the Ministerial Forum

The opening ceremony of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum took place on August 9, 2017 and was co-chaired by Mr. Komi Selom Klassou, Prime Minister, Head of Togolese Government, representing the Togolese Head of State, H.E. Mr Faure Essozimna GNASSINGBE, and H.E. Mr. Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, US Trade Representative and personal Representative of the US President H.E. Mr. Donald Trump.

The presence of these two high-level personalities from Togo and the US reflects the importance of this forum for these two countries, and for Africa as much as for the USA, it is the first commitment of the new US administration in Africa; for Togo, it is a challenge not only to show the commitment to make the country a hub of Trade between Africa and the US, but also to demonstrate the capacity and expertise from Togo to the hosting of major events.

The opening ceremony presaged the success of this 16<sup>th</sup> forum of the kind and also the importance of the works' outcomes for Togo.

In her occasional remarks, Mrs. Bernadette Essossimna Legzim-Balouki, Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion of Togo, welcomed the participants and said that despite the opportunities offered by the AGOA Act, its impact on trade between the U.S and sub-Saharan African countries is limited and concentrated on a few sectors.

She also noted that constraints related to supply capacity and lack of infrastructure are among the major causes of the limited utilization of AGOA by eligible countries.

In his speech, the Prime Minister, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Republic of Togo, expressed his warm and cordial welcome to the various delegations and also said that Togo is honored to host this 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum.

Then he indicated that it is important for sub-Saharan African countries to conduct in-depth reflection and take steps to maximize the impact of AGOA on

trade, wealth creation and on participatory and inclusive development for sub-Saharan Africa.

He also advocated that African countries should continue to reflect on the process of regional integration and on agreed approaches to security and poverty reduction.

Finally, he recalled the need to focus on the continuous monitoring and self-assessment of the impact of privileged relations implementation under AGOA, before wishing a pleasant stay in Lomé to the various delegations and wished success to the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum activities.

H.E. Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, US Trade Representative and Personal Representative of the US President, H.E. Mr. Donald Trump, reiterated the commitment of the US to support Africa. He also said that his country believes in the growth potential of Africa and recalled the need for the US and sub-Saharan African countries to focus on ways to achieve a stronger trade commitment with greater reciprocity in the future.

He also said that the AGOA Forum in Lomé was a good opportunity to take stock of US-Africa trade relationships and discuss its evolution in a constantly changing economic environment. He said "together we can create a better environment for business and pave the way for a stronger and sustainable business relationship for the future."

He added that the US had just signed the letter approving the textile and clothing visa for Togo and that this important step allowed Togolese companies to profit from the many advantages of textiles and clothing available in the context of AGOA program.

### 1.2.2. The Ministerial forum

The Ministerial Forum brought together Ministers of Trade, Ambassadors, Representatives of regional and sub-regional organizations from the eligible African countries and the United States. Representatives of the private sector

and civil society were also invited to sessions.

In addition to the opening and closing ceremonies, work was carried out in plenary and in breakout sessions to develop consensus on progress, opportunities and challenges and to map the road for the next few years. The sessions also helped strengthen the capacity of government decision-takers.

The summary of the work in plenary and breakout sessions is as follows.

#### 1.2.2.1. The plenary Sessions

##### Plenary Session 1: Relationships in terms of trade between the United States of America and sub-Saharan Africa

In the first plenary session, the US Trade Representative (USTR), His Excellency Robert Lighthizer and the Minister of Commerce of Nigeria, Mr. Okechukwu Enelamah, chaired the discussion on priorities to expand trade in the context of AGOA and the long-term future of trade relationship between the United States and Africa.

According to the US Trade Representative, AGOA is the cornerstone of trade between the US and Africa, and the US is committed to strengthening their trade relationships with Africa and supporting its development because prosperity in Africa is also beneficial for the US.

Between 2000 and 2016, AGOA enabled Africa to double exports to the US and diversify its exports in the same period.

H.E. Ambassador Robert Lighthizer emphasized the importance of going further by promoting free trade and strengthening regional integration. He also indicated that for the long term, U.S seeks to develop a "more balanced" and reciprocal trade relationship with Africa.

The US Trade Representative also called on African ministers to improve the business climate in their respective countries to enable businesses,

entrepreneurs and farmers to expand their economic activities and attract more Foreign Direct Investment.

For H.E. Dr. Okechukwu Enelamah, Minister of Commerce of Nigeria and co-Chairman of the Plenary, specific support under AGOA is needed to:

- ✓ Encourage more investment by American companies in Africa for industrialization;
- ✓ Strengthen regional and sub-regional integration.

He called for innovative and creative approaches to AGOA utilization. In addition, several African ministers called on the US to maintain its technical assistance for trade and investment in Africa by strengthening the budget of agencies involved, including USAID.

At the end of the session, the panelists agreed on the following:

- ✓ Trade is an engine of growth and, as such, efforts must be made to intensify it, not reduce it;
  - ✓ The need to work to increase investment in Africa. To do so, they called on the United States to accompany the efforts of the eligible countries by encouraging the Americans to increase their investments in Africa;
  - ✓ The application of the eligibility criteria makes it possible to move towards a more stable and human rights-sensitive Africa, which is necessary for a sustainable growth of trade. The eligible countries, however, encouraged the US party to ensure that the out-of-cycle review is conducted in a spirit that does not compromise that of AGOA;
  - ✓ Better coordination and integration of the US government's trade and investment assistance mechanisms with better service to SMEs.
- In conclusion, all participants agreed that within 8 years of the AGOA deadline, it is now time to take action to strengthen the utilization of AGOA.

## Plenary N°2: A Meeting with US Congressional Representatives

This plenary was chaired by Mrs. Connie Hamilton, US Trade Representative, Acting USTR for Africa.

In her opening remarks, Mrs. Connie Hamilton said that after 2025, AGOA would end and that African partners in the eligible countries should control the US market in order to ensure access beyond 2025. She indicated that the United States of America is already working in this direction.

At this session, the Representatives of the US Congress reaffirmed their commitment to working with eligible African countries for a better utilization of AGOA. They also highlighted important points for the US congress including:

- ✓ Increased US support for capacity building in order to better utilize AGOA, including technical assistance for better compliance with health standards;
- ✓ The need for each country to have a strategy for utilizing AGOA;
- ✓ The importance of eligibility criteria as a catalyst for growth based on private sector development, strengthening democracy and promoting the rule of law.
- ✓ The importance for African countries that have not yet done so to ratify the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement;
- ✓ The need to reduce trade and customs barriers to promote international trade between the United States and Africa and strengthen African integration.

### Plenary 3: The Role of AGOA in US-Africa Cooperation

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Peter Barlerin, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the State Department – Africa Bureau, presented a summary of the major successes recorded through AGOA. He mentioned that trade between the US and Africa has increased significantly since 2000 and non-oil trade has grown by 300%. Investments in Saharan Africa have increased significantly.

He reaffirmed that these successes achieved under the AGOA and the recognition that trade can contribute to the strengthening of democratic institutions and regional stability are the main reasons that motivated the American congress to renew AGOA.

For Mr Barlerin, eligibility criteria were introduced to encourage African countries to make progress in developing a stable and attractive environment for investment. These criteria include political pluralism, the rule of law, a market economy, the protection of workers' rights, a reliable system for combating corruption, policies to reduce poverty and human rights commitment.

The US view is that the confidence shown by current investors, AGOA's renewal by the US Congress and the measures taken by eligible African countries will increase trade between the US and Africa.

One of the major challenges, he said, was the transport system in Africa. Inadequate transport infrastructure, low capacity for development and ineffective cooperation are among the challenges to be met. 60% of market prices from Africa are made up of shipping charges whereas in developed countries it is 15% or less.

But, through investments, regional partnerships and innovative commitments with development banks such as the World Bank and national financial structures and many others such as: the US import and export bank, USAID and the US trade and development agency, and especially the private sector, African countries could build transport infrastructure that would allow them to take full advantage of AGOA in the US and global markets.

He stressed that the youth of the sub-Saharan population is both a short-term challenge and a long-term opportunity. This demographic reality positions Africa as the future manufacturing hub of the world. Policies will have to be taken by States to realize this potential and promote trade in manufactured goods by Africa.



H.E. Mr. Albert Muchanga, African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry and Co-Chairman of the session, noted that AGOA had played an important role in the US support to African priorities, as AGOA's trade preferences have helped to strengthen exports and improve economic growth. He also highlighted the role played by AGOA's eligibility criteria in encouraging African countries to develop an enabling environment for trade and investment and support for common goals of strengthening democratic institutions and Right wing state.

He also noted the important role of AGOA in the following areas:

- ✓ Promoting the development of investment and trade relations between the USA and the eligible countries;
- ✓ Capacity building for the diversification of its products through industrialization;
- ✓ Technology transfer in Africa and the promotion of decent work practices or international labor standards;
- ✓ The creation of opportunities for decent work on the continent, which has the potential to reduce clandestine immigration;
- ✓ Deepening diplomatic relations between African countries and the USA.

H.E. Mr. Albert Muchanga also expressed the hope that AGOA would contribute even more to regional and sub-regional integration on the African continent, given that the future of Africa depends on it.

The African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry noted the need to reinforce the use of AGOA in eligible countries so that more eligible countries get from it a significant impact and more products on the AGOA list are exported in large quantities. For a better return on investments made to promote exports under AGOA, His Excellency Albert Muchanga recommended better synergy and improved complementarity between AGOA mechanisms and other US-Africa cooperation tools like US agencies involved in supporting trade, investment and development such as USAID, CIPO (OPIC) and other bilateral cooperation instruments used by the US such as the Peace Corps.

### 1.2.2.2. Breakout sessions

#### Breakout session n°1: Regional Integration

The session was co-chaired by USAID Acting Deputy Administrator for Africa Mr. Chris Runyan and Mlumbi Peter Xolelwa, Deputy Director General, Department of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Trade and Industry industry in South Africa.

This session provided an opportunity to discuss the best strategies for boosting regional integration including through AGOA and other partnerships with the US and to strengthen the African regional integration agenda through initiatives such as the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA).

Co-chair of the session Mr. Chris Runyan underlined in his introductory words that trade and investment relationship with the United States and Africa should support the continent's efforts for its industrialization and its regional integration in accordance with the Agenda 2063.

According to him, trade liberalization and the integration of Africa into global supply chains will help to ensure economic growth in African countries. It therefore encouraged the reduction of non-tariff barriers and the easing of customs procedures in order to promote regional integration of markets and strengthen the competitiveness of African enterprises.

Mrs. Mlumbi Peter Xolelwa, Co-Chairperson and Deputy Director General of the Department of Trade and Industry of South Africa, indicated that integration is not only a political priority but also an economic priority. She noted that the important role of regional integration is to ensure market expansion and promote sustainable development and attract more foreign investment. Africa contributes only 3% to world trade and its markets are highly fragmented. Increasing Africa's share in international trade also requires progress in regional integration. To do this, Mrs. Mlumbi Peter Xolelwa recommended a regional integration approach based on three pillars:

- ✓ Integration of markets through trade facilitation agreements such as the agreement signed in Egypt which concerned 26 African countries;
- ✓ Industrial development: It is important to have an integrated regional approach to promote industrialization and advance African enterprises towards the most beneficial links in global value chains;
- ✓ Infrastructure: Infrastructure deficit in Africa reduces business productivity by 40% and per capita income by 2%. It is therefore important to strengthen infrastructures to better connect the markets and businesses for improved productivity.

The discussions were enriched by the contributions of H.E. Mr. Albert Muchanga, African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry and H.E. Mr. Laouali Chaibou, ECOWAS Commissioner for Trade, Customs and Free Movement. The private sector's perspectives on regional integration were also shared, notably through the contribution of Mr. Ikechukwu Ofuani, Senior Manager, Global Government Relations and Public Policy to Procter and Gambe (P & G). He welcomed the progress made in the area of sub-regional integration, but also called on African governments to intensify the elimination of intra-African trade barriers to strengthen continental and sub-regional supply chains to better promote industrialization of Africa.

Panelists' views converged on the positive contributions of free trade areas and trade facilitation policies and actions. The participants welcomed the ongoing efforts to strengthen regional and sub-regional integration and called for intensified efforts in this area. This enhanced integration is a key condition to foster the development of regional value chains and to stimulate the industrialization of the continent and increase intra-African trade, which currently stands at 12%. They also encouraged stronger political leadership to facilitate sub-regional and regional market integration. They also called on the US to support regional integration and to ensure that bilateral free trade agreements do not undermine the regional integration objective that is important for Africa.

## Breakout session n°2: Trade and Labor

This session was co-chaired by Mr. Matt Levin, Director of the Bureau of Trade and Labor Affairs, US Department of Labor, and Dr. Bekele Bulado, Minister of Trade of Ethiopia.

Its objective is to integrate Labor Standards into Trade and Investment Policies.

This session was opened by the address of His Excellency Gilbert BAWARA, Minister of Public Service, Labor and Administrative Reform of Togo.

Participants were educated on actionable steps towards integrating labor standards into trade and investment. They agreed that creating decent jobs will create a more conducive environment for foreign investment and promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth through AGOA.

In this area, the example of Ethiopia was shared as an optimal practice. The practical case of Ethiopia demonstrated how the integration of labor standards in trade can help a country attract investment and support economic growth.

## Breakout session n°3 : Women and Trade

This session was co-chaired by H.E. Mrs. Bernadette Legzim-Balouki, Minister of Trade and Promotion of the Private Sector of Togo and Mrs. Amy Holman, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

Its objective was to build capacity of participants on the power of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in inclusive and sustainable economic growth through textile and Agribusiness sectors.

After highlighting the strategies implemented by Togo to promote women and young people's entrepreneurship and to support SMEs and small producers, H.E. Mrs. Bernadette Legzim-Balouki called on participants to exchange best

practices to enable these target groups to realize their full potential, particularly through better utilization of AGOA.

Particular emphasis was placed on the progress made by women entrepreneurs and the challenges they face. One of the challenges is access to finance and other productive resources such as land, technology and training. To this end, Mrs Candide Leguede (Chair of ECOWAS-FEBWE: ECOWAS Federation of Business Women and Entrepreneurs) highlighted the best practices for accompanying women entrepreneurs.

The session also provided participants with the opportunity to learn about the successful experience of ALAFFIA. The company ALAFFIA is an enterprise created by Americans including a Togolese from the diaspora, Mr. Tchala who is top manager of the business. The company directly employs 700 women and indirectly 11,000 women in Togo and Ghana. This company also operates from the State of Washington in the USA. Its model of social entrepreneurship for economic growth and trade is based on empowerment, differentiation of products on the market with competitive access to well-targeted niches, and promotion of ethical trade. The company shared its strategy to penetrate the US market. It also presented some important approaches to meet the demands of this very competitive and promising market for African countries. He (the company Manager) highlighted the importance for African countries to strengthen intra-African trade to increase their competitiveness. ALAFFIA has among its main strategic partners one of the largest US companies, Whole Foods that works the agribusiness sector. Participants were also able to benefit from the experience of Whole Foods through the contribution of Mrs. Brooke Buchanan, Vice-President of this company who highlighted the needs and requirements of the American market.

At the end of the meeting, a number of participants recommended that governments and international organizations strengthen their support for micro,

small and medium-sized enterprises, including women, so that women can better contribute to and integrate regional and global value chains.

Participants noted the importance for governments to:

- ✓ Implement policies and initiatives to attract foreign direct investment;
- ✓ develop strategic partnerships with major companies and multinational corporations to promote the inclusion of small and medium-sized enterprises in regional and global value chains;
- ✓ Support companies in meeting quality standards and certification processes.

They called on companies, especially micro and small enterprises, to establish partnerships and networks in order to meet the requirements regarding adequate quantities and delivery of export markets including the US ones.

#### Breakout Session n°4: Transportation links to Catalyze Trade

This session was co-chaired by Mr. Thomas Hardy, Acting Director of the US Trade and Development Agency and H.E. Mr. Alioune Sarr, Minister of Trade, Industry and the Informal Sector of Senegal.

The session focused on the opportunities and challenges of regional integration and logistics infrastructure in African markets, particularly as it relates to strengthening intra-Africa and US – Africa trade links. The United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and high-level representatives of African governments, African private sector and US private sector discussed the opportunities and challenges in Africa's transportation sector. Aviation was also at the heart of the discussions.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Thomas Hardy, Acting Director of the US Trade and Development Agency, stressed that "trade development impacts economic growth".

In his speech His Excellency Alioune Sarr, Minister of Commerce, Industry and the Informal Sector of Senegal, recalled that "the development of transport infrastructure and services is a requirement for economic growth, particularly in Africa".

He then pointed out that infrastructure and transport constitute a sub-sector supporting growth and wealth. But at the same time, they allow the product to flow from the raw material to the final product. According to him, "a country which does not have a suitable transport infrastructure will have difficulty developing its exports".

For his part, the Minister of Infrastructure and Transport of Togo, H.E. Mr. Ninsao Gnofam indicated that: "Togo has initiated a vast program of economic recovery from the transport sector". He noted that in Africa it is difficult for the private sector alone or for a single State to finance the construction and development of road, sea and airport infrastructure, given their very high costs. Therefore, in order to face this problem, H.E. Mr. Ninsao GNOFAM recommended funding through regional institutions and public-private partnerships to build road, sea and airport infrastructures.

#### Breakout Session n°5: Investment

This session was co-chaired by Mr. Chris Runyan, representative of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Mr. Biggie butale, Deputy Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, Botswana.

Chris Runyan said in his introductory words that the US government, USAID and Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), a US government development finance institution, are working together for a better commitment

of the private sector to achieve the development results through international trade growth. He highlighted the role and accompanying activities of the three USAID Trade Hubs in promoting, expanding investment and trade for the benefit of sub-Saharan Africa and the United States.

Mr. Biggie Butale, for his part, indicated the need to stimulate the economy of the eligible countries in order to reduce unemployment and poverty.

He stressed the need to develop new and innovative mechanisms for full and optimal use of AGOA.

Peter Ballinger, Managing Director of CIPO – Africa, said it was important for African governments to strengthen regional trade. To do so, investments must be made to accelerate market integration and promote intra-Africa trade. Mrs. Kanini Mutooni, Director of Investment, East African Trade and Investment Hub, noted the activities of the Trade Hubs, namely:

- ✓ Promoting exports under AGOA;
- ✓ Attracting private investment;
- ✓ And helping create the right environment for business to flourish.

She also informed that regional trade centers have created innovative mechanisms to encourage US investment in Africa. In addition, she indicated that in the regional trade centers, advisory units have been set up to accompany investors. The mission of this unit is, for example, to analyze the market in Agriculture and to carry out the necessary studies with a view to building investor confidence.

The panelists concluded that increasing the volume of investment in sub-Saharan Africa requires:

- ✓ Diversified financing;
- ✓ Risk mitigation mechanisms;
- ✓ Greater domestic resource mobilization to support sustainable development;
- ✓ Capacity building in project preparation and negotiation.



## Session n°6: Value for Money Infrastructure

This session was co-chaired by Mr. Eric Meyer, US Deputy Assistant Treasury Secretary for the Middle East and Africa and H.E. Mr. Souleymane Diarrassouba, Minister of Trade, Crafts and SMEs Promotion Ivory Coast.

The objective of the session was to examine country experience and tools for maximizing the value for money in terms of infrastructure investment.

Mr. Eric Meyer reviewed tools used to maximize the economic benefits from infrastructure projects in African countries.

The Acting Director of the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), Mr. Thomas Hardy, and the Deputy Vice President of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) for Infrastructure, Environment and Private Sector, Mr. Jonathan Richard shared their experiences in areas of infrastructure projects by putting an emphasis on risk and cost control to ensure a high return on investment.

There is broad consensus on the need for significant investments in infrastructure to attract private investment, connect markets to enhance trade and competitiveness, and spur inclusive growth. Although the private sector can play a role in some infrastructure investments, including through the use of public-private partnerships (PPP), much of the financial responsibility falls on governments. It is therefore essential that the Governments of Sub-Saharan Africa take the measures to optimize the resources invested in the realization of infrastructures.

## Session n°7: Investing in Agribusiness and Land Reform

This session was co-chaired by Mr. Kim Ward, Managing Director of Programs of the US-Africa Development Foundation and His Excellency Mr. Lazare

Sehoueto, Minister of Trade, Industry and Small and Medium Enterprises of Benin.

It highlighted the need to review successful models on agricultural productivity and implementation of land reforms to facilitate investment in agribusiness.

During his intervention, His Excellency Lazare Sehoueto pointed out possible solutions to the three challenges relating to opportunities offered by AGOA to African countries. These include:

1. The infrastructures in terms of standards, quality and traceability which a number of countries, in particular ECOWAS' ones, have put in place; there is, for instance, an innovative program in Benin. However, United States' support in this area could help countries meet this challenge;
2. The adequate financing challenge: thanks to the French Agency for Development (FAD) in Benin, there is a particularly interesting type of financing, that system of co-financing between the AFD and the government, which makes it possible to accompany micro , small and medium-sized enterprises;
3. Access to the market: there is a linguistic barrier beyond non-tariff barriers, especially for francophone producing countries.

In conclusion, he indicated that private financing for SMEs is also a project on which the US and Africa should work so that Africa can take advantage of the opportunity provided by AGOA.

Mr. Kim Ward, noted that, given that 80% of the population depends on agriculture and given the number of small producers, it is important to broaden the base of trade between Africa and the US and promote economic growth.

As recommendations, panelists call for:

- ✓ Relocating some processing plants under AGOA in Africa so that cashews, shea butter and other products are somehow processed in Africa;
- ✓ Ensuring that these processed products access markets on American soil.

### Session n°8: WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement: Unlocking the benefits for Agriculture by streamlining Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Standards (SPS) formalities and procedures

This session was chaired by Mr. Skip Jones, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the US Department of Commerce, and Mr. Alan Kyerematen, Minister of Trade and Industry of Ghana.

This session enabled a consensus to be reached on the importance of trade facilitation in achieving regional integration, fostering economies of scale, and helping African countries gain access to global value chains.

The session also pointed out the complementarity between trade facilitation and the sanitary and phytosanitary agreement of the WTO. Participants also recommended capacity building to help countries better comply with sanitary and phytosanitary procedures. They closed the session by calling on eligible countries that have not yet ratified the agreement to do so at their earliest convenience.

### Session n° 9: Public Health and Trade

The session was co-chaired by Mrs. Amelia Kyambadde, Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives of Uganda and Mr. Eric Meyer, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Treasury for the Middle East and Africa.

It was intended to build capacity on the role of Trade and Commerce in addressing Non-Communicable Diseases through improvements in financing, regulatory systems and capacity building.

The co-chairs noted the significant impact of public health problems and particularly non-communicable diseases on economic and social development of countries. They called on all leaders in all sectors to get involved in addressing this issue.

In his intervention, Professor Mofou Belo, Chief of the Division of Non-Communicable Diseases Surveillance in TOGO, said that 17 million low- and middle-income people die per year from a non-communicable disease. To meet this major challenge for achieving sustainable development goals, Professor Belo recommended to:

1. Develop strategies for mobilizing domestic resources (taxes on tobacco product, alcoholic beverages, sugary drinks) in addition to international resources;
2. Finance the fight against Non-Communicable Diseases through the Global Fund mechanism;
3. Develop multi-sectoral action plans and partnerships at the country level.

The session concluded with the importance of ensuring sustainable financing for the prevention and management of non-communicable diseases, given the high impact of these diseases on the development of African countries. In this search for financing, it is also essential to increase national resources and ensure that non-communicable diseases are included in development plans in all sectors.

There was a consensus on the need to improve cooperation in terms of standards and sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures to overcome barriers to food and other agricultural product trade in order to promote trade, investment and exports.

## Session n°10: Applying Tools of Agricultural Biotechnology to Address Food Security in Africa

The objective of this panel was to discuss the various agricultural biotechnology approaches used to address the food security problem in Africa.

The session was co-chaired by Mr. David Wolf, Agricultural Advisor, at the US Embassy in Accra, Ghana, and Mr. Wiskes D. G. Nkombezi, Deputy Director of Trade, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism of Malawi.

This session provided insights into the resistance of drought in Africa and how biotechnology approaches and transgenic crops could help improve modern production and promote trade with partners including the US.

According to Mr David Wolf, the ever-increasing demand for agricultural products on the African continent requires the appropriate use of biotechnology, which should be made available to producers in order to limit the impact of climatic conditions production and ensure food security. For him, biotechnology will ensure an effective regulatory system.

For his part, Mr Wiskes D. G. Nkombezi, Deputy Director of Trade of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism of Malawi, the use of biotechnology is essential to ensure food security, with respect to demographic growth in the world whose population is expected to reach 8 billion by 2025, while arable land is becoming scarce.

Panelists agreed that biotechnology has potential to bring immense benefits to society. Each panel then described how their organization is working to maximize the benefits of biotechnology. The representative of the African Foundation of Agricultural Technology described several products that they are developing with improved characteristics. Their efforts have been deployed throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Managing Director of the Togolese Institute for Agriculture and Research (*ITRA*), Mr Bèdibètè Bonfoh, shared how the biotechnological advances made by his institution make it possible to put at the disposal of producers, plant and animal resources that are efficient and adapted to Togo agro-climatic conditions, thus contributing to increase productivity and efficiency in the agricultural sector, with a corresponding increase in farmers' incomes. He called for further cooperation with his institution.

The work of this session made it possible to agree on the importance of:

- ✓ Establishing an enabling regulatory framework for the use of agricultural biotechnology;
- ✓ Negotiating with application developers for technologies tailored to the context and needs;
- ✓ Providing adequate training to end-users, ie producers;
- ✓ Promoting cooperation between institutions involved in the promotion of agricultural biotechnology.

### Session n°11: Gaz – Fired Power Solutions

The session was co-chaired by Mr. Thomas Hardy, Acting Director of the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and H.E. Carlos Dos Santos, Ambassador of Mozambique to the United States.

This session aims to review issues related to the use of mobile electricity generation solutions in Africa thanks to recent technology advancements on energy grounds and identify ways to provide sustainable baseload power solutions in order to quickly expand generation and stabilize the grid in the event of disruption.

In the course of the activities, of the session Co-Chair, Dr Thomas Hardy of the USTDA presented the use of natural gas as an important and strategic energy source for Africa industrialization. He also took as an example a feasibility study for the "energy gas" project in Mozambique that could be financed by the USTDA.

H.E. Carlos Dos Santos, Ambassador of Mozambique to the United States, highlighted Mozambique's experience with the project related to electrical solutions and gas. He pointed out that the discovery of a significant natural gas deposit is changing the situation for the country's development. He shared the experience of Mozambique with its partners in the gas project for domestic and industrial use.

Moreover, sharing Power Africa experiences and those of Contour Global, Kuikila Investments, Genesis Energy and the Electric Power Company of Benin, enriched the discussions.

Panelists and participants at this session discussed and agreed that gas energy is a powerful driver for promoting industrialization and social development.

To succeed in the gas-fired power project, it is important to build effective partnerships and well integrate support of institutions like USTDA, Power Africa into the global gas-fired energy value chains.

It is important to consider the entire cycle from generation to energy distribution. There is also a need to study affordability issues in terms of price due to the role energy plays in social development. We must also establish conditions to reassure investors. The effective national project management capacities and the efficient cooperation with technical and financial partners are decisive to success. In addition, participants noted the importance of taking into account the context of each country to define the most adapted energy mix.

Furthermore, it is important to seek regional solutions to make it possible that gas from one country can serve in other neighboring countries that do not have one.

For these regional solutions to be realized, it is important to well conduct inter-state negotiations. The success of these inter-state energy projects also depends on the support provided by the public administration to reduce the time and limit the risks and costs associated with these programs.

On the sidelines of the sessions, the USTDA's Acting Director, Dr. Thomas Hardy and Mr. Diogo Vaz Guedes, Chairman and CEO of Kuikila Investments, signed documents relating to the US grant for a feasibility and implementation study of a gas-fired power station of 78 megawatts in the Chokwe District, rural area located in the province of Gaza in Mozambique.

This agreement was signed in the presence of H.E. Carlos Dos Santos, Ambassador of Mozambique to the United States. Mr Diogo Vas Guedez said that this grant from the USTDA is not only financially attractive, but also has other important advantages such as the visibility of the project and the motivation of other actors to finance the project.

## Session n° 12: Intellectual Property Rights Enforcement

The session aimed to promote the development of intellectual property through capacity building at the African level and to contribute to the continent's economic transformation while preserving African biodiversity and traditional knowledge. The session was co-chaired by the US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Skip Jones and the Chief Operating Officer of the Rwandan Development Board, Mr. Emmanuel Hategeka.

In his speech, the co-chair of the session, Mr. Skip said that intellectual property protection was not useful without enforcement. He said: "Worldwide counterfeiting and piracy rates are particularly high in Africa and counterfeiting of goods valued at US \$ 500 billion, or 2.5 per cent of global trade puts lives at risk, undermines government revenues, stifles innovation and discourages investment".

Panelists noted that intellectual property related crimes are no longer limited only to luxury goods, but also to consumer goods and digital goods. The key



recommendations of the session concern the need to raise public awareness of the impact of goods piracy and counterfeiting. It was also recommended to strengthen collaboration between African countries and international organizations in order to promote the development of intellectual property to enhance Africa's economic transformation. The panelists stressed the importance of cooperation and information sharing in the law enforcement, not only in the country but also across borders. This cooperation should make it possible to trace the origin of the necessary product and limit infringements of intellectual property rights.

### 1.2.3. Private sector forum and Civil society forum

The Private Sector Forum and Civil Society Forum sessions held on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017 at 2 Février-Radisson Blu Hotel, preceded by a joint opening ceremony. It brought together nearly 600 participants from both activity sectors, from AGOA sub-Saharan African eligible countries and the US African regional communities also took part in the activities of the private sector forum and the civil society forum.

#### 1.2.3.1. Private sector forum

As it was the case with the Civil Society Forum, two panel discussions marked this forum. Both workshops were chaired by experts from Corporate Council on Africa (CCA).

Nearly three hundred (300) delegates participated on the various sites. Also present at the forum were the Chief Executive Officers of financial institutions and Government Officials.

Discussions evolved around the following themes:

- ✓ AGOA Successes and Challenges and the Way Forward
- ✓ Logistics, Transport Operations and Global Value Chain

Based on the experiences of exporters, finance and transport managers, delegates were edified on the process and successful experiences in exporting under AGOA.

Suitable measures were recommended for greater efficiency in the areas of customs duties, transport, energy, facilitation for business start-up, infrastructure and the development of alternatives to power energy by the different actors.

In addition to these main activities of the Forum, other side activities were carried out.

#### 1.2.3.2. Civil society forum

This forum was marked by two workshops chaired by eminent experts and consultants from renowned structures such as: International Trade Center (ITC), USAID and the African Leadership Forum.

These workshops were attended by representatives of Togolese ministries in charge of the areas covered including the ministries of agriculture and livestock, of health, of grassroots development, and of infrastructure. The discussion topics were the following:

- ✓ Using Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMES) to strengthen regional integration
- ✓ Challenges, best practices and recommendations on textile, infrastructure, agriculture and agribusiness (added value).

#### 1.2.4. Side activities

Three major side activities got the attention of the delegates of this 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA 2017 Forum. These were company visits, exhibition fairs and socio-cultural activities.

##### 1.2.4.1. Company visits

Delegates visited several companies, including the free zone companies and ALAFFIA.

These various visits enabled the delegates to learn from the best practices of these companies in the areas of financing, energy, manufacturing and export of shea-butter and derived products, among others.

#### 1.2.4.2. Exhibition fair and Trade fair

Two fairs were organized as part of the AGOA 2017 Forum.

AGOA exhibition fair: it took place at the conference center of 2 Février-Radisson Blu Hotel. It was attended by exhibitors from AGOA eligible countries. During their visit, the forum delegates discovered the potentialities and the diversity of products originating from these countries under the coordination of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Togo (CCIT) with the support of the AGOA forum National Organizing Committee. Arrangements were made for this fair to offer B2B opportunities to economic operators in order to develop partnerships.

"Made in Togo" fair: it was organized by the Ministry of Commerce and was held from July 31 to August 14, 2017 at the Togolese Center for Exhibitions and Fairs in Lomé (*CETEF-TOGO 2000*). This fair was in its second edition.

It should also be noted that the Ministry of Commerce has arranged for the "Made in Togo" fair to be extended to cover the period of the forum, enabling participants to appreciate and acquire Togolese products. This trade and exhibition event coincided this year with the holding of the AGOA forum. The general public and the forum delegates were able to discover "Made in Togo" products. It helped build more dynamic partnerships and business network between Togolese entrepreneurs and those from other invited countries. It was also an opportunity to build relationships with Togolese private sector companies and to discover the vitality and ingenuity of women and young entrepreneurs. Shuttles were made available to facilitate the travel of delegates from the forum sites to the fair.

#### 1.2.4.3. Socio – cultural activities

Several activities contributed to enhance the brilliance of this forum, particularly AGOA Fashion Week which made it possible to valorize African fabrics through fashion. It took place in two stages. Lomé Fashion Week Show which saw the participation of more than 500 people and the AGOA forum closing fashion show, gathering more than 600 people. Sixty (60) fashion designers from the African eligible countries presented 300 outfits, 180 of them in African fabrics during these two fashion shows.

There is a need to recall that the Togolese and American governments respectively offered a gala dinner and a closing cocktail to the delegates of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum. ECOBANK International on the one hand and AGOA Civil Society Network and AWEF on the other hand also offered cocktails respectively for the delegates of the private sector forum and for the delegates of the civil society forum.

This socio-cultural program was an opportunity offered by the Togolese government and its partners to the participants to benefit from the socio-cultural and tourism wealth of Togo. Information on the opportunities and the hosting and business capacities of the country were shared.

#### 1.2.5. The closing ceremony

It was marked by three speeches, remarks by H.E Mr. David Gilmour, US Ambassador to Togo, occasional address by Mrs. Dédé Ekoué, Minister, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Togo, President of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum Organizing Committee and the closing speech of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum delivered by Mrs. Bernadette Essossimna Legzim-Balouki, Minister of Trade and Private sector Promotion, representing H.E. the Prime Minister of Togo.

In his address, H.E Mr. David Gilmour thanked the Togolese Head of State, H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, and the Togolese Government for having done an extraordinary job as host of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum. He stated that Togo has set an ambitious vision for Lomé to become a major destination for conferences and international events. He also thanked the president of the 16<sup>th</sup>

AGOA Forum National Organizing Committee for perfectly coordinating the preparations for the forum.

Mrs. Dédé Ekoué thanked the US government through H.E. the US Ambassador in Togo and all his team, the service providers as well as the chairmen and members of the national organizing committee of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum for the perfect collaboration and the quality of the work done.

In her closing remarks, Mrs. Bernadette Essossimna Legzim-Balouki thanked the joint teams of the United States and Togo who made their work and commitment effective. She also thanked H.E. the US Ambassador to Togo who personally invested himself as well in the preparations as for the actual holding of this important event. She also extended her heartfelt thanks and congratulations to all the AGOA eligible countries for the quality of the work during the various plenary and breakout sessions. She thanked the US government for reiterating its commitment to continue this partnership with Sub-Saharan African countries under AGOA.

Finally, she said that the Togolese Government, under the leadership of H.E. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Republic, is committed to create the necessary framework to support the private sector and civil society to better benefit from AGOA.

## II. SUMMARY REPORT OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> AGOA FORUM

The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum resulted in strategic outcomes for sub-Saharan Africa and the US on the one hand and specific results for Togo on the other hand. An additional report for Togo was prepared for the specific results of Togo and the tracks for a better capitalization of the forum in Togo. This additional report for Togo is available on the 16<sup>th</sup> forum capitalization website <http://agoatogo2017.info>.

### 2.1. Strategic Outcomes for Sub-Saharan Africa and the US

As a reminder, the objective of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum is specifically to formulate relevant recommendations, build the capacities of different African actors and foster networking, in order to remove major barriers to the full AGOA utilization.

#### 2.1.1. Relevant recommendations regarding AGOA utilization strategies

The Forum enabled governments, the private sector and civil society in eligible countries to agree on important steps to be taken to tackle the major challenges of agribusiness, industrialization, regional integration, infrastructure, standards and research, the inclusion of women and young people's small and medium-sized enterprises, and the diversification of products.

The recommendations for each forum are presented below.

### 2.1.1.1. Recommendations of the Ministerial Meeting

The Ministers of Trade of the AGOA eligible countries met on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017 in Lomé, Republic of Togo and below are the major recommendations:

Regarding the challenges and solutions for the implementation of AGOA

1. AGOA countries remain largely exporters of primary products, including but not limited to agriculture. This necessitates that we must encourage industrialization to promote value-addition so as to change the structure of our economies.
2. There is also a need to enhance cooperation on standards, as well as sanitary and phytosanitary measures in order to overcome challenges that come with trade in food and other agricultural related products in the global trade.
3. There is demand for various products in the US. However, AGOA countries cannot easily export into the US market under its stringent standards. AGOA beneficiaries need to undertake thorough market research and produce products that meet the US standards. Further, the United States is encouraged to continue to provide capacity building to overcome existing non-Tariff Barriers within a timeframe of 3 to 5 years.
4. Undertake to promote African clinical research while protecting people often used as subjects of trials to ensure local solution is sought for clinical challenges specific to Africa.
5. We call upon UNECA in collaboration with USG agencies to promote the exchange of AGOA best practices through the organization of regular workshops.
6. Encourage the setting up of a consultative committee comprising of representatives from the African Ambassadors Group (AAG), USTR, US

Department of Commerce, US Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. to monitor all AGOA related issues under agreed terms of references that still need to be developed by all stakeholders. The committee will engage with private sector and civil society from both sides.

7. Africa should highlight the importance of security in order to enhance trade.
8. Strengthen the focus on:
  - a. Linkages between investment, industrial development and trade and;
  - b. Efforts to attract US investors and broaden US investment beyond the current concentration in the Mining sector.
9. AGOA beneficiaries are encouraged to take maximum advantage of the presence of the Trade and Investment Hubs located across Africa to diversify their export sectors.
10. On Intellectual Property (IP), the African Union Commission (AUC) is encouraged to work with relevant institutions such as World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to ensure a development approach to IP and build capacity within the continent. Fundamentally, policies must contribute to the economic transformation agenda, preserve Africa's biodiversity and traditional knowledge amongst others.
11. Emphasize the importance of policy space to promote structural transformation of the African continent.

#### Concerning regional integration

- ✓ The trade and investment relationship with the US should support the continent's efforts to industrialize in line with Agenda 2063 and contribute to regional integration. Policy issues should be on the basis of



cooperation and should not limit use of key policy tools Africa needs to industrialize.

- ✓ Strengthen African Regional Integration agenda through initiatives such as the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), bearing in mind the outcomes of the RECs, which will address trade cost, boost Intra-Africa trade and promote the development Regional Value Chains and boost industrial development. This will increase the utilization of AGOA preferences and expand benefits across a greater number of African countries. In addition, there is a need for African countries to develop a common position on the trade and investment relationship with the US

#### Regarding the out-of-cycle review of AGOA-Eligible Countries

- ✓ Recall that AGOA is an Act of congress to promote two-way trade and investment that promotes sustainable development, as well as regional integration. Recognize that the out-of-cycle review is an integral part of AGOA legislation; however, the out-of-cycle review should not be used in a way that would be detrimental to the spirit of AGOA itself.
- ✓ The US is urged to consider the legitimate public policy issues of Africa in considering petitions for out-of-cycle reviews.

#### To the US Government:

- a. Call upon USG agencies to scale-up support to AGOA-eligible countries for implementation of the WTO TFA, especially land-locked countries to lower trade costs and move goods across borders and promote Africa's integration into the global economy. The cooperation on the TFA must be on the basis of agreed programs at the Regional Economic Community level so as to promote regional integration.

- b. Encourage the US Government not to cut budget to USAID in a bid to facilitate resources for countries in maximizing their AGOA utilization Strategies.
- c. Since Africa is currently making steady progress towards continental and regional integration, the consensus is that these actions will facilitate the continent integration into global supply chains and distribution networks. In this regard, we call upon our US partners to support these efforts.
- d. Call upon the US not to implement out-of-cycle reviews in a way that would be detrimental to the spirit of AGOA itself which is premised on predictability and certainty.
- e. Africa is making progress toward continental integration, we call upon the US to support the regional integration agenda in order to promote Africa's integration into the global economy.

#### 2.1.1.2. Recommendations of the Private sector Forum

##### Panel 1: AGOA Successes and Challenges and the Way Forward

1. The lack of understanding of the US market and labor laws needs to be addressed. The US market is not impenetrable as witnessed by several of the success stories that were highlighted in the Private Sector Dialogue.
2. The private sector noted that there is a gap that exists between the AGOA legislation that grants access to the US market and African implementation of export policies that promote utilization of AGOA. USAID, through its trade HUBS as well as other US government agencies seek to bridge that gap.
3. The lack of adequate infrastructure needs to be addressed by governments

to enable products to move to markets. African governments also need to create the enabling environment to facilitate trade.

4. Successful AGOA exporters advised that new market investors should start small and build up supplying the US market. African suppliers of goods to create economies of scale.

5. The expectation of buyers/importers in the US, is that African suppliers will deliver on time shipments of quality goods.

#### Panel 2: Logistics, Transport Operations and the Global Supply Chain

1. Diversify sources of financing beyond banks -such as commodity exchanges, credit cards, bonds, hedging and retirement funding- to allow trade and investment to occur.
2. There needs to be increased government support for connectivity, especially using technology. Also, government need to promote trade facilitation by acceding to and implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), integrating customs data across borders and identifying any other bottlenecks impeding trade. Finally, governments need to lower taxes to help African companies become more competitive.
3. Government in coordination with the private sector should promote clustering networks such as industrial parks and infrastructure financing that enable African businesses to compete globally. African governments also need to enforce the sanctity of contracts for businesses to make the right investment decisions.
4. Together, governments and the private sector should promote more reverse trade missions that are targeted to specific sectors.

5. Finally, governments and businesses should encourage more marketing and branding of African products to penetrate global supply chains.

#### 2.1.1.3. Recommendations of the Civil Society forum

##### ❖ AGOA COUNTRY UTILIZATION STRATEGY AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- We call on AGOA eligible countries to support the work of the AGOA Civil Society Organization; Network Secretariat in building the capacities of civil society organizations and Africa; The African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) in Africa regarding the issues of AGOA country utilization strategies and compliance with eligibility criteria to provide the planning that is necessary in making success possible in using AGOA benefits to support micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) development.
- Member Governments should work, closely, with their CSOs AWEP, Labor and Youth in the design of their AGOA Country Utilization Strategy to ensure efficiency, and inclusiveness.

##### ❖ TRADE FACILITATION, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND TRANSPORTATION LINKAGES

- We call on all AGOA eligible countries to ratify and implement the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Facilitation Agreement to increase transparency, reduce transaction costs and increase the competitiveness of African businesses and exports. Member governments should work closely with civil society and AWEP on the implementation of trade facilitation agreements.
- We call on the African Union to unveil its Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) which encompasses free movement of business persons and investment, establishment of custom unions, harmonization and

coordination of trade liberalization, trade facilitation and instruments across regional economic communities (RECS) on time.

#### ❖ FAIR TRADE

- We call on Governments to provide incentives for investment in testing laboratories, agency standards, micro lending, and other support mechanisms that are required to obtain the Fair Trade Certificate;
- We call on private sector institutions, i.e., Ecobank, the Africa Development Bank, Ethiopian Airlines and others to support AWEF members and other MSMEs in obtaining finance, and addressing logistics and transportation challenges that they face in doing business.

#### ❖ YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

- We encourage member governments to promote policies that encourage “clustering” to grow economies of scale, and strategic partnerships with universities, the private sector and government agencies to provide fellowships, internships and skills training for the youth;
- We urge member governments to provide widespread access to digital-age technology, including, internet access, mobile technology, e-commerce and other new media to promote entrepreneurship among youth and women.

#### ❖ MICRO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE VALUE CHAINS

- We call on member governments to increase their support for trade and technical capacity building programs in their countries to strengthen micro, small, and medium sized enterprises so they can better participate in global value chains;
- We encourage member governments to enact policies that will attract foreign direct investment, including that from Diaspora, and partnerships with US multinationals in order to foster inclusion of MSMEs in their global value chains.

## ❖ TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

AGOA Civil Society Organization Network Secretariat to organize training and provide capacity building and technical assistance in partnership with AWEPP and network members quarterly in West; East; Central and Southern Africa regions.

### 2.1.2. Capacity Building

The 16th AGOA Forum was an opportunity to build the capacities of participants from the 38 eligible countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the US Experts from various US agencies in connection with AGOA trained participants on several themes in the three forums (ministerial, private sector and civil society). Exchanges of best practices took place. All these training courses are designed to deepen the knowledge of key players on the standards and requirements of the AGOA Act and to appropriate best practices to strengthen the competitiveness of African companies and to enhance their exports under AGOA and beyond.

The massive presence and quality input of the imminent high-level panelists was a key to the success of capacity-building and exchange of best practices. The panelists and resource persons include:

- Several Ministers in charge of trade in African eligible countries;
- US government Representatives;
- US agency officials such as: Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), West and East Africa Trade and Investment Hubs, US-Africa Development Foundation (USTR);
- Executives of international companies such as: Ethiopia Airlines, Ecobank Transnational Incorporated, ALAFFIA, WholeFoods, Procter and Gamble, PVH, Flexknit, and Saber Airline Solutions;

- Representatives of regional and sub-regional institutions such as: African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Southern African Customs Union (SACU);
- Officials of international organizations such as the African Trade Policy Center of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;
- Heads of international, US and African NGOs such as: Corporate Council on Africa (CCA), AGOA Civil Society Network, Enterprise Territories and Development (ETD-Togo), and AWEP;
- International experts and consultants specializing in trade, relationships with the US and private sector development.

During the various sessions, ALAFFIA shared its model, which focused on: understanding the US market; identifying and leveraging comparative advantages; investing in adherence to fair trade standards; and creating awareness of the ethical principles that constitute a commercial imperative, creating partnerships and networks in order to ensure the required scale of production and speed of delivery of the requested products, building the company's capacity to meet quality standards, regularity and delivery times as well as compliance with contractual agreements and legal obligations.

The major challenges identified relate to infrastructure improvements, regional integration and the availability of market information.

It should be noted that ALAFFIA has made a significant contribution to the mobilization of several senior US company executives including the Vice President of WholeFoods and institutions such as IMO (Institute for Marketecology) which awards Fair Trade certification. At several sessions, ALAFFIA also shared its experience in exporting to the US and with fair trade.

The Strategic Coordination Unit has made arrangements to facilitate access to the technical documents used for the forum preparation as well as documents from the forum including documents on the successful experience of ALAFFIA. These documents are available on the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum experience capitalization website: <http://agoatogo2017.info>

### 2.1.3. Networking

The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum was a success in terms of networking between participants due to the high level of delegations representation, the strong mobilization of participants and the quality of networking opportunities.

#### 2.1.3.1. The high level of representation

Government and intergovernmental representation was exceptional. The US government was strongly represented through its various officials. The US Congress Representatives also took part in this important event. The forum was highly attended by US agencies such as: Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Millennium Challenge Corporate (MCC).

Representation was also effective on the African continent side with a strong participation of trade Ministers and Ambassadors from AGOA eligible countries.

A quality representation of regional institutions with the African Union and ECOWAS which were respectively represented by their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> officials, to name but a few.

On the private sector and civil society side, the civil society and the US, African and Diaspora businesses were represented by high-level Executives. Women's businesses (AWEP) and young people businesses from African countries, as well as organizations that support small and medium-sized enterprises, participated actively in the forum. ALAFFIA intervened at the session level to share its experience in exporting to the US

#### 2.1.3.2. The strong mobilization and active contribution of all sectors



The mobilization at the 2 Février – Radisson Blu Hotel, ECOBANK and EBID sites during the period from 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> August exceeded the expectations in terms of the number of participants. Against an average of 150 participants expected for each of the private sector and civil society forums, an average of 300 participants were registered for each forum.

The forum also had a large influx of government authorities. Thus, for the Ministerial Forum, nearly 400 participants including the Ministers of the eligible countries, the African Ambassadors, the delegation of the US Government, Representatives of regional and sub-regional institutions like African Union, Economic Community of the States of West Africa (ECOWAS), COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Southern African Customs Union (SACU) were involved in the Forum activities.

#### 2.1.3.3. The high availability and quality of networking opportunities

The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum created networking opportunities through the welcoming gala dinner hosted by the President of the Togolese Republic, the VIP lunches and luncheons hosted by the Togolese Government, the welcoming cocktails offered by ECOBANK, AGOA Civil Society Network and AWEPT-TOGO, and the closing reception offered by the US Government.

The AGOA forum exhibition fair and “Made in Togo” fair as well as the company visits also allowed the various actors to establish business relationships.

### III. SUCCESS FACTORS OF THE 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA FORUM

#### 3.1. The commitment of the Togolese State

The highest Togolese authorities gave special importance to this forum by setting up a national organizing committee established by a presidential decree and placed under the authority of the Togolese Republic Presidency.

This system was established by Decree No. 2017-060 / PR of 07<sup>th</sup> April 2017, creating, composing and allocating the institutional arrangements for the organization of the AGOA 2017 forum.

It consists of a National Organizing Committee of the AGOA 2017 Forum, the Technical Commissions and the Strategic Coordination Unit of the AGOA Forum.

The Togolese State also proved its commitment by making financial resources available to the committee for the activities realization.

The system established for the organization of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum was operational and efficient thanks to:

- ✓ The leadership and shared vision of AGOA 2017 National Organizing Committee (ANOC) members and committee chairs;
- ✓ The synergy and complementarity between the AGOA Forum Technical Commissions and Strategic Coordination Unit;
- ✓ The collaborative leadership and commitment of the Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion, Mrs. Bernadette Legzim-Balouki;
- ✓ The leadership and dynamism of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum Organizing Committee President, AGOA Focal Point, Mrs Dédé Ekoue, who was a source of inspiration and motivation for all those who worked on the organization of this Forum;
- ✓ The quality support of the Togolese Republic President's Office. This support helped address budgetary difficulties and promoted the availability of working materials and qualified staff to lead the Strategic Coordination Unit;
- ✓ The active involvement and commitment of the Ministry of Trade and Private Sector Promotion team;

- ✓ The dynamic support, hard work and professionalism of the AGOA Forum's Strategic Coordination Unit;
- ✓ The effective collaboration between the Forum's Strategic Coordination Unit and the Ministry of Trade and Private Sector Promotion;
- ✓ The active contribution of their focal points of the technical commissions.

### 3.2. The quality the Togolese government – US cooperation

The success of this organization is also due in large part to the active cooperation between Togo and the US. The most concrete expression of the quality partnership with the US was the effective presence of H.E. Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, US Trade Representative. The agreement of the textile visa in Togo as announced at the forum is also an eloquent illustration. Effective and close cooperation was established between the AGOA Forum National Organizing Committee and the US Embassy in Togo and the support of the US State Department, the US Department of Commerce, the US Representative Bureau for Trade, USAID and the West Africa Trade Hub.

The Togolese side benefited from:

- the wise leadership of Mrs. Connie Hamilton, US Trade Representative, Acting AUSTR for Africa,
- the unwavering support of the US Ambassador to Togo, H.E. Mr. David Gilmour,
- the close technical and professional assistance from Mrs. Tawanna Davidson, State Department, Africa / Bureau of Economic and Regional Affairs, AGOA Forum Logistics Lead
- the quality support of Mr. Harry Sullivan, State Department, Africa / Bureau of Economic and Regional Affairs Acting Director and Mr. Frederique Stewart, US Department of Trade, Africa Bureau Director,

and Mr. Alexander Gazis, Senior Trade and Investment Officer, State Department.

- the technical assistance of Mrs. Carol Adoum, West Africa USAID Trade Hub Chief of Party and her team including Mr. Kara Diallo and Mr. Lofti Kourdali.
- the multifaceted support of the US Embassy Togo team and the voluntary support of the Ambassador's wife, H.E. Mrs. Gilmour.
- the contribution of two Yali Mandela Washington Fellows: Mrs. Emefa Kpegba at the level of the Technical Coordination Unit and the Civil Society Forum Technical Committee and Mr. Ismaël Mamoudou Tanko, Managing Director of TOGO TIMATI (Agri-business) at the level of private sector forum technical committee.

This U.S – Togo frank and rich collaboration was one of the most decisive factors for the success of this forum.

### 3.3. The strong mobilization and quality contribution of African eligible countries and African regional and sub-regional organizations

The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum was a great success thanks to the strong mobilization of African governments and actors from these eligible countries. The governments' representation at a high level, with strong and multi-sectoral delegations gave a constructive dynamic and a highly ambitious vision to the activities. Regional organizations such as the African Union and the African sub-regional economic commissions, including SADC, ECOWAS, COMESA contributed significantly to the success of the forum's activities. Cooperation with the United Nations Commission for Africa and ECOWAS also helped enhance the quality of the activities.

### 3.4. The quality of the collaboration with the US technical partners

The private sector forum was organized under the technical leadership of the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA), and the civil society forum was organized

with the technical support of the AGOA Civil Society Network. The expertise of these two US institutions made it possible to get valuable outcomes from these forums. This also reflects the excellent cooperation between these two institutions and the Togolese side through the two private sector and civil society technical committees and with the AFNOC (AGOA Forum National Organizing Committee).

The 16<sup>th</sup> forum benefited greatly from the Trade Law Center's AGOA.info website. This cooperation was decisive in ensuring quality technical preparation and effective communication on AGOA issues and prospects.

### 3.5. The Effectiveness of African Countries Ambassadors Committee and the African Union in Washington

Ambassadors from eligible countries worked with the US side on the finalization of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum themes and agenda. They also contributed to the mobilization of the private sector and the civil society of the individual eligible countries.

In addition, it should be noted that the "Report of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Mid-term Review (MTR)" document resulting from the Ambassadors and Government Delegations meeting held in Washington, DC on July 17-18, 2017 lays a solid foundation for effective technical preparation of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum.

Thanks to the cooperation between the AGOA Forum organizing unit, the African Countries Ambassadors Committee and the African Union in Washington, it was possible to well organize the African experts meeting and the African trade ministers meeting. This is all the more important as these meetings led to the African ministers recommendations that were returned during the forum.

Furthermore, the high-level participation and the contributions of eligible countries Ambassadors and the African Union enhanced the quality of the discussions during the Forum's activities and contributed to the expectations of the Forum's outcomes.

### 3.6. The strong mobilization and contribution of Private Sector Delegates and Non-Governmental Organizations from Eligible Countries and the US

As the private sector was the beneficiary and the driving force behind AGOA utilization, it played a decisive role in the success of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum. African, US and multinational companies mobilized and shared their experience to edify the forum participants. Regional, sub-regional, US and international NGOs also made a significant contribution to the activities of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum in Togo. The wide range and the richness of activities organized by the private sector and the civil society had a very positive impact on the forum. This positive impact brings hope for strengthening partnerships for better AGOA utilization over the next 8 years.

### 3.7. Proactive Leadership of the Togolese Private Sector and Civil Society

Chaired respectively by Ecobank Transnational Incorporated and the Chamber of Commerce with the support of Employers for the private sector and by the AWEF with the support of *FONGTO* (NGOs Federation in Togo) and *UONGTO* (NGOs Union in Togo), these technical committees were very effective in organizing the two forum entrusted to them.

#### 3.7.1. The Contribution of the Private Sector Forum Technical Committee

The private sector technical committee, headed by an office comprising the National Council of Employers and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Togo (CCIT) and chaired by Ecobank Transnational Incorporated, conducted the preparatory work of the private sector forum in close collaboration with the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA). Several other private sector players are members of the private sector technical committee, including the Association of Large Enterprises of Togo (*AGET*) and the Group of Industrialists of Togo.

This partnership enabled a strong mobilization of the Togolese and African private sector. In addition, Ecobank Transnational Incorporated, the pan-African bank, strongly contributed to the mobilization of the private sector and African Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). In addition, Ecobank Transnational Incorporated provided multi-faceted support for the organization of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Togo (CCIT) and the Togolese Center for Exhibitions and Fairs (*CETEF*) worked with the Togolese government to organize the Trade Fair.

The private sector technical committee worked with the CCA to finalize the sub-themes and agenda of the private sector forum.

### 3.7.2. The Contribution of the civil society forum technical committee

The Civil Society technical committee, headed by an office comprising the Togo NGOs Union (*UONGTO*) and the Togo NGOs Federation (*FONGTO*) and chaired by the African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP), conducted the preparatory work of the Civil Society Forum in close collaboration with the AGOA Civil Society Network. Several representatives of micro, small and medium – sized enterprises are members of the Civil Society Technical Committee.

The African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) worked closely with the AGOA Civil Society Network to finalize the sub-themes and agenda of the Civil Society Forum. They also worked for the mobilization of civil society actors from the eligible countries.

### 3.8. The professionalism of service providers mobilized for the forum

One of the keys to the success of the forum was the quality of the service providers for all the services and especially the quality of the services of the 2 Février-Radisson Blu Hotel, the Attias Company and the other companies that accompanied the logistics and the other services. It should be noted that most

providers have already had a positive experience working with the State or the donors in Togo in organizing international conferences. Given the very limited time and given the importance of the issue, there was a need to have service providers who demonstrated their ability to work under pressure and meet high demands.

## CONCLUSIONS

The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum in Togo kept its promises and enabled decision-makers from Africa - US governments and from the private sector and civil society to agree, within eight (8) years of the AGOA, to optimize AGOA and increase exports to the US in order to promote prosperity of the people from eligible countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

It provided an opportunity to build the capacities of the actors, government decision-makers, leaders of private sector organizations and civil society from sub-Saharan Africa eligible countries and the US

All stakeholders agreed to set up country-specific strategies for the AGOA utilization.

The 16th Forum was a good opportunity to take stock of US-Africa business relationships and discuss its evolution in an ever-changing economic environment.

According to H.E. Mr. Robert Lighthizer, "Together we can create a better business environment and pave the way for a stronger and sustainable business relationship for the future."

This AGOA forum, which is the first of the new U.S Administration, was an opportunity for this Administration to express its commitment to continue the partnership with the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa in line with the provisions of the AGOA Act. This forum has resulted in a new commitment by the US and eligible countries in sub-Saharan Africa to boost the AGOA utilization and to strengthen the partnership between the US and Sub-Saharan Africa.



The operationalization of this new pact requires the implementation of provisions at the level of the eligible countries and the US

These include: (i) enhancing USAID support for eligible countries, (ii) setting up a committee of Ambassadors in Washington to monitor progress in implementing the recommendations of the AGOA Forum and the actions undertaken by each country; (iii) work at the level of each eligible country to establish of a framework for monitoring the implementation of the AGOA strategies by encouraging countries that do not have an AGOA strategy to be able to define it; (iv) encouraging regional economic communities to support states in the process of regional integration by pooling resources for better AGOA utilization; and (v) plan in the forthcoming AGOA forums a mechanism for sharing experiences on the actions undertaken by each country and their outcomes in the AGOA utilization.

As part of the regular holding of the AGOA Forum in the United States of America and in one of the eligible countries of sub-Saharan Africa, Ivory Coast officially declared its candidacy for the organization of the 18<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum which will be held in 2019 and this nomination is the only one registered at the level of eligible African countries.

Togo thanks all the actors who took part in this forum for their participation and their contributions which fostered the brilliant success of this important event. In order to capitalize on the success of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum and enable all the actors to keep on taking advantage of the outcomes and best practices of organizing this forum, Togo has set up an experience capitalization website of the AGOA forum in Lomé <http://agoatogo2017.info> in addition to [www.agoa-togo.tg](http://www.agoa-togo.tg), the forum official website.

# APPENDIX

## Appendix 1 : INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE 16th TOGO AGOA FORUM

Togo hosted from 08 to 10 August 2017, the 16th Forum on trade and economic cooperation between the United States of America and Sub-Saharan Africa

AGOA 16th Forum, Theme: « The United States and Africa: Partnering for Prosperity through Trade »  
Lomé, August 8 – 10, 2017

(Known as the AGOA Forum). Considering the strategic importance of this Forum, Togo Head of State, H.E. Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe decided to put in place a high level institutional mechanism by presidential decree n°2017-060/PR of 07 April 2017.

The Prime Minister is charged of the implementation of this decree which shall be published in the official journal of the Togolese Republic.

This mechanism is placed under the authority of presidency of the republic and is formed of a National Organizing Committee of the AGOA 2017 Forum, Technical Committees and a Strategic Coordination Unit of the AGOA Forum. Moreover, additional Technical Committees have been set up to mobilize private sector and civil society leaders for the successful preparation of private sector and civil society forums.

#### 1. The National Organizing Committee of the AGOA Forum

The National Organizing Committee of the AGOA 2017 Forum had the mission of providing strategic guidelines for the preparation of the forum in all aspects that fall under the responsibility of the host country. Specifically, it was responsible for insuring the leadership of committees and subcommittees, validating the work plan and budget proposals submitted by committees, monitoring the work of committees and providing guidance for solving challenges and performing any other mission under the responsibility of Togo as part of the activities of the forum.

It is composed of:

Chairman: Focal Point for the Presidency of the Republic, H.E. Mrs. Ahoéfa Dédé Ekoue, Minister, Advisor to the President of the Republic.

Members :

- Minister for Grassroots Development, Handicrafts, Youth and Employment, H.E. Mrs. Madam Victoire Tomegah-Dogbe
  
- Minister of Posts and Digital Economy, H.E. Mrs. Cina Lawson

- Minister of Infrastructure and Transport, H.E. Mr. Ninsao Gnofam
- Minister of Security and Civil Protection, H.E. Col. Damehane Yark
- Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Intergration, H.E. Mr Robert Dussey
- Minister of Agriculture, Livestocks and Hydraulics, H.E. Col. Ouro-Koura Agadazi
- Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion, H.E. Mrs. Bernadette Essossimna Legzim-Balouki
- Ministry of Industry and Tourism, H.E. Mr. Yawovi Attigbé
- Ministry of Communication, Culture, Sport and Civic Education, H.E. Mr. Guy Madjé Lorenzo
- Minister of Health and Social Protection, H.E. Prof. Moustafa Mijiyawa
- Minister of Development Planning, H.E. Mr. Kossi Assimaïdou
- Minister of Economy and Finance, H.E. Mr. Sani Yaya
- Representative of the Republic's Presidency, Minister, Advisor to the President of the Republic, H.E. Mr. Djossou Mawussi Semodji
- Representative of the Prime Minister, Mr. Komivi Gbeblewou Semeglo
- President of the Special Delegation of the City of Lome, Rear Admiral

Fogan Adegnon

- President of the Togo Commerce and Industry Chamber, Representative of the Private Sector, Mr. Essohouna Meba
- Chairman of the Togo National Employers' Council, Representative of the Private Sector, Mr. Coami Tamegnon
- Coordinator of the African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP), Ms. Dédé Sylvie Benissan-Messan
- President of the Federation of Togo Non-governmental Organizations (FONGTO), Representative of the Civil Society, Mr. Koffi Elom Noutepe
- President of Togo Non-Governmental Organization Union (UONGTO), Representative of Civil Society, Mr. Abeyeta Djenda

Furthermore, in accordance with Decree No. 2017-060 / PR of 07 April 2017 establishing the organizational mechanism of the AGOA forum, the US Ambassador to Togo, H.E. Mr. David Gilmour and his team as well as any representative designated by the US side for that purpose, participated fully in the work of all the components of the mechanism.

## 2. Technical Commissions

Technical Commissions are in charge of developing and submitting the action plans and draft budgets to the National Organizing Committee for approval in order to ensure the effective performance of their duties. They are responsible for submitting consolidated reports to the National Organizing Committee and the Strategic Coordination Unit. In addition, the members of the Technical Commissions' Offices participated in the work of the National Committee as resource persons.

The chairmanships of committees were insured as follows:

- the Commission for Reception, Airport and Accommodation, chaired by H.E. Mr. Robert Dussey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration
- the Commission for Local Transport, chaired by H.E. Mr. Ninsao Gnofam, Minister of Infrastructure and Transport and coordinated at the technical level by Mr Komla Tindano, CEO of SOTRAL
- the Commission for Security chaired by H.E. Col. Damehane Yark, Minister of Security and Civil Protection
- the Commission of the Conference Logistics and Accreditation, chaired by the Presidency of the Republic through GBA (2S) Essofa Ayeva
- the Commission of Catering and Reception chaired by H.E. Mr. Yawovi Attigbé Ihou, Minister of Industry and Tourism
- the Commission of Communication and Media, chaired by H.E. Mr. Guy Madjé Lorenzo, Minister of Communication, Culture, Sports and Civic Education and coordinated at the technical level by Mr. Franck Missite, Director of Cabinet
- the sub-Commission of Airport chaired by H.E. Mr. Ninsao Gnofam, Minister of Infrastructure and Transport and coordinated by Mr. Gnama LATTA, Director of the National Civil Aviation
- the sub-Commission for Protocol chaired by H.E. Mr. Robert Dussey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration; and coordinated at the technical level by the Director of Protocol, Mr. Waké Yagninim

- the accommodation sub-commission chaired by Mr. Yawovi Attigbé Ihou, Minister of Industry and Tourism and coordinated at the technical level by Mr. Gnazou N'dam, Director of Cabinet.

### 3. The Strategic Coordination Unit for the AGOA Forum (CNOFA)

The Strategic Coordination Unit was in charge of accompanying the implementation of the institutional mechanism of the forum and providing support to the organizers of the private sector and civil society forums.

In terms of monitoring, it ensured the implementation of key actions such as: the operationalization and the implementation of the working plans of commissions and the monitoring with the Togolese and American authorities to ensure the effective implementation of specific responsibilities of each country and joint responsibilities. She also served as a liaison between Togo, the American agencies and the Embassy of the United States of America.

Regarding the coordination, the Unit worked closely with the AGOA National committee and other key ministries.

The Strategic Coordination Unit is under the authority of the President of CNOFA and the AGOA Focal Point, H.E. Mrs. Ahoefa Dede Ekoue. It is composed of multi-sector experts from the public sector, the civil society and the private sector.

It should be noted that the AGOA Focal Point was assisted in his duties by H.E. Mr. Mawussi Djossou Semodji, Minister, Advisor to the Head of State, who represented and replaced while absent or unable and perform de facto the role of deputy focal point.

### 4. Technical Committees

In addition to bodies established by the decree, the National Committee set up two technical Committees and a Technical Group in order to ensure a better organization of forums' activities.

These are:

- The Private Sector Forum Technical Committee
- The Civil Society Technical Committee
- The Technical Group for Tourist and Socio-Cultural Program

#### 4.1. Private Sector Forum Technical Committee

The Private Sector Forum Technical Committee mission was to contribute on a volunteer basis by making recommendations and by supporting, according to the means of its members, the implementation of some actions agreed with the designated organizer (Corporate Council of Africa) of the Private Sector Forum. Its role consist of establishing a partnership with CCA and the American and the Togolese Government for the success of the private sector forum in order to promote the participation of successful enterprises of Africa and of the West African sub-region so that they can benefit from the forum and share their competence and forge a common advocacy vision vis-à-vis African and American Governments.

It also played a key role in defining strategies to better communicate the assets of Togo and reinforce the potential of Togo as one of the preferred gateways to boost the export of West African products to the US and to strengthen the internal trade within West Africa.

In addition, the Private Sector Forum Technical Committee helped to give a better visibility to Togolese, African and American companies that act as (i) an acceleration engine for trade exchange between the US and the West Africa; (ii) a driver for strengthening intra-ECOWAS trade.

It includes:

- President (vis-à-vis CCA), Mrs. Mareme Mbane Ndiaye, Cabinet Director of ECOBANK Transnational Incorporated (ETI)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Mr. Essohouna Meba, President of Togo Chamber of Commerce and Industry



- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, Mr. Coami Tamegnon, President of the Togo National Council of Employers
- Member of the Board, Mrs. Edwige Atayi, President of the Association of Business women of Togo (AFCET)
- Member of the Board, Mr. Clément Ahialey, President of the Association of Big Enterprise of Togo (AGET)
- Member of the Board, Mrs. Sandra Johnson, Project Manager, Technical Coordinator of MCA, of Togo Invest /MCC/DOING BUSINESS
- Member, Mr. Thierry Awesso, Chief Executive Officer of NIOTO, President of the Group of Industries of Togo (GITO)
- Member, Mrs. Candide Leguede, President of the Federation of Woman Entrepreneurs and Business women (FEFA) TOGO/ECOWAS
- Member, Mr. K. Fogan Adegnon, CEO of the Autonomous Port of Lomé
- Member, Mr. Malik K. Natchaba, CEO of the Lomé-Tokoin Airport Company (S.A L.T.)
- Member, Mr. Anani E. Sitti, Executive Director of Free-Trade Zone Companies Association (ASOZOF)
- Member, Mr. Ismaël Mamoudou Tanko, CEO of TOGO TIMATI (agro food industry)
- Member, Mrs. Sylvie Benissan-Messan, Coordinator of African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP)

- Member, Mr. Dovi K. Koudou, CEO of BIO-AFRIQ'IN FUSIONS (Young Entrepreneur FAIEJ)
- Other Representatives: Mr. Adolphe A. Edoh, Head of Togo CNP Programs and Mr. Eric Sehr, CEO of Orix Togo and Vice-President of ASOZOF.

#### 4.2. Civil Society Technical Committee

The objective of the Civil Society Forum Technical Committee is to contribute on a voluntary basis to the successful organization of the AWEP Civil Society Forum by making proposals and accompanying, depending on means available to its members, the implementation of some actions agreed with the designated organizer (AGOA Civil Society Network).

Specifically, it helped build a partnership with the AGOA Civil Society Network for a successful organization of civil society and AWEP forum for:

- (i) ensuring an effective mobilization of African and West African civil society during the forum and beyond for optimal use of AGOA assets and for a better integration of micro and small enterprises;
- (ii) building a shared vision of advocacy vis-à-vis governments and the private sector;
- (iii) giving visibility to civil society organizations and Togo that can support the achievement of fixed objectives during and after the civil society - AWEP forum;
- (iv) strengthening the capacity of national civil society to contribute in issues regarding the promotion of sustainable and fair trade and regional and sub regional integration, as well as the subject relating to AGOA

The Civil Society Forum Technical Committee is as follows:

- President, Mrs. Sylvie Dédé Benissan-Messan, Coordinator of African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-president, Mr. Koffi Elom Noutepe, Executive Director of the Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations in Togo (FONGTO)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-president, Mr. Abeyeta Djenda, Executive Director of the Union of Non-Governmental Organizations of Togo (UONGTO)
- Member, Ms. Candide Leguede, President of FEFA TOGO / CEDEAO
- Member, Ms Mawusse Akpama, Coordinator of GF2D/CRIFF
- Member, Mr Anani Sitti, Executive Director, ASOZOF
- Member, Mr. Komi Abitor, CEO of ETD
- Member, Mr. K. Dovi Koudou, CEO of BIO AFRIQUE
- Member, Mrs. Akossiwa Janine Kinvi, AWEP Communication Commission Manager
- Member, Mr. Boevi Kouglo Lawson-Body, Economist at CSI-Africa
- Member, Mrs. Ghislaine Broohm, Sociologist at CSI-Africa
- Member, Ms. Eméfa Améyo Kpegba, Software Engineer / Social Tech Entrepreneur / YALI
- Member, Mrs. Koumi Carole Comlan, BIO AFRICA Management Assistant

- Member, Mrs Kafui A. Aholou, Administrative Assistant of CHAMPISO.

#### 4.3. Touristic and Socio-cultural Program Technical Committee

The Technical Committee of Touristic and Socio-cultural Program was set up and aimed to recommend and implement, depending on the available means, activities to encourage the participants of the AGOA forum to discover touristic cultural, artistic and artisanal wealth of Togo .

It includes the Ministry of Industry and Tourism, the Ministry of Communication, Culture, Sports and Civic Education, the Ministry of Grassroots Development, Handicrafts, Youth and Youth Employment and the Ministry of Trade and Private Sector Promotion.

### Appendix 2: Opening Speech by H.E. Mr. PRIME MINISTER OF TOGO

SPEECH BY H.E. Mr. PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
TOGO  
OPENING CEREMONY

Lomé, August 9, 2017  
2 Février-Radisson Blu Hotel

Mr. Chairman of the National Assembly,

Chairpersons of the Republic Institutions,

Mr. Chairman of the African Union Commission,

Mr. Peter Henry Barlerin, Acting Deputy Secretary of African Affairs,

Excellency Mr. Robert Lightizer, U.S. Foreign Trade Representative,  
Mr. State Minister,  
Members of the government,  
Ministers of AGOA eligible countries,  
Excellency Mr. Ambassador of US in Togo,  
Excellency Ambassadors and Representatives of sub-regional, regional and international organizations;  
Honorable Members of Parliament at the National Assembly,  
Mr. Commissioner of African Union for Trade and Industry,  
Representatives of Private Sector and Civil Society organizations,  
Experts from the different countries,  
Venerable Traditional Chiefs, Guardians of our customs and traditions,  
Dear participants,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen in your respective ranks and levels,

After Washington last year, where the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of AGOA forum was held, here we are together this year 2017 in Lomé, capital of Togo and as a result of the application of the oscillatory provision defined between the U.S. and Africa. Togolese people as a whole are honored to be chosen and welcome you cordially.

The President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé wished to personally chair the opening ceremony of this 16<sup>th</sup> African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) forum but was held up at the

last minute by tasks related to his high-level function and consequently honored me to represent him.

So, it is on his behalf that I take the floor before this galaxy of actors from different levels and different activity sectors to chair the forum whose theme, revealing socio-economic issues, is: "The United Nations and Africa: Partnering for Prosperity through Trade".

We should recall that this relevant theme is line with the goal n°17 of the Agenda 2030 which recommends partnership as a privileged means to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDG).

Ladies and gentlemen,  
Distinguished guests,

Allow me, now, to deliver the message from the President of the Republic.

I would like, first of all, to add my voice those who preceded me, namely, that of Mrs. Minister of Trade, to warmly and cordially welcome you to Togo.

We acknowledge and properly appreciate the friendship and the trust you place in us by you being present and mobilized to make the current meetings a success.

Ours thanks go to the President Donald Trump as well as to all my peers, African Heads of State and Government, whose countries are represented today in Lomé, for having entrusted to Togo the holding of these important meetings.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to the U.S. government and to those of African Countries members of AGOA and to you all, Heads of delegations, Trade Department Officials, Representatives of partner organizations, Expert actors of the Private Sector, members of the Civil Society, various service providers for your involvement in preparing and holding this forum.

I would like to congratulate the mix Togo-U.S. team who has worked professionally to make this event a real success. I hereby welcome, the availability of Mr. Ambassador David Gilmour and that of his collaborators whose constant presence by the side of the Togolese counterparts has been vital. I do not forget the decisive impact of the diligences of the African Ambassadors Group in Washington which I warmly thank.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Distinguished guests,

For 17 years and with an ongoing success, AGOA has constituted an important pillar of the business relationship between our African States and our U.S. partner.

Being even considered as a cornerstone in these exchanges, it is the framework of a real strategic alliance within which we have been working together to strengthen and diversify our business relationships while stressing on the improvement of governance as well as the establishment of policies that foster growth and development.

The benefits of this common initiative are undeniable.

In recent years, AGOA has contributed to economic growth, opened new horizons to producers and traders and finally contributed to the betterment of living conditions of millions of people across the Atlantic.

A lot of progress has been made in this vein since the year 2000 and we are right to express a justifiable satisfaction from the outcomes of this mechanism preferably on growth and development.

Considering its aim which is to achieve conditions for a shared prosperity by acting on levers of the fight against poverty, the partnership established by AGOA needs to be unceasingly reviewed, rethought and improved to stay effective.

Gathered in Lomé, for this 16<sup>th</sup> forum, it is our duty to go on with the reflections engaged for a substantial strengthening of this relationship while keeping in mind the concept of: "Trade, not aid."

In order to make this possible, it is essential to revitalize the business relationship which must from now on be consolidated by a better consideration of the production on our continent.

I think, for instance, to the fact that for my country Togo, as for many other African countries, the agriculture sector which employs nearly 70% of the population and contributes to the Gross Domestic Product up to 40% would gain in having a more important part in exchanges within AGOA.

Ladies and gentlemen, participants,  
Distinguished guests,

While we are in the first years of the longest period of AGOA renewal, or 2015 – 2025, it is more than ever the time to search improved performances and more inclusive benefits for our partnership.

AGOA has been the driving force for important advancements in economic exchanges between the U.S. and Africa.

However, we need to keep in mind that this mechanism is at the same time, opportunity and challenges.

It requires that final beneficiaries really take advantage of its outcomes, an even more pragmatic and innovating approach which integrate all the dimensions of development and considers sectors having a strong growth potential as fields to exploit for facilitating trade.

We have not yet succeeded in fully achieving all the potential has for Africa as well as for the U.S.

Certainly, it made it possible to increase up to the double, the business exchanges between the two parties. Being legitimately satisfied of this state of



affairs, we noted that for some years, figures show a downward trend which demands that we carry out an in-depth reflection and take steps without delay in order to optimize the impact of AGOA on trade, wealth creation and finally, on the participative and inclusive development we envision.

Consequently, I would like to call on participants to the current meetings to carry on with the reflections on the opportunities and emerging issues which will influence the global economy in the course of the next decade, particularly, the strengthening of regional integration process and agreed approaches, namely on security and poverty reduction.

The state of the world shows us to which extent the numerous, interdependent and complex issues of concern have an impact on the economy and the development process.

It is at this price that we will give the theme of the current forum its full meaning, by converting in the reality for the coming years our partnerships for prosperity through trade between the U.S. and Africa.

More globally, we will then succeed in achieving, through the implementation of SDG, a development which does not exclude anyone. And we will have laid important foundations in our continent's move towards a pacific, prosperous and integrated space by 2063.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear participants,

I am convinced that, as far as Africa is concerned, harmoniously integrated regional groupings will constitute more relevant and more decisive actors within the AGOA framework. It is a real issue of stability, credibility, competitiveness and growth acceleration.

That is why, at the level of ECOWAS, I am committed to ensure the implementation of our objectives on the free movement of people and goods.

I am pleased that the same vision drives the actions taken by all the economic, regional communities and is subject of consultations instituted under the auspices of the African Union and the United Nations through the Economic Commission for Africa.

Furthermore, our political will should go along with strategic investments and a solid public-private partnership to enable AGOA to full produce the expected effects on trade flows, on economic growth of our States and especially on the lives of our populations.

Like all the AGOA partner countries, Togo is ready to play its role with the important financing devoted to the rehabilitation of port, airport and road infrastructures.

The on-going improvement of the business climate as well as capacity building programs for producers and entrepreneurs contribute equally to the expansion of sectors covered by the facilitations within AGOA. In this context, the recent validation of textile visa between our country and the United States constitutes a good example and represents for numerous enterprises, an opportunity of growth for their activities and the conclusion of new partnerships, synonym of growth.

Ladies and gentlemen, participants,

Distinguished guests,

I wish you that the current forum constitute the one of new possibilities for the next growth of business exchanges between Africa and the U.S., regarding the volume and the quality of the concerned products.

I would like to encourage you to stress on the continued monitoring and self-assessment of impacts of the implementation of privileged relationships within AGOA as we agreed on during 14<sup>th</sup> forum held in Libreville, Gabon.

The growing involvement of the private sector also should still be one of our priorities, especially in the framework of national forums devoted to reflections, in order to take maximum advantage from the AGOA partnership.

I express the wish that the perspective of post – 2025 be already envisioned not as the end of a collaboration, but as a terminal which opens a new horizon of opportunities more promising since it will be enriched with experiences and teachings from a 25 years of fruitful partnership.

I wish you all, a happy stay in Lomé. After studious hours devoted to the forum that gathers us, I invite you to go discover our capital and its surroundings.

Wishing full success to your works, I declare, open the 16<sup>th</sup> Africa – U.S. forum of commercial and economic cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.

### Appendix 3: Speech by H.E. Mr. US Foreign Trade Representative

REMARKS BY H.E. MR. ROBERT LIGHTHIZER,  
AMBASSADOR, US FOREIGN TRADE  
REPRESENTATIVE  
OPENING CEREMONY

August 9, 2017  
Lomé, Togo

Good morning, Your Excellency, Mr. Prime Minister Komi Klassou,

AGOA 16th Forum, Theme: « The United States and Africa: Partnering for Prosperity through Trade »  
Lomé, August 8 – 10, 2017

Mrs. Minister of Trade, Legzim-Balouki,  
Esteemed members of the Togolese Government,  
Ministers and heads of delegations and delegates from the AGOA partner  
countries,  
Distinguished guests,

I am honored to be here, and I join President Trump and our Government in  
welcoming all of you to the 16<sup>th</sup> annual AGOA Forum.

Before I begin, I would like to specially thank President Gnassingbé for  
hosting this year, AGOA Forum in your capital city. Thank you for your  
hospitality and the warm welcome we have received. Togo is positioning itself  
as a transportation hub and logistics center, so it has a clear appreciation of the  
benefits of trade.

I am pleased that the theme of this year's Forum is "The United States and  
Africa: Partnering for Prosperity through Trade."

The United States is committed to Africa. We see great potential to grow and  
deepen our trade relationship, with the goal of establishing a true partnership  
for the future. By lowering barriers and tackling other constraints that impede  
trade and investment, we are poised to see US – Africa trade flourish. To  
achieve these gains, however, much more work needs to be done, as we will  
discuss during this important AGOA Forum.

The US Government has enjoyed a bipartisan consensus for the past 16 years  
on its trade policy towards Africa, with AGOA providing a framework for our  
economic engagement.

The Africa of today is not the Africa of 17 years ago. We live in a changing world  
and much has changed in Africa over this period. For instance, the United  
States is importing over one billion dollars in luxury automobiles from Sub-  
Saharan Africa annually. Meanwhile, some AGOA partners are implementing  
reciprocal trade agreements with major developed economies that compete

with the United States. So let us focus on ways we can achieve deeper commercial engagement now while working towards greater reciprocity in the future to ensure that sustained political support for our trade relationship goes forward.

I look forward to discussing these issues and opportunities further in this meeting. Together, we can create a better business environment and chart a path toward a stronger and more sustainable trade relationship for the future.

Finally, I would like to take a brief moment to announce an example of an AGOA beneficiary country working hard to succeed with an export strategy. I have just signed a letter approving an AGOA textile and apparel visa for Togo. This important step will permit Togolese entrepreneurs to take advantage of the many textile and apparel benefits available under the AGOA program. And we wish them all the best in this endeavor.

We look forward to continuing to develop our trade relationship throughout the region. I thank you very much for this opportunity to be here and to represent my Government.

SOURCE: U.S. Embassy in Lome

<https://agoa.info/news/article/15220-opening-statement-by-ustr-amb-lighthizer-at-the-agoa-forum-in-togo.html>

#### Appendix 4: Speech by H.E. Mrs. Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion

SPEECH BY H.E. MRS. ESSOSSIMNA LEGZIM-BALOUKI,  
MINISTER OF TRADE AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROMOTION

OPENING CEREMONY

Lomé, August 9, 2017

Excellency Mr. President of the Republic of Togo,  
Mr. Prime Minister,  
Mr. Speaker of the National Assembly,

Mr. Chair of the African Union Commission,  
Excellency Mr. Ambassador and US Trade Representative  
Ministers and Counterparts,  
Excellencies, Ambassadors and Representatives of Regional and  
International Organizations,

Honorable Members of Parliament at the National Assembly,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Distinguished guests of all ranks and levels,

With your permission, Excellency Mr. President of the Republic, I would like to give all the participants a warm welcome to this ceremony which marks the official opening of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum under the theme: "The United States and Africa: Partnering for Prosperity through Trade."

It is a real pleasure for us to welcome you to Lomé to take part in this important event that every year brings together public and private actors as well as those from Africa and US civil society for the promotion of trade exchanges between the United States and Africa.

We would like to thank all the participants in this Lomé forum for their interest in issues related to global trade development, as one of the sectors with strong economic growth potential.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished guests and Dear participants,

The 16<sup>th</sup> US – Africa Ministerial Forum of Economic and Trade Cooperation which opens today is a great opportunity for AGOA eligible countries to make of trade a true lever of socio-economic development in our countries.

I would like to recall that in recent years the exchanges between Africa and the US have dropped from 24 billion dollars in 2014 to 19 Billion dollars in

2015 for exports from Africa to the US and from 24 billion in 2014 to 17 billion dollars in 2015 for imports in Africa from the US.

There is therefore a need to find the means to improve the partnership between the US and Africa and to take full advantage of AGOA for the good of our populations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African Growth and Opportunities Act known as AGOA authorizes access to the American export market free of customs duties of up to 6400 product lines from Sub-Saharan Africa.

Its aim is to encourage economic and political reforms and to promote the engagement of Africa in the development of its trade capacities and to increase American direct investment in Africa.

Excellency Mr. President of the Republic,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Despite the opportunities this Act offers, it should be noted that its impact on trade exchanges between the United States and Sub-Saharan countries is limited and is only focused on some sectors.

The constraints of supply capacity, the lack of infrastructure, certain institutional and cultural gaps are amongst the caused linked to a limited utilization of AGOA by the eligible countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Lomé Forum is part of a three-dimensional dynamic, i.e. «produce, process and market» aiming at increasing the part of African countries in general and in particular those eligible countries under the AGOA Act in world trade.

The ongoing discussions in this forum should allow AGOA countries to fully benefit from the advantages that this new act offers and to strengthen the partnership with the United States of America.

The theme of this Forum « The US and Africa: Partnering for Prosperity through Trade» encourages us to examine the actions that will allow us to grasp the opportunities of AGOA to be competitive on the American market and benefit from the advantages and increase the incomes of our populations for a prosperous and flourishing Africa.

I dare believe that the productive exchanges with our great American partner will help us find the solutions to the difficulties linked to the implementation in our different countries of this important Act for the development of trade to envisage the future of our trade relations after 2025.

I wish you the best success in your work.

Long live cooperation between Africa and the United States of America!

Long live Africa for the development of its peoples through AGOA!

Thank you very much for your kind attention.



## Appendix 5: Speech by African Union Commissioner for Trade and Industry

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR ALBERT M. MUCHANGA  
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSIONER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY  
OPENING CEREMONY

Excellency Mr. Komi Selom Klassou, Prime Minister of the Republic of Togo,

Excellency Mr. President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Togo,

Excellency Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative,

Honorable Bernadette Legzim-Balouki, Minister of Trade and Promotion of the Private Sector of the Republic of Togo,

Honorable Ministers,

Leaders of Delegations,

Distinguished Forum Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here this morning and participate in the opening ceremony of the United States-Sub Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation (AGOA) Forum that is convening under the Theme: "The U.S. and Africa: Partnering for Prosperity Through Trade".

I bring greetings from H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, who expressed great desire to honor this invitation to be here with us this morning.

Unfortunately, he was unable to come due to other pressing commitments.

He, however, asked me to represent him in this important assembly.  
He also sends his best wishes for a successful outcome of our deliberations.

I would also like to record the appreciation of my delegation to the people and Government of Togo for the warm welcome and boundless hospitality accorded to us since our arrival, complemented with very impressive cultural performances.

Your friendliness and generosity are highly appreciated and will be greatly treasured.

Equally important, we thank all the delegations that are in this Forum because your presence and participation are what give it life and dynamism.

The AGOA Forum accommodates the varied interests of its stakeholders.

Some of the stakeholders are: governments; legislators; civil society organizations; business; and, individuals.

We should keep it this way because the diversity of stakeholders in our Forum enhances its capacity to deliver positive results. It also gives it greater strength; and, ultimately, relevance and sustainability.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Forum Participants,

My statement will be brief. I will broadly touch on the challenge that we face to bring to life the theme of this Forum and key areas of capacity building to increase African exports under AGOA as well as harnessing regional and continental integration to expand and harmonize the African market.

Allow me to begin by stating that the AGOA Forum is an important platform for developing trade and investment relations between the United States of America and AGOA-eligible African countries.

We currently face some challenges such as declining exports into the US under AGOA and under-utilization of some preferences.

The theme of this Forum captures the challenge of the moment.

We would like to harness trade to propel countries in our partnership to higher levels of prosperity.

We, however, have to build from a setback of declining exports.

As of 13 June 2017, there were 37 AGOA-eligible countries, with total exports to the US under AGOA estimated at about nine billion United States dollars in 2016.

This was a significant reduction from the high of about US\$56 billion recorded in 2011.

This reduction was largely as a result of a drop in our mineral oil exports to the United States.

It should also be noted that since 2011, the annual growth rate of world trade has been below the growth rate of world GDP.

The key questions that we must answer during this Forum are: what are the prospects of expanding and increasing our trade flows under AGOA and how do we achieve this so that the theme of the Forum is fully realized?

With some aspects of globalization in retreat; with some commentators and economists already coming up with the term 'physical deglobalization' to describe this retreat, we have a huge task ahead of us in harnessing trade to generate prosperity.

From this challenge, we also face the reality that the ladder of development is not easy to climb.

It has never been easy.

It will never be.

We hence have to harness the will and energy to overcome challenges that exist in our partnership and that is why we are gathered here today and tomorrow to share experiences and come up with common solutions to make our partnership yield desired results.

I, therefore, look forward to this Forum coming up with practical measures to harness trade as a lever of prosperity under AGOA.

On our part, we acknowledge that we need to build capacity to exploit the opportunities offered under AGOA.

Market intelligence, development of quality infrastructure, developing skills to manufacture goods, developing the ability to sustainably supply the US market are some of the capacity building areas.

We welcome steps being taken by the US side aimed at enhancing our utilization of the AGOA market access window.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Africa will improve her economic prospects by creating a large, harmonized and attractive market.

We are, in this respect, currently building on the successes of our regional economic communities to establish the Continental Free Trade Area by December this year.

The private sector, a key stakeholder in the AGOA process, will be a major player in the development of the CFTA market.

All we ask of the private sector is to give us, through their investments, quality, affordable, competitive and safe products to facilitate intra-African trade and trade with the rest of the world.

We also request the private sector to partner with us in the development of regional value chains in the Continental Free Trade Area to promote industrialization, value-addition, economic diversification, competitiveness, structural transformation as well as overall development of our productive capacities.

We also look forward to engaging with cooperating partners like the US in working with you on issues like development of trade and investment hubs aligned to the Continental Free Trade Area and implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement; among others.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, let me say that I look forward to participating in the various sessions of this Forum.

Let me also state that the partnership for prosperity through trade is not just between the US and AGOA eligible Sub-Saharan countries.

It is also a partnership involving governments and members of society in our respective countries whom we represent.

In this connection, I also look forward to outcomes from this Forum that will contribute to poverty reduction and employment generation in Africa, key measures of our progress towards prosperity.

In Africa, we succeed when we uplift the living standards of the most disadvantaged members of our societies.

We fail when we overlook their plight, because when we do that, our progress will be much slower.

It is the slowest members of our societies who determine our speed in our journey towards prosperity.

Let this Forum, therefore, meet its most pressing challenges, including the expectations of the most disadvantaged members in our societies for decent livelihoods.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

Appendix 6: Remarks by H.E. Mr David Gilmour, US Ambassador to Togo

REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR DAVID GILMOUR  
CLOSING CEREMONY, AGOA FORUM 2017

Lomé, Togo August 10, 2017

Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It is a great honor to officially conclude the 2017 AGOA Forum in Lomé. Allow me to begin by thanking all of our distinguished guests -- the Ministers and officials who have traveled from across the continent, my United States Government colleagues, and our partners in the private sector and civil society -- for your participation and collaboration over the past three days of this forum, and for your commitment to strengthening the partnership between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa.

I wish to extend a special thanks to the Government of Togo, led by His Excellency President Faure Gnassingbé, for having done such an extraordinary job as the host of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum. The Government has outlined an ambitious vision for Lomé to become a major destination for international conferences and events. After the experience of this AGOA Forum, I think you will all agree that the people of Togo are exceptionally warm and welcoming hosts, and that the organization of this Forum has been magnificent. It has been a pleasure for me to watch over the past few days as our guests have realized what I have known for sometimes now -- that Togo may be small country, but it is a country capable of doing great things!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank specifically Her Excellency Minister Dédé Ekoué, the President of the AGOA Forum National Organizing

Committee. Minister Ekoué expertly coordinated a massive team of ministers and officials from across the government to deliver a first-rate experience for all of us. Her energy, enthusiasm and good humor were an inspiration and a motivation to everyone who worked on the organization of this Forum. It has been a tremendous privilege for me and my team at the U.S. Embassy, as well as dozens of U.S. Government colleagues, to work alongside Mrs. Ekoué and her team these past months. We could not have asked for a better partner. Mrs Dédé – a huge thank you from all of us on the American side.

We come now to the end of two very productive and enlightening days spent exchanging ideas on a variety of topics - regional integration, trade and labor, women and trade, logistics and transportation, investment, agriculture, agrobusiness and land reform; bio-technology; energy; and so much more.

What unites all these topics and what brought us all here, is a single common goal: to advance sub-Saharan Africa's economic development by enhancing its trade and investment ties with the United States.

That is the vision that inspired the U.S. Congress to pass the AGOA law in 2000, and to renew it for an additional 10 years in 2015, and it is the vision that has shaped the past 15 AGOA Forums.

One thing that we have discussed many times over the past few days is that the world is not the same place that it was when AGOA was first passed in 2000. Part of that is due to AGOA's success. Total African exports under AGOA have increased to over \$10 billion since the program's inception, and non-oil exports have increased 200 percent. Africa has grown wealthier, and the opportunities and challenges have evolved.

So the task that all of here today carry back with us at the close of this Forum - - our homework, if you will -- is to think about where we go from here. How do we continue to maximize AGOA, and how do we develop clear steps to enhance the U.S.-sub-Saharan Africa trade relationship beyond AGOA?



How do we continue to leverage the assistance provided by the U.S. government – such as that provided by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, and others - to develop energy, transport, and other infrastructure that supports U.S.-Africa trade, and a more competitive role for Africa in the vast global economy?

At the same time how do we harness the power of the private sector – from homegrown entrepreneurs to international firms - to create innovative solutions to complex issues and accelerate economic growth?

How do we help African exporters take greater advantage of, and respond to, rapid changes in the American market, such as the fast-growing demand for consumer products that are natural, organic and responsibly produced?

How can we boost two-way trade between the United States and Africa, so that more Americans will see Africa as an export destination? How can we ensure that our trade brings benefits and creates prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic?

There are no simple answers to these questions, but we must continue this vital work. The expectations for greater prosperity for our fellow citizens, particularly among young people, are very high.

It is clear that is that all of us in this room share a commitment to using trade as an engine for economic growth that will benefit citizens in all of our countries.

I know that we will continue to advance this common vision for the shared benefit of our countries, our businesses, and our peoples.

Thank you again for participating in this AGOA forum, and I wish you a safe journey home.

Appendix 7: Closing speech by Mrs. Dédé Ekoue, Minister, President of the AGOA Forum National Organizing Committee (AFNOC)

CLOSING REMARKS BY MRS. DEDE EKOUE  
MINISTER, CHAIR OF AFNOC  
AND AGOA FOCAL POINT

Representatives of the Regional Economic Bodies and Communities,  
Ministers of the Togolese government,  
Ministers, head of delegations from brotherly and friendly countries,  
Honorable Members of Parliament,  
Members of the US Congress,  
Ambassadors of AGOA eligible countries,  
Mr. Chairman of ECOBANK Group,  
Mrs. Chair of Corporate Council on Africa (CCA),  
Mr. President of AGOA Civil Society Network,  
Mrs. President of Africa / African Women Entrepreneurship Program,  
Mrs. President of the National Organizing Committee of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum,  
Members of the National Organizing Committee of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum,  
Members of the private sector organizations,  
Members of the civil society organizations,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the National Organizing Committee of the AGOA 16<sup>th</sup> forum, I would like to thank the heads of delegations and all members of their delegations for coming to Lomé and taking part in this important event.

I would also like to salute the commitment and the determination of H.E. Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Togolese Republic, who provided the necessary orientations and supports for a successful organization of the forum.

Togo is honored by the presence of Mr. Robert Lighthizer, U.S Foreign Trade Representative, which symbolizes the interest H.E. Mr. Donald Trump places on Africa and on Togo.

Our thanks also go to all U.S departments and agencies which worked with us in organizing the forum. These supports have enabled our country to get the textile visa.

My special thanks go to Mr. David Gilmour, US Ambassador in Togo for his commitments and the undeniable support that he provided to our country for the success of this important event.

As President of the National Organizing Committee, I would like to welcome all the presidents of the committees set up for the organization of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum as well as all their members.

I would also like to thank Ecobank group which headed the private sector forum technical committee, as well as all the other members of this committee, especially the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Togo and the National Employers Council of Togo.

I would to salute AWEP which headed the civil society technical committee, responsible for organizing the civil society forum, as well as the other members of this committee, mainly the NGO Union and the NGO Federation of Togo.

We are honored by the determination of all the participants and people for the success of activities in plenary and in break-out sessions. We would like to

congratulate all the resource persons who headed and composed the different sessions.

The discussions confirmed that participants are satisfied with the organization of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum of Togo and this satisfaction score honors our service providers that we salute. We would like to refer to, among others, Radisson Blu and Sarakawa Hotels.

I wish you a safe return to all the delegations in their respective countries.

Thank you.

Appendix 8: Closing Speech by Mrs. Legzim-Balouki, Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion.

## CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA FORUM 2017

### SPEECH BY MADAM BERNADETTE LEGZIM – BALOUKI, MINISTER OF TRADE AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROMOTION

Excellency Mr. Ambassador, U.S Trade Representative,

Ministers and Dear Counterparts,

Mr. Commissioner in charge of Trade and Industry of African Union,

Mr. President of the ECOWAS Committee,

Excellency Mr. Ambassador of the USA in Togo,

Excellency Ambassadors and Representatives of Regional and International  
Organizations,

Honorable Members of Parliament at the National Assembly,

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests in your respective ranks and  
levels,

In a short while, the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum will be part of history. In this solemn  
moment, I am honored to take the floor, on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Prime  
Minister, to reiterate you the appreciation of His Excellency Mr. Faure  
Essozimna Gnassingbe, President of the Togolese Republic, of his  
Government and the Togolese people, for having accepted to come to Lomé in  
order to actively participate in activities of this 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During three days, this 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Trade and Economic Cooperation  
Forum between the USA and the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa under the  
theme: "USA and Africa: Partnership for Prosperity through Trade" was an

opportunity to discuss and exchange, regarding the opportunities provided by this Act, the challenges which still hinder African eligible States from taking advantage of this useful partnership.

I welcome the strong mobilization of all actors from African countries eligible for AGOA and the USA mainly from public administration, private sector and civil society.

The ultimate outcomes make me truthfully say that the AGOA Forum of Lomé kept its promises.

Here is the opportunity for us to reiterate our heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to H.E. Mr. Ambassador, U.S Trade Representative and his delegation, to Ministers and Heads of delegations, to Ambassadors and Senior Officials as well as to all the sub-regional, regional and international organizations for all the efforts made before and during the forum.

I would also like to thank the joint teams of the USA and Togo which enable, through their work and commitment, the effective holding of the forum.

Allow me to equally thank His Excellency Mr. Ambassador of USA in Togo who was personally involved in the preparations as well as in the effective holding of this important event which has from now on become historical in the economic and trade relations between Sub-Sahara African countries and the USA.

I would like to extend my warmest thanks to national and international media, to all hotel owners, all good-wills, and all those who directly or indirectly contributed in a way or another to the organization of the forum.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Whether in the course of plenary sessions, break-out sessions or panels, all the topics planned were scrutinized. All the stakeholders were committed to make the AGOA Act a framework of win-win partnership between the USA and Africa.

On its part, the Togolese Government, under the impetus given by His Excellency Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Republic, is firmly committed to create the necessary framework to help the private sector and the civil society benefit from this facility.

I am pleased to take this opportunity to reiterate the gratitude of the Togolese government to the American government for the validation of its textile visa system.

The Togolese government has already established an inclusive action plan which aims at building its offer capacities, increasing and diversifying its exports to the USA by taking into account the economic and social inclusion of young people and women of our towns and countrysides.

This operational action plan aims at making Togo a competitive country on the American market as far as trade is concerned, and thus significantly contributing to the sustainable growth of the national economy.

This plan takes into account the following aspects:

- The accordance with the development strategies of the country, mainly on the priorities of the Accelerated Growth and Employment Promotion Strategy (2013 – 2017) which will be extended by the National Development Plan (2018 – 2020) in preparation process;
- The positioning of the private sector namely the economic operators as main actors of the successful implementation of this Plan.
- The involvement of all stakeholders for a wide dissemination of the AGOA Act and its advantages for priority lines;
- The mobilization of investments to support the production, the manufacturing and exportation in the selected priority lines;
- The promotion of equitable trade and the sustainable inclusion of small producers, young people and especially women in value chains;
- The building of products offer capacities in quality and quantity;
- The promotion of bio-productions;

- The capitalization of sub-regional and regional opportunities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am still convinced that initiatives are being taken across the African continent in the support of the private sector and the civil society.

Therefore, the private sector and the civil society should play the role to boost our exportations to the USA in order to create more wealth and employment for our populations.

I am certain about the commitment of our American partner to better support Africa, continent of hopes and opportunities.

Before ending my address, I would like to encourage all the stakeholders mainly the U.S, the eligible African countries and the sub-regional, regional and international organizations to take all necessary actions for an effective implementation of the Lomé Forum outcome recommendations.

It is on this encouragement message that I wish you all a safe return in your respective countries and declare closed, on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Prime Minister, the activities of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum 2017.

Long live economic and commercial cooperation between the USA and Africa in South Sahara.

Thank you for your attention.

### Appendix 9: Additional documents

Other documents related to the forum organization are available on the 16th forum AGOA experience capitalization website <http://agoatogo2017.info>

- Strategic Vision of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum;
- Forum speech



- Presentations made during the forum
  - Recommendations from the Ministerial Forum, the Private Sector Forum and the Civil Society Forum
  - Agenda of the forum
  - Presidential Decree No. 2017-060 / PR of April 07, 2017 on institutional arrangements for the organization of the AGOA Forum;
  - Work plans of the Strategic Coordination Unit, Technical commissions and sub-commissions;
  - Working methodology for the preparation of the forum
  - Terms of Reference of the Private Sector Forum Technical Committee;
  - Terms of reference of the Civil Society Forum Technical Committee;
  - Terms of reference of the cultural program
  - Media presence of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum in the media
  - List of useful contacts and websites
  - Videos and Pictures of the 16<sup>th</sup> Forum
- Other additional information is also available on the official website of the forum ([www.agoa-togo.tg](http://www.agoa-togo.tg))