

Text of handout provided to delegates at the 2013 AGOA Forum in Addis Ababa.



Remarks by United States Trade Representative Michael Froman at the Opening Ceremony of the AGOA Forum

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

****As Prepared for Delivery****

"Your Excellency, Mr. Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn; Honorable Minister Kebede Chane; Honorable Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha; esteemed members of the Ethiopian Government; Ministers and heads of delegation from the 39 AGOA partner countries; my U.S. Government colleagues and distinguished Members of Congress; private sector and civil society leaders - all friends of AGOA, here today:

"I am delighted to be back in Addis Ababa for the 2013 AGOA Forum. This year's theme, 'Sustainable Transformation Through Trade and Technology,' spotlights two tools critical to the growth of African nations in a 21st century global economy.

"It is my privilege to lead a strong U.S. Government delegation to this AGOA Forum, including senior officials from a wide variety of agencies as well as key Members of Congress. I would like to recognize Senator Johnny Isakson and Representative Karen Bass, two great friends of Africa. We also have many U.S. business and private sector representatives here in Ethiopia. We have arrived in force and ready to work.

"I had the honor of joining President Obama on his trip to Africa this past July. Then, we saw for ourselves Africa's rising economic growth, Africa's growing middle class. We saw how new technologies are writing success stories across the continent.

"But we did not only see what is happening in Africa - we saw what can happen, what needs to happen: that we must do more to promote trade and investment, to create jobs and growth on both sides of the Atlantic.

"Africa can be the planet's next great economic success story. And as President Obama has said, the United States wants to be a partner in that

success.

"Indeed, much of what the President did on his trip, in his meetings with leaders, businesspeople, and youth, highlighted trade and investment as key drivers for Africa's future and development. To that end, the President has announced a number of new initiatives, including Trade Africa and Power Africa.

"But at the heart of the U.S. economic relationship with sub-Saharan Africa is AGOA.

"Since AGOA was enacted in 2000, exports to the United States have surged, and non-oil exports have tripled. Those exports are estimated to have created hundreds of thousands of jobs in Africa. U.S. exports to Africa are growing in triple digits as well, supporting jobs in the United States too.

"To keep our trade growing, there are a number of steps we must take together. The first is working with the U.S. Congress on a seamless renewal of AGOA beyond 2015 - one that will give certainty and predictability to manufacturers, buyers, and investors both here and in the United States.

"AGOA is the centerpiece of our trade and investment policy with sub-Saharan Africa. By facilitating trade and supporting jobs, AGOA has improved individual lives and stimulated development in a way that is leading to real growth.

"More broadly, we believe that AGOA has enhanced regional economic progress and stability, and improved the business environment to the benefit of both African and American firms. It is for these reasons that Congress passed AGOA and has expanded or improved it on four occasions, and it is why President Obama has affirmed that renewal of AGOA is a top priority for his Administration.

"That said, AGOA's full promise remains to be fulfilled. There is so much more that it can achieve.

"The task before us now - and I mean before all of AGOA's stakeholders: U.S. and African governments, farmers, manufacturers and businesses, civil society - is to think thoughtfully about how we can meet AGOA's untapped potential.

"How do we make AGOA work better? The AGOA Forum is the perfect platform to discuss our shared goals on AGOA post-2015. We will have time to discuss these issues this morning and over the course of the next two days.

"So at this point, I could conclude with a quotation from President Obama, but I think it's best if I let him speak for himself. Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States, Barack Obama."