

Remarks at the 2024 AGOA Forum

REMARKS

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AGO A FORUM
WASHINGTON, D.C.

JULY 25, 2024

As prepared for delivery

Good morning, everyone.

It's my pleasure to welcome you to the U.S. Department of State and open the 2024 AGOA [African Growth and Opportunity Act] Ministerial. I want to start off by thanking everyone for being here – thank you to all the trade ministers and their delegations who have joined us, as well as members of the regional economic communities, civil society, private sector, and the diaspora. We look forward to engaging with you all today and tomorrow at our ministerial and breakout sessions.

Our discussions at this year's Forum are particularly important, as AGOA legislation is set to expire in 2025.

As President Biden has said, "we are all in on Africa." Our work on the continent is broad and essential. We're working with you to develop sustainable, reliable, and transparent critical minerals supply chains through the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) and MSP forum. We're also partnering with you to enable the technologies of the future and ensure local communities join in economic growth.

We're advancing food security through USAID's [U.S. Agency for International Development] Feed the Future and the State Department's Vision for Adapted Crops and Soils (or VACS), which boosts Africa's critical agriculture sector.

And we're supporting the power sector through Power Africa, with the goal of adding at least 30,000 megawatts of cleaner and more reliable electricity generation capacity by 2030.

Trade is an important piece of all these engagements, and AGOA is the cornerstone of the United States' trade relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa. It has helped grow Africa's economic potential and made a difference for many Africans – enabling business opportunities and job creation. It has stimulated investment that has formed the backbone of new industries in many countries, such as apparel.

AGOA has also promoted regional integration, enhanced Africa's export competitiveness, and incentivized many African governments to undertake key political and economic reforms. However, since the landmark AGOA legislation was passed two decades ago, a lot has changed on the continent and in the global economy, and a lot will continue to change. Africa is the largest emerging market and the youngest continent in the world with over 60 percent of the population under the age of 25. We have an opportunity to make AGOA even better and more effective.

Today and tomorrow – you will hear remarks from several esteemed speakers from the U.S. government and our African partners – these will cover a wide range of topics such as inclusive trade and sustainable economic development, congressional engagement, intellectual property and the creative industries, fostering a business enabling environment, public health, women's entrepreneurship, technology, and worker-centered policy.

I encourage everyone here to actively engage in an open and meaningful dialogue on a forward-looking vision for AGOA that can address today's challenges and deliver real benefits to more people across the continent.

Thank you.