



we wear® our mission

August 4, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) – the national trade association for the apparel and footwear industry and its suppliers – I am writing to urge you to work closely with Congress to achieve expeditious renewal of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

Representing more than 1,000 world famous name brands, AAFA is the trusted public policy and political voice of the apparel and footwear industry, its management and shareholders, its four million U.S. workers, and its contribution of \$350 billion in annual U.S. retail sales.

The fate of AGOA is necessarily a core element of the conversations that will take place this week as African heads of state and U.S. and African business leaders meet with you and your team. During your discussions, I ask that you keep four key points in mind which we and like-minded business groups have endorsed.

First, AGOA should be renewed as soon as possible. The legislation expires in less than 13 months. While that may seem like an eternity in the legislative area, it is an instant for executives who must source materials globally. Decisions are being made today for products that will be delivered after AGOA's scheduled expiration. Every day of delay reinforces the belief that the extension of AGOA and many other trade programs are on life support.

Second, when AGOA is renewed, it should be renewed on the longest possible terms. Short term renewals stifle the kind of long term trade and investment decisions that are key to African economic development. We recommend no less than 15 years.

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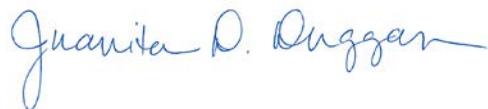
Third, flexible rules of origin (ROO), such as the third country fabric provision, must be renewed for the entire length of the program. All footwear imports and 95 percent of apparel imports trade under these state of the art rules. Without them, AGOA loses its relevance for our industry.

Fourth, these ROOs should be extended equally to all AGOA beneficiaries. Having a ROO that applies to some countries, but not to all, creates an unnecessary and complicated dynamic that also segments Africa at a time when we are trying to encourage regional integration.

Mr. President, I know you share our view that now is the time to strengthen and expand trade and investment linkages with Africa. Swiftly renewing AGOA along these four principles will create a sustainable U.S. - African trade partnership that will benefit Americans and Africans for decades to come.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Juanita D. Duggan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Juanita D. Duggan
President & CEO