

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 12, 2013

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General  
U.S. Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), enacted in 2000, seeks to encourage African countries to further open their economies and build free markets in hopes of achieving economic development, increasing new investments, trade and job creation throughout the continent. The original, as well as subsequent legislation, sought to promote these goals by reducing U.S. tariffs for most products exported from eligible sub-Saharan African countries, including apparel, and providing economic development assistance and aid.

Issues of primary interest to policy makers include the effectiveness of AGOA in enhancing economic development in sub-Saharan Africa, the ability of African businesses to utilize the full range of opportunities available under AGOA, and the efficacy of AGOA in increasing two-way U.S.-sub-Saharan African trade. As AGOA comes up for renewal in 2015, we request that GAO conduct a study reviewing the following issues:

1. How has AGOA contributed to economic growth and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa?
2. Have U.S. trade capacity-building programs improved sub-Saharan African countries' economic competitiveness and diversification? If so, to what extent?
3. How have AGOA and U.S. trade capacity-building programs improved regional integration within sub-Saharan Africa and integration of sub-Saharan countries into global supply chains?
4. Is a lack of infrastructure development, including in the energy sector, preventing sub-Saharan African countries from fully utilizing AGOA? If so, to what extent? Can measures under AGOA and other U.S. programs further improve infrastructure development?
5. What steps have AGOA-eligible countries taken to utilize and maximize the effectiveness of AGOA within their respective countries?
6. To what extent has the AGOA eligibility and certification process supported reform efforts and rule of law objectives in sub-Saharan African countries?
7. How have actions by Brazil, Russia, India and China (the BRICs) and the European Union (EU) in Africa, including the imposition of EU Economic Partnership Agreements and bilateral trade initiatives, such as the EU-South Africa Trade, Development, and Cooperation Agreement, affected the effectiveness of AGOA?

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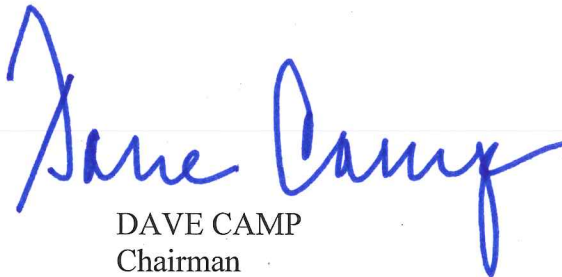
8. Section 116(a) of AGOA provides that "Congress declares that free trade agreements should be negotiated, where feasible, with interested countries in sub-Saharan Africa, in order to serve as the catalyst for increasing trade between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa and increasing private sector investment in sub-Saharan Africa." Are there impediments to the participation of AGOA countries in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations, including trade agreement negotiations with the United States and at the World Trade Organization? If so, please identify them.
9. To what extent has the AGOA Forum facilitated the achievement of AGOA's objectives?
10. What factors have affected AGOA's ability to increase two-way trade and investment flows between sub-Saharan Africa and the United States?
11. What changes or additions to AGOA would enhance its ability to stimulate economic growth and development and increase two-way trade and investment between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa?

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Nilmini Rubin at Nilmini.Rubin@mail.house.gov, Geoff Antell at Geoffrey.Antell@mail.house.gov, Chris Landberg at Chris\_Landberg@foreign.senate.gov, and Chelsea Thomas at Chelsea\_Thomas@finance.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



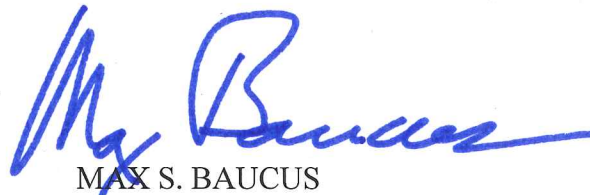
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