

Readout of Ambassador Katherine Tai's Trip to Johannesburg for the 20th AGOA Forum

Office of the United States Trade Representative Readout Johannesburg, South Africa November 4, 2023

The 2023 U.S.-sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum (AGOA Forum) concluded today in Johannesburg, South Africa. United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai co-hosted the convening with South Africa's Minister of Trade, Industry, and Competition Ebrahim Patel, and led the U.S. delegation to the Forum.

The Forum brought together senior government officials from the United States and AGOA-eligible countries, as well as representatives from continental and regional economic organizations, the private sector, labor, and civil society. The ministerial built upon the success of the Biden-Harris Administration's U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit held in 2022 and the enhanced economic engagement between the U.S. and the continent. During the open and closing ceremonies and plenary sessions, the U.S. delegation highlighted the commitment to the AGOA program and hosted a number of conversations on a broad range of issues which included modernization as part of renewal, increasing utilization, gender equity and inclusion within the program, and the partnership between the U.S. and sub-Saharan Africa to drive economic opportunity for Americans and Africans. Discussions also reaffirmed President Biden's strong support for timely reauthorization of the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Throughout the Forum, Ambassador Tai held bilateral meetings with Minister Ebrahim Patel; Mauritius Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade Maneesh Gobin; and Tanzania's Minister of Industry and Trade Ashatu Kijaji. Ambassador Tai discussed how worker-centered trade policy contributes to the AGOA program and resilient, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. She also engaged on key regional integration issues with the African Union's Commissioner for Industry and Trade Albert Muchanga, and Secretary General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Wamkele Mene.

During the Forum, Chief Agricultural Negotiator Ambassador Doug McKalip met with Dipepeneng Serage, Deputy Director-General from South Africa's Ministry of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, to discuss bilateral market access issues. Ambassador McKalip led a panel conversation on the U.S. commitment to building food security and agricultural sustainability across the continent. Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for African Affairs Constance Hamilton also held meetings with Kenya's Principal Secretary for Trade Alfred K'Ombudo, and Uganda's Minister of State for Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives Harriet Ntabazi.

AGOA Forum participants included trade ministers from 32 AGOA-eligible countries. The delegation from the United States included professional staff from the United States Congress, and senior government officials from the Department of State, the Department of Commerce, the Department of the Treasury, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Agriculture, the Export-Import Bank of the U.S., Prosper Africa, the Small Business Administration, the National Security Council, and the Office of the Vice President.