

# Statement from Ambassador Katherine Tai on the African Growth and Opportunity Act Eligibility Review

October 31, 2023

WASHINGTON – President Biden decided to reinstate African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trade preference program benefits for one country, Mauritania, and to terminate benefits for four countries – Gabon, Niger, the Central African Republic, and Uganda – effective January 1, 2024.

Based on the results of the annual AGOA eligibility review, Mauritania’s eligibility will be reinstated based on progress that it has made with respect to the 2019 termination of its benefits due to worker rights concerns, as well as the government’s willingness to work diligently with the United States to continue to make substantial and measurable progress on worker rights and eliminating forced labor across the country.

“Recognizing progress made by Mauritania in recent years, we know that there is more hard work to be done,” **said Ambassador Katherine Tai**. “Mauritania’s continued partnership with, support for, and empowerment of labor, civil, and human rights organizations will be key to its success. Using the tools provided by the AGOA program, we will closely monitor Mauritania’s progress, in effectively and decisively protecting internationally recognized worker rights, particularly eradicating the scourge of hereditary slavery.”

Gabon and Niger’s AGOA eligibility will be terminated due to unconstitutional changes of government in those two countries. Benefits will also be terminated for the Central African Republic and Uganda on the basis of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights being perpetrated by those governments.

“Absent urgent changes, these four countries are set to be removed from the program due to actions taken by their governments that are inconsistent with the AGOA eligibility criteria,” **said Ambassador Tai**. “The United States urges these governments to take necessary actions to meet those criteria so that we can resume our valued trading partnerships. I will provide each of these countries with clear benchmarks for a pathway toward reinstatement, and our Administration will work with them to achieve that objective.”

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