



AGOA FORUM

Washington, D.C.

September 22-26, 2016

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Executive Director

The AmCham Cameroon led a delegation of business representatives to the 15th annual Sub Saharan African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum on September 26, 2016 in Washington D.C. The AGOA legislation provides opportunities for preferential trade tariffs to more than 40 Sub Saharan African countries. There are more than 6000 articles that are eligible for export under the AGOA agreement. This report summarizes the best practices and strategies that were discussed for utilizing AGOA.

Proceedings

On almost everyone's mind were the modest gains made under AGOA since the year 2000, and the imperative to re-negotiate and restructure requirements that are consistent and sensitive with country objectives. During the *invitation only* VIP lunch on **Financing Solutions for Major Infrastructure**, Madame Linda Thomas Greenfield, Secretary of State for African Affairs, Export-Import Bank President, Mr. Fred P. Hochberg, Millennium Challenge Corporation, CEO, Ms. Dana Hyde, and Acrow Bridges, President, Mr. Paul Sullivan spoke with AmCham President Nicholas Achiri and Executive Director Charmian Penda on the eleven municipal water systems and other large projects, slated for Cameroon. This luncheon provided an ideal platform for the Cameroonian authorities, who were scheduled to present on trade and investment policies, to defend the economic potential of Cameroon.

On one hand, the emphatic absence of the Cameroon public sector at the forum, ended as a missed opportunity to engage with AGOA Eligible Sub- Saharan African countries, the U.S. government, the U.S. private sector and U.S. financing institutions. On the other hand, we

were able to capitalize on making introductions for our delegates and marketing Amcham Cameroon as a most formidable intermediary in the USA to Cameroon corridor of business.

Recommendations from the forum

(1) Need African governments to cover the infrastructure deficit because investment flows in infrastructure are not where they need to be. Also needed, are environments that enable SMES and women to take advantage of AGOA which are critical underpinnings of job creation and poverty alleviation according to Ambassador Michael Froman (United States Trade Representative). Additionally, SMEs need coaching and monitoring through the export process as well as the creation of a database of AWEPP (African Women Entrepreneur Program).

(2) Incentivize and encourage American companies to invest in AGOA and add value to raw materials. African Development Bank needs a specific AGOA program to access US market and should make known the American institutions that can provide funding and /or technical assistance within AGOA to exporters and implementation committees.

(3) African countries need to identify their competitive advantage and harmonize regulations within economic communities.

Recommendations for Cameroon

(1) Given its vision and energy on the potential positive result of doing business in Cameroon, the GRC authorities might have made a presentation on the PM's AGOA council activities to date in Cameroon with respect to the textile, handicraft and agricultural sectors, which are the principal areas of export (hors Petroleum) under AGOA. Furthermore, they should make reforms that render Cameroon an attractive business environment for American businesses.

(2) Focus on a singular sector/service or product for export as Ghana, Kenya, Cote D'Ivoire and Ethiopia have been able to achieve. Taking this measure may help advance cross-border business flows in tandem with remediation of high transportation costs.

(3) Build and sustain partnerships with US Trade Partners to reduce technical barriers, certification requirements and sanitary measures. AGOA Trade hubs can facilitate the latter.

- **United States Agency for International Development,**
- **United States Trade Representative,**
- **US Department of State,**
- **US Department of Agriculture,**

- **US Department of Commerce**
- **Export-Import Bank of the United States**
- **Millennium Challenge Corporation**
- **Overseas Private Investment Corporation**

Conclusion

According to the experts, Africa is set to become a manufacturing powerhouse. The recent AGOA extension provides predictability if supply side issues are addressed to boost competitiveness. Many African nations have benefited from AGOA and it would be a pity if Cameroon was unable to capitalize on the extended legislation through 2015 and beyond.

AmCham Delegation

- *Nicholas Achiri Asangwe, President*
- *Charmian Penda, Executive Director*
- *Guy Honore Tchente, Conseils Fiscaux Associes*
- *James Chona, Comatrans*
- *James Epo, The Law Office Epo*
- *Ngu Chris Akong, Glomae*
- *Simon Ntonsengeh, Glomae*
- *Paul Anumu, Abaapcam*
- *Mathurin Tchouaga, Leroy Baulieu*
- *Joseph Anchang, Onambele-Anchang Law Firm*

ANNEX LIST OF PANELISTS & PERSONALITIES WHICH TOOK PART

- Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary of the State for African Affairs
- Ambassador Michael Froman, U.S. Trade Representative
- Dana Hyde, CEO, MCC
- H.E Fatima Acyl, Trade Commissioner, African Affairs
- H.E. Rob Davies, Minister of Trade & Industry, South Africa
- H.E. Axel Marcel Addy, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Liberia
- H.E. Usha Dwarka-Canabady, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mauritius
- H.E. Jean-Louis Billon, ,Minister of Commerce, Craft, and SME Promotion, Cote D'Ivoire
- H.E.Francois Kanimba, Minister of trade and Industry, Rwanda
- H.E. Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson, African Union Commission
- Hon. Adan Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary Industry Trade, & Cooperatives, Kenya
- Hon. Amb. Amina Mohammed, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Kenya
- Hon. Mansour Sy Minister of labor Senegal
- Hon. Alioune Sarr, Minister of Trade, Senegal Rachel Ebaneth, President, AWEP-Gabon
- Dr. Frannie Leautier, Senior Vice-President, African Development Bank(AFDB)
- Arun Kumar, Director General of U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service & Assistant Secretary for Global Markets, U.S. Department of Commerce

- Fred Oladeinde, President, Foundation for Democracy in Africa
- Leocadia Zack, Director, USTDA
- Paul Sullivan, Vice President of International Business Development, Acrow Bridges
- Cathy Novelli, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, energy, and the Environment
- Oren Whyche-Shaw, Deputy Assistant Administrator, USAID
- Augusto Lopez Claros, Director, Global Indicators Group, World Bank
- Anthony Carroll, Senior Associate, CSIS
- Cynthia Whittenburg, Deputy Executive Assistant Commissioner, U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP)
- Gayle Smith, Administrator, USAID
- Stepenette Deddeh Snoh-Taylor, Manager, New World Finance/YALI Fellow
- Megan Rapp, Africa Regional Team Lead, USAID Development Credit Authority
- Abdulai Abdul-Rahman, Head of SME Scale Enterprises, Ecobank Ghana
- Mark Linscott, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for WTO & Multilateral Affairs
- Moona Mupotola, Director, Regional Integration and Trade Division African Development Bank
- Temitope Iluyemi, Associate Director, SSA Global Government Relations, Proctor & Gamble
- Representative Ed Royce, Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee (9)
- Representative Jason Smith, Member, House Ways and Means Committee (R)