



## U.S. and African Companies Applaud Senate Vote and Ask House to Vote As Soon As Possible to Renew AGOA

May 18, 2015

Apparel and footwear manufacturers, brands, and retailers applaud the overwhelming U.S. Senate action to renew AGOA, which plays a vital role in the development and support of a competitive U.S.-African textile, apparel and footwear trade partnership. This long-term AGOA renewal is a critical step to develop a broader reciprocal commercial relationship with AGOA countries. AGOA has created more than 350,000 direct jobs in apparel production in Africa and an estimated 100,000 jobs in the U.S. Originally enacted in 2000, AGOA continues to enjoy widespread bipartisan support. With the Senate vote of 97 to 1 to approve extension, we ask the House to move quickly on renewal.

Representing the apparel and footwear manufacturing, brand, and retail industries in Africa and the United States, we urge the House to vote as soon as possible to extend the AGOA program:

**Immediate renewal:** AGOA must be renewed as soon as possible. Because sourcing decisions are made many months in advance, any delay in passage will discourage continued sourcing and new investment, and will result in the loss of trade and jobs in both Africa and the U.S. In 2012, 30,000 jobs were eliminated in Africa because Congress waited until the last minute to renew the AGOA third country fabric rule of origin. That number is sure to grow because many more jobs—both in Africa and the U.S.—are now at stake. These sourcing decisions are actually happening now as Congress is set to vote on the extension.

**Long-term renewal:** Renewal of AGOA for ten years will ensure the predictability necessary to support trade and investment decisions. This will support the industry's capital-intensive investments and maintain long-term sourcing partnership decisions.

Our organizations are committed to working with other stakeholders to achieve these objectives to support African trade and development, as well as the U.S. jobs that depend on that trade partnership.

**African Cotton and Textile Industries Federation (ACTIF)** is the leading representative of the AGOA apparel industry in Africa. ACTIF's members are from the cotton-textiles-apparel value chain in: Botswana, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Representing more than 1,000 world famous name brands, the **American Apparel & Footwear Association (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 \$360 billion in annual U.S. retail sales. AAFA stands at the forefront as a leader of positive change for the apparel and

footwear industry. With integrity and purpose, AAFA delivers a unified voice on key legislative and regulatory issues. AAFA enables a collaborative forum to promote best practices and innovation. AAFA's comprehensive work ensures the continued success and growth of the apparel and footwear industry, its suppliers, and its customers. Learn more about how AAFA wears its mission at [www.wewear.org](http://www.wewear.org).

Founded in 1944, the **Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA)** is the largest, most effective and respected footwear trade association in the US. It represents 80% of the footwear industry, including over 130 of the industry's leading retailers and importers and over 200 brands. FDRA advocates on behalf of its members in Washington, DC—working to lower tariffs on footwear and push new trade agreements like TPP. FDRA is also the industry's thought leader and intelligence hub on footwear customs, product safety, sourcing and social compliance challenges, trade, sales data, as well as consumer trends. Learn more at [www.fdra.org](http://www.fdra.org)

**National Retail Federation (NRF)** is the world's largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. Retail is the nation's largest private sector employer, supporting one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.6 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation's economy. NRF's This is Retail campaign highlights the industry's opportunities for life-long careers, how retailers strengthen communities, and the critical role that retail plays in driving innovation.

**Outdoor Industry Association (OIA)** is a national trade association whose mission is to ensure the growth and success of the outdoor industry. OIA provides trade services for over 4000 manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, sales representatives and retailers in the outdoor industry. OIA programs include representation in government/legislative affairs, market and social research, business-to-business services and youth outreach initiatives. Educational events include the annual Rendezvous, Outdoor University, and the Capitol Summit. Outdoor Industry Association is based in Boulder, Colorado, and is the title sponsor of the Outdoor Retailer tradeshow. For more information go to [www.outdoorindustry.org](http://www.outdoorindustry.org) or call 303.444.3353.

**The Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA)** is the trade association of the world's largest and most innovative retail companies. Retail executives choose RILA's unique collaborative forums, effective public policy advocacy, and premier educational events to advance excellence throughout the retail industry. RILA members include more than 200 retailers, product manufacturers, and service suppliers, which together account for more than \$1.5 trillion in annual sales, provide millions of jobs and more than 100,000 stores, manufacturing facilities, and distribution centers domestically and abroad.

**The United States Fashion Industry Association (USFIA)** represents textile and apparel brands, retailers, importers, and wholesalers based in the United States and doing business globally. Founded in 1989 as the United States Association of Importers of Textiles & Apparel with the goal of eliminating the global apparel quota system, USFIA now works to eliminate the tariff and non-tariff barriers that impede the industry's ability to trade freely and create economic opportunities in the United States and abroad. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., USFIA is the voice of the fashion industry in front of the U.S. government as well as international governments and stakeholders.