



**United States Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum  
(Africa Growth and Opportunity Act)**

**25 July 2024 - Washington DC**

**Organised Labour Read Out: AGOA Forum**

**\*Read by ITUC-Africa President Martha Molema at the AGOA Ministerial  
Opening Ceremony\***

For the second year, the AGOA Forum has included Organised Labour. We appreciate the efforts of the Biden Administration to continue this important precedent set in Johannesburg ensuring workers have a clear voice in shaping the future of AGOA.

Working class communities face daunting challenges, from climate change and food insecurity to the absence of jobs for young women across Africa, to the inspirational wave of U.S. workers organizing at major multinational companies in the face of employer repression.

AGOA has supported millions of jobs from clothing factories in Lesotho to farms in Kenya. It has spurred integration with auto parts manufactured in Cote D'Ivoire and Botswana for vehicles assembled in South Africa destined for the US.

It is a mutually beneficial relationship supporting economic growth, investment and jobs in both America and Africa. Whilst we welcome the support AGOA offers Africa, we are concerned that exports remain dominated by petroleum and minerals.

Organised Labour is diverse but united in support of AGOA and believe it's critical that:

- We encourage the U.S. Congress to expedite the renewal of AGOA with necessary enhancements to advance workers' rights, increase utilisation rates, and diversify the products exported.
- Negotiations on a renewed AGOA must include input from workers and their trade unions and not just on fair labour practices.
- Measures to strengthen decent work and fair labour practices should be pursued in full compliance with the International Labour Organisation's fundamental labour Conventions.
- New enforcement tools should be embraced, including a facility-specific mechanism that can rapidly address non-compliance with labor standards by companies who receive AGOA benefits.
- Promotion of responsible business conduct where investors and companies lead by example and ensure value chains embrace workers' rights.
- Additional support for emerging African sectors to exploit AGOA's opportunities; including finance, logistics, and infrastructure.
- The scope of products AGOA covers be reviewed and extended.



- Finally, a renewed AGOA must complement the African Continental Free Trade Area.

The AGOA Forum is an important part of the journey to renew and enhance AGOA and strengthening bonds between our peoples. This momentum must be accelerated.

Organised labour will continue to work with government and business in support of an early renewal and to place the needs of workers, job creation, decent work, and sustainable economic development at the centre of a new AGOA. Thank you.