



Weekly Special Report



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INSIDE

Clinton Africa Trip Seen Offering Opportunities

By James Fisher-Thompson
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's August 4–14, seven-nation trip to Africa presents a good opportunity to build on development partnerships set out by President Obama during his recent visit to the continent, says former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Walter Kansteiner.

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Secretary of State Hillary Clinton meets with then-Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma of South Africa in March 2009 in Washington.

McDermott: AGOA Forum Promotes Important Economic Interaction

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Nairobi, Kenya — An annual conference such as the Eighth AGOA Forum is important because it allows Americans and Africans to openly discuss trade issues, make improvements and address any problems in their trade relationships.

U.S. Representative



U.S. Representative James McDermott, shown addressing Congress in 2005, is known informally by many as "the father of AGOA."

James McDermott made that point in an August 3 interview with America.gov. McDermott, who has spent 21 years in the U.S. Congress, was in Nairobi awaiting the opening of the Eighth United States –Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Forum, August 4–6, also known as the

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Clinton Africa Trip Seen Offering Opportunities . . .

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Clinton's first official trip to Africa as secretary of state includes an initial stop in Kenya to attend the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum followed by visits to South Africa, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Liberia and Cape Verde.

Kansteiner said he believes Clinton's meeting with top South African officials is especially timely. "What a wonderful opportunity she has to really open up that dialogue with the new South African government as a representative of the new American government.

"This is really a clean slate in U.S. relations with not only South Africa but all of sub-Saharan Africa," Kansteiner told America.gov. "And it was facilitated by President Obama, who in his speech in Ghana approached the continent with a message of hope as well as understanding for its economic and political challenges."

Kansteiner was assistant secretary of state for African affairs under President George W. Bush from 2001 to 2003. As a founding member of the Scowcroft Group, an international business advisory firm, he helped broker the \$1.3 billion privatization of Telkom South Africa, one of the largest privatizations in Africa, and continues to advise corporations on mergers, acquisitions and privatizations on the continent.

Obama's July 11 address to Ghana's Parliament is "one of the best speeches I've ever heard a

president of the United States make concerning Africa," the former diplomat said.

"It was forthright and honest. It challenged the Africans, telling them how it was, and explained where the U.S. was on helping them overcome poverty. So I think it was a very good launch pad for this administration's ability to work and be a partner with Africa." (See Obama's Speech in Ghana (<http://www.america.gov/st/texttrans-english/2009/July/20090711110050abretnuh0.1079783.html&distid=ucs>).)

In Accra, Obama reiterated the \$3.5 billion pledge he made at the G8 meeting in Italy to improve agriculture and food security in Africa. But he said that, in return, he expected African leaders to fight corruption and create an enabling environment for business because "development depends on good governance."

Professor Peter Pham, an Africanist who teaches political science at James Madison University and has completed a book about the rebirth of Liberia, also touched on the importance of Clinton's trip.

"I think it's a very significant visit," he told America.gov. "Africa is increasingly being recognized as important to U.S. strategic interests, and so it's very important that the secretary of state and other senior U.S. officials acknowledge this fact publicly with visits such as this."

Pham said Obama's "personal history" of an African father and now to be the first African-American elected U.S. president, "as well as

steps he has already taken to aid development in Africa, like a request for increased funding for the Millennium Challenge Corporation [MCC], send the right signals that America takes the continent seriously."

Another program making a difference, Pham said, is AGOA, the trade act that grants duty-free access to U.S. markets from African countries that liberalize their economies.

Since it was passed by Congress in 2000, AGOA has proved "extraordinarily important to business development on the continent," Pham said. "We've seen its positive results in helping Africans expand their businesses in a number of places, like Lesotho and Swaziland, where employment in the textile industry has increased severalfold and exports to the United States upwards toward 700 percent from a decade ago.

"So AGOA is certainly emphasizing the right things: that trade — finding Africa's unique position in the global economy and integrating it are key to sustained development and prosperity," Pham concluded.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

McDermott: AGOA Forum Promotes Important Economic Interaction . . .

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AGOA Forum for the U.S. African Growth and Opportunity Act.

McDermott, whom many often informally call “the father of AGOA,” said the fact that top members of President Obama’s Cabinet will be attending, such as Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, sends a signal of Africa’s importance to the United States.

“Now we will find out what some of the problems are that we can go back and try to correct or facilitate a solution to. That is why, when we wrote the original bill, it was in the original legislation ... that every year there was to be a meeting between the leaders of Africa and the United States so that they had some kind of mechanism to bring their complaints or problems ... to our attention.”

McDermott, a Democrat who represents Seattle, Washington, in the Pacific Northwest, further illustrated his point: “I was in Seattle one day [years ago] when the heads of 17 or 18 Asian countries came to meet the [U.S.] president. I had an opportunity to watch when the president and the other leaders got together ... and all the meetings that go on around the edges where the work gets done. ... My belief is that if you don’t facilitate that and make it sort of a formal thing, it does not happen.

“So that is why we built it into the legislation that we thought there should be a yearly conference where people can come and say how things are going — they can say good things and ... bad things. So that is why I come, because I

think it is important to come out and listen.”

McDermott, who serves in the U.S. House of Representatives on the powerful Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction over all revenue-raising measures and a number of important social programs, noted that he is not a businessman and knows little about economic development.

But to further explain his interest in the AGOA Forum, he said, “I love Africa and I look for ideas to make things work, and this conference is important for that.”

Since AGOA’s inception in 2000 as part of the Trade and Development Act, U.S.-Africa trade ties have become closer and deeper, he said.

Before AGOA, he said, “there simply was no one [Americans in large numbers] doing business over here,” outside of certain natural resource and extractive industries, “nothing of a value-added” nature.

“It seemed to me that we ought to start [some business and trade], and that is now going on. There are some countries that are not doing it [taking advantage of AGOA], and ... sometimes it has to do with corrupt leadership or a variety of situations, but the fact is that AGOA has worked in some countries.”

McDermott acknowledged that as a trade preference program for Africa — which has been revised and improved many times since its inception — AGOA can be viewed like a glass, as being half full or half empty, depending on your perspective. But, he said, overall, it has

worked and is working to expand and deepen U.S.-Africa trade ties.

In those countries that have not benefited from AGOA, McDermott said, people often say, “Those people have got something going that we haven’t got. What do we have to do to get that?”

Commenting on the importance of transparency, McDermott recalled that he was in Ghana in 1961 when there was “tremendous hope all over the continent as the countries became independent. ... The hopefulness at that time was tremendous!

“Then African leadership ... squandered that,” he said. “But now they are fighting their way back. You can see some countries where they have gotten back on their feet — Ghana, Senegal, Rwanda” and several others where things are starting to work.

What has been a required part of that fight, he said, is the acceptance of transparency and the rule of law.

“Nobody wants to come out here and put a bunch of money on the ground and then find out that it has been stolen or that you can’t get it out” of the country, he said.

McDermott said that around 1994, when the World Trade Organization trade policy was being discussed in the Congress, he asked what it would do for Africa.

He said the answer was “nothing,” so he pressed for language in the implementation legislation to push

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Byliner: U.S. Trade Representative on U.S.-African Growth Partnership

This commentary by U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk was published August 3 in several Kenyan newspapers and is in the public domain. There are no republication restrictions.

(begin byliner)

Toward a New U.S.-African Partnership on Trade and Development

By Ron Kirk

In his address to the Ghanaian Parliament last month, President Obama laid out his vision for a new U.S.-African partnership, one that includes "supporting development that provides opportunity for more people."

This week in Nairobi, I will attend the 8th African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum, as will Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, senior U.S. and African officials, and representatives of the private sector and civil society. At the Forum, we will discuss ways to advance the U.S.-Africa partnership on trade and development.

AGOA, which was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in 2000, eliminates duties on almost everything eligible African countries export to the United States. It also provides a framework for U.S.-African cooperation on economic issues.

The theme of this year's AGOA Forum is "Realizing the Full Potential of AGOA through Expansion of Trade and Investment."

This is a difficult time for exporters around the world, and Africa is no

exception. I am committed to finding new solutions to the challenges facing African exporters and new ways to realize the potential of AGOA.

This is the first AGOA Forum of the Obama Administration, and it is an opportune time to discuss new strategies that can build on AGOA's achievements and set a new path for U.S.-Africa trade and investment.

Here are some key considerations that I think should be taken into account as we move forward:

We need to find new and more effective ways to promote African competitiveness. The experience of developing countries in Asia suggests that African countries need to expand and diversify their trade in order to generate and sustain economic growth. Africans can become more competitive internationally by improving the business environment in their countries and nurturing entrepreneurial initiative, including through simplification and modernization of border procedures. An ambitious and balanced outcome of the World Trade Organization's Doha Round negotiations could also help Africa to reap more benefits from the global trading system.

The challenge in improving AGOA is utilization. AGOA has helped to grow and diversify U.S.-African trade. African exports to the United States now include apparel, footwear, processed food products, and other value-added products. Still, we know that more can be done to expand AGOA trade across more countries and more product sectors. The answer is not expanding the list of AGOA products - almost eve-

rything is already covered - but in increasing the utilization of AGOA. We will do our part by providing trade-related technical assistance. African governments and businesses can help to make the most of AGOA by developing joint export development strategies in specific product sectors.

A healthy, sustainable U.S.-Africa relationship must be built on expanded trade in both directions. Thanks to AGOA, the U.S. market - the largest single-country market for African goods - is more open to African products than ever before. Africans can help to put our long-term trade and investment relationship on a stronger footing by intensifying efforts to address trade barriers affecting U.S. exporters in their countries. We will need to work together to find ways to level the playing field for U.S. exporters and increase two-way trade.

Regional economic integration is critical to Africa's future. Last October, the leaders of more than two dozen African countries committed to work toward a regional free trade area stretching from the Mediterranean to the Cape of Good Hope. These and other efforts toward regional integration hold the promise of boosting intra-regional trade and improving investment prospects in Africa, as well as African competitiveness. The United States will work with African regional organizations and their member countries to support these initiatives.

Aid for Trade must be a priority for both donors and beneficiary countries. The Obama Administration is committed to supporting trade capacity building assistance, also

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Regional Reforms Increasing African Trade

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Nairobi, Kenya — The East and Central Africa (ECA) Global Competitiveness Hub, one of four such U.S.-sponsored African trade offices, is promoting greater U.S.-Africa trade as well as increased African regional trade. It has directly closed at least \$29 million in trade deals since its creation in 2003.

The ECA Hub, located in Nairobi, is operated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Other U.S. trade hubs — located in Dakar, Senegal; Accra, Ghana; and Gaborone, Botswana — have directly closed, collectively, more than \$135 million in trade deals since their inception earlier this decade.

Three USAID employees based in Nairobi — Stephanie Wilcock, regional trade adviser; Larry Meserve, deputy regional director; and Kim Wylie, development outreach and communications specialist — sat down with America.gov August 1 to discuss the operation of the ECA Hub.

All three were gearing up for the Eighth United States–Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, which takes place this year in Nairobi, Kenya, August 4–6. The meeting is also known as the AGOA Forum named after the U.S. African Growth and Opportu-



Dried goods vendor Omar Diop adjusts his wares in a market on the outskirts of Dakar, Senegal. Dakar, one of the most popular destinations in West Africa, is alive with markets, music clubs and vibrant street life. Dakar also hosts one of several U.S. regional trade hubs in sub-Saharan Africa.

nity Act.

Since 2003, the ECA Hub has worked with hundreds of firms and has been responsible for millions of dollars' worth of exports to the United States, under AGOA in particular.

Beneficiary companies such as Kenana Knitters of Kenya have tripled their work forces and are now selling their creative products in the United States and, in particular, to the prestigious U.S. retailer Saks Fifth Avenue.

Gahaya Links of Rwanda has been able to create more than 3,000 jobs by producing and exporting decorative baskets to the giant U.S. re-

tailer Macy's.

Other firms, such as Novastar Garments of Ethiopia, and Phenix Logistics, which makes organic cotton apparel in Uganda, have also now penetrated the U.S. market, thanks to the ECA trade hub.

Wilcock said the ECA trade hub staff holds numerous workshops to "educate" those across the region on how to qualify their products for export to the United States under the U.S. AGOA trade preference program. They also help identify business firms that might have export potential to the United States and take some African firms to U.S.

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trade shows to help them market their wares to American buyers.

She said the hub — which is now working with an increased budget — is also now coordinating closely with private sector businesses across the region to lobby African lawmakers to further streamline the regional trade process.

“Having focused initially on AGOA, I think all of these hubs have expanded and realized that there are a number of barriers in taking advantage of AGOA, and those come in the form of a poor business climate, high transport costs and high energy costs,” Wilcock explained.

Turning again to her Nairobi hub, Wilcock said it “focused a lot on AGOA at first but then quickly diversified into programs designed to expedite transport” from the region to reduce costs.

Illustrating her point, she said “At Malaba — the major rail customs border point between Uganda and Kenya — we worked to reduce clearance time by introducing a one-stop clearance process where both sides clear products together rather than separately.”

That, she said, has dramatically reduced clearance time from three days to three hours and has thus saved time and costs for everyone. That same process, she said, is now also being applied to truck traffic.

Meserve said the ECA Hub is now working with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and other regional eco-

nomics commissions to reduce trade barriers and “bring out more com-

mon policies” from which everyone can benefit.

That includes promoting regional transit facilitation and encouraging common tariffs and one-stop border posts, he said. Most countries work bilaterally and so cannot do that, he explained.

“The hub’s value-added” contribution, he said, “is bringing in a regional problem-solving approach and clearing barriers to trade.”

The use of common regional systems, he said, actually has “significantly reduced the transit time for goods in shipment and, with that, the actual cost of doing business. We are working with the ports too, with the East African Freight Forwarders Association, to help standardize procedures and certification processes to professionalize their systems,” he said.

Traders are forced to purchase a bond in each country where goods are transshipped, guaranteeing that those products will not be sold in that country. Clearance of those bonds can take up to a year.

Wilcock said it is estimated that up to \$500 million in scarce capital is locked up in this bonding system. If a regional approach can be adopted, much of that scarce capital would be available for other investments.

Wilcock said there are competitiveness arguments mandating the need for taking a regional approach to trade. “For transit, it makes a big difference for your global competi-

tiveness level,” she said.

Such a regional approach is also

helpful in the area of financial services and transaction costs, she added, which tend in sub-Saharan Africa to be “some of the highest in the world. . . . If you can scale-up with financial integration on a regional basis, you can reduce those transaction costs” and make those goods more competitive.

Those costs are especially pertinent in the area of cotton and textiles, she explained, where different parts of the supply chain exist in different countries.

“Kenya is a big apparel producer, Tanzania has cotton and lint production, cotton is grown in Uganda, and garment trims are produced in other countries,” she said. Individual country tariffs present huge additional costs to the end products, she said, and thus make them less competitive.

Kim Wylie, USAID’s development outreach and communications specialist in Nairobi, said that, ultimately, “if regional trade increases, if poverty is reduced and an African middle-class is created, think of the market that there would be for African products just in Africa, and that will spur even more economic growth and development across the continent.”

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Africans Must Use Trade to Fight Economic Crisis, Kenyan Says

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Nairobi, Kenya — Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga, representing the host nation, officially opened the civil-society and private-sector sessions of the Eighth AGOA Forum on August 4 with the traditional Swahili welcome, "Karibu," and called for Africa to trade its way out of the global economic crisis.

In a keynote speech before the combined opening session, which included African ministers, Odinga said that "for Africa, the global recession is particularly challenging: It adds to our growing crisis in water, food, energy" and impedes long-term economic growth and development.

"For tens of millions [of Africans], even a small drop in income can put them on the edge of survival," he said.

As difficult as times are, however, there are chances of "immense opportunity," he added, and he called for new ways to attack problems "which cannot be addressed through conventional efforts."

All Africans agree, he said: "We must trade our way out of this crisis."

Odinga told his audience at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in Nairobi that Africans are "most fortunate" to have as their partner as they try to find new ways to attack their economic problems a new U.S. presidential administration that is also exploring new ideas and has shown strong support for the continent.



*Kenyan Prime Minister
Raila Odinga*

retary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who would arrive later in Nairobi to attend the Eighth AGOA Forum as the first stop on her historic seven-nation Africa trip.

"There was a time," Odinga said, "where we sought aid to resolve our economic development needs." But now Africans see more international and regional trade as a viable solution, he said, particularly in light of the global economic crisis and the subsequent decline in international investment.

Africans embrace trade with "renewed vigor" as the means to achieve long-term economic growth and development, he said.

Odinga praised the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which was passed in its original form in 2000 as a trade preference program for the import of African goods into the U.S. market, as a catalyst, but said it is too early to claim full success for the law.

He called on Africans to increase the quality and quantity of their export products for both international and regional markets. "Only then

"Never before has an American president and a secretary of state visited our continent so early in their tenure," he told the delegates, before going on to publicly thank Sec-

can we become significant global actors — economically and politically — to make maximum use of AGOA opportunities."

In 2008, he said, the United States imported \$93 billion in apparel, but only \$1 billion of it came from Africa. He said that is because most African production comes from small and medium-sized producers who have trouble filling large orders for the United States.

While Africa moves to remedy that problem, he said, it must also focus on expanding regional trade, which still remains "pitifully small."

"We must create our own export strategies and focus strongly on intra-African trade. That is where there is immense potential," he said.

Odinga called on Africans to create their own African version of the AGOA Forum and, to a rousing round of applause, asked why it is not possible to open borders across Africa for the free flow of goods and trade.

He said it is easier for someone to travel many nations across Europe than it is for an African businessman to travel from Nigeria to Kenya.

"Why don't we open our own markets here?" he asked the delegates.

The African market is 800 million consumers strong, he said, but if borders are closed or overly restrictive, African businesses cannot do business and expand, and African economies cannot grow.

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Civil Society, Private Sector Important to AGOA

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Nairobi, Kenya — The role of civil society groups and the private sector in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) forums and the AGOA process is more important than ever, U.S. Ambassador to Kenya Michael Ranneberger said August 4.

Addressing the combined opening session for the civil society and private sector forums at the eighth annual United States-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, known as the AGOA Forum, Ranneberger said while both groups have always participated in AGOA meetings, “your role now is more timely and important than ever.”

“Economic development and democratic institutions are inextricably linked,” he explained. There are many reasons why some nations in sub-Saharan Africa are failing to take advantage of the trade preference terms offered under AGOA, he said, and those reasons center on a lack of transparency, weak anti-corruption efforts and the need for stronger democratic institutions.

One key area to be discussed at the forum, he told the delegates, is how to energize the relationship between civil society and the private sector.

“That relationship must embrace the spirit of frank and constructive dialogue if it is to succeed,” he said. “Private sector and civil society bear a responsibility to speak truth to power to encourage and press for the economic and political reforms necessary to promote economic development and democratic



U.S. Ambassador to Kenya Michael Ranneberger

stability.”
Civil society and the private sector must play broad roles, he said, “helping to ensure that free and fair trade exists and that policymakers are held accountable for their actions in a transparent process, especially with respect to trade and governance policies that negatively affect producers and consumers.”

Ranneberger quoted President Obama in explaining why civil society is so important, noting that the rule of law, civil participation and the need to find concrete solutions to eliminate corruption are of major importance.

The presence at the forum of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton; the U.S. trade representative, Ambassador Ron Kirk; other Cabinet-rank officials; and members of the U.S. Congress, he said, “underscores the importance we attach to AGOA as a means to foster economic development.”

Ranneberger praised remarks by Secretary Clinton at a different forum session that highlighted the particularly important role women play as “drivers” of economic growth and democratic stability.

He also praised U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) efforts that are assisting women’s groups in East Africa to access U.S.

markets through the AGOA program. Gahaya Links of Rwanda, which is exporting baskets to the U.S. retailer Macy’s, and Kenana Knitters of Kenya, which is exporting its knitted goods and novelties to the United States, are just two of the many success stories, he said.

Ranneberger told the delegates, which also included African government officials, that “the crisis that Kenya experienced last year highlighted the key role which civil society and the private sector can and must play.

“Civil society, the private sector and the media all came together in an historic way to exert influence to promote peaceful pressure to reach a political solution and to develop a far-reaching reform agenda to deal with the underlying problem which fuelled the crisis.”

Full implementation of that reform agenda, he told the delegates, is “absolutely essential. Failure to do so is one factor holding back economic recovery and full exploitation of the opportunities offered by AGOA.”

Ranneberger applauded the “courageous work” that civil society groups and the private sector are doing across Africa.

“I urge you all to use your deliberation today to explore the relationship between economic development and strong democratic institutions, to examine the relevance for AGOA and to develop constructive recommendations,” he said.

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Civil Society, Private Sector Important to AGOA . . .

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"I want to assure you that your voices are heard throughout the conference and the United States and that your input will most definitely be used to improve the impact of the [AGOA] program."

Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga

officially opened the one-day civil society and private sector sessions as the representative of the host nation.

Secretary of State Clinton will address a ministerial session that begins August 5. Her arrival in Kenya will mark the first stop on a seven-nation Africa trip.

The Eighth AGOA Forum runs through August 6.

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Africans Must Use Trade to Fight Economic Crisis, Kenyan Says . . .

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On the issue of governance, Odinga said Africa is now in a time of "political transition," moving away from the strongman dictators such as Mobutu Sese Seko and Idi Amin and embracing accountability, transparency and good governance.

The program also included speakers from the private-sector and civil-society forums and the U.S. ambas-

sador to Kenya, Michael Ranneberger.

The Eighth AGOA Forum, formally known as the U.S.-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, runs August 4–6 in Nairobi.

A major ministerial session will be held August 5–6. It will be attended by Secretary of State Clin-

ton, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, other Cabinet officials and members of the U.S. Congress. The U.S. government co-sponsors the annual AGOA trade forum.

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Byliner: U.S. Trade Representative on U.S.-African Growth Partnership . . .

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known as "Aid for Trade," to help African countries make the most of global trade opportunities. Last year, the United States provided over a billion dollars in trade capacity building assistance to sub-Saharan Africa. African countries must also do their part by making trade a priority in their development programs and ensuring that funds are wisely targeted.

As President Obama said in Ghana,

what we are trying to achieve with our African partners is "more than growth numbers on a balance sheet." We are working to create opportunities, new jobs, and brighter futures for Africans and Americans alike.

Trade can be a powerful tool for realizing Africa's economic development priorities. The United States is committed to working with our African partners to ensure that trade and development work hand-in-

hand.

[Ron Kirk is the U.S. trade representative.]

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(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

African Specialty Foods Key Part of AGOA

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Nairobi, Kenya — A U.S. specialty food development company is helping African countries develop higher-end products for export to U.S. and worldwide markets.

The company, Talier Trading Group, now works in 14 African countries.

"In Kenya, we export coffee, tea, honey and a range of cooking sauces," said Jim Thaller, the company's chief executive officer. "We do jams from Senegal. We do juices. A lot of what we do is very regional-specific."

Thaller talked with America.gov at the combined private sector–civil society opening session at the Eighth AGOA Forum in Nairobi August 4. He was attending the AGOA Forum to network and further improve and expand his company's product line.

"Africa is not terribly competitive in the commodity trade, so we try to brand products the way you would pasta sauce from Italy and then export predominantly to the United States," he said.

Thaller, a self-described entrepreneur, said the business represents entrepreneurialism at its most grass-roots, basic level.

"Nothing is as exciting as starting from scratch. ... You get to interact with a lot of African government officials" and people across the spectrum, he said. He praised many African governments for helping his company market African products.

"We get a lot of support from Afri-

can governments. ... They help us pay for signage. They help us put on various launch events. We work with the ministries of tourism ... because when we go into a new supermarket chain, it is a new experience. ... Most of the American public doesn't know anything about Africa ... so we are able to come in and say, 'We have all of this fabulous food, taste it.' We bring in celebrity chefs and put on huge events. ... We try to do it as a total learning experience for all of Africa."

He said the specialty food market in the United States is the largest in the world, totaling about \$70 billion in revenue annually, with the European market doing only about half that volume.

For that reason, he said, "we typically start with the U.S." to achieve critical mass marketing production of a product.

Asked if the U.S. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trade preference program has helped his business, Thaller said, "Absolutely."

"AGOA has done a couple of things: It allows us to get African products into the U.S. duty free, which is very helpful when you are talking about operating out of an amazingly expensive place like Africa.

"Beyond that, it has also brought in a lot more attention to the various sectors" of trade. "It has been tremendously helpful."

Thaller said his company identifies products and partners and helps them export to the United States or sometimes designs a product and

manufactures it in Africa for export.

"In Mali, we do a range of baking mixes, such as West African chocolate spice cake." He said even though people in Mali are not baking cakes, 70 percent of the agricultural population is growing millet or sorghum or cassava.

"We cannot take the product raw, as it is, but are most interested in implementing the value chain [finishing the raw product for added value] in Mali or anywhere else, so that is where we actually take those raw materials, turn them into flour and then process from there."

Because the value is added in Mali, he said, the Malians earn more money from their crops as they are refined into finished products.

Thaller said his company, which does specialty foods worldwide, has been involved in Africa for only three years but has already increased business from zero to \$10 million annually.

He said his company sets up specialty food aisles in 7,000 supermarkets, representing 39 ethnic parts of the world.

"We do all of them: British, French, Thai. Africa is just another piece of that. Right now, the Africa program consists of 520 products from 14 countries.

"In 2006, African cuisine was an unknown category in the mainstream market. Now it is easily one of the fastest-growing categories — starting from zero there is nowhere to go but up."

(Continued on page 18)

AGOA Spurs African Stock Exchanges

By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Kigali, Rwanda — The historic U.S. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has created a positive impact across sub-Saharan Africa, and one such development has been the establishment of private equity stock markets in many African countries.

Robert Mathu, executive director of Rwanda's Capital Market Advisory Council, made that point in a July 30 interview with America.gov at the headquarters of the Rwanda Capital Market, which runs the country's stock exchange. Mathu made his comments before the opening of the 8th AGOA Forum in Nairobi, Kenya, August 4–6.

A stock market is critical to a country's financial health and long-term economic growth and development, he said, and thus the Rwanda Capital Market, which was established in January 2008, "fills a gap" in funding key economic projects.

Stock markets are "extremely crucial," he explained, because they provide long-term capital funding needed for economic development at reasonable rates.

"A stock market helps any country allocate capital more efficiently than any other system because ... capital is attracted to one thing: return on investment. Without a capital market," Mathu said, "it would be impossible for investors to access a variety of investments in a competitive environment."

"When you have a capital market in a Western economy, because information is publicly available, the public can select the best-yielding



Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, has a newly established stock exchange.

investments and invest accordingly and rationally," he explained.

The capital market ensures that investment funds are priced competitively and transparently for everyone to see, he added.

Citing an example, he said the Rwanda Capital Market posted its first corporate bond issued by BCR Capital in January 2008. The long-term funds that were generated from that investment offering, he said, are now being used to provide 15- to 20-year mortgages that are allowing Rwandans buy homes and, in turn, also helping to stimulate the economy.

Most investment being funded by commercial banks is short-term, he said, and so without a stock market to attract long-term capital, long-term development projects such as mortgages cannot be funded.

Mathu said Rwanda's stock market is just one aspect of an economy that has been totally transformed since the country's 1994 genocide, in which more than 800,000 people died.

"A lot of reforms have been undertaken across the entire spectrum of the economy," he said, with the country's financial, manufacturing

and service sectors being reworked from the ground up.

"Rwanda now has the highest level of governance in Africa," he explained, meaning a "zero tolerance for corruption, full transparency, very good security of life and property, with rule of law" being fully observed.

With those reforms now being implemented, he said, the only thing that has been lacking is long-term capital, and that gap is now being provided by the Rwanda Capital Market.

Besides serving the domestic investment sector, the Rwanda Capital Market now also offers investments to international portfolio investors, he added.

The market serves those investors, he said, by following international accounting and disclosure standards and rules of transparency that allow those investors to make their investment decisions based on international standards with which they are familiar.

Those international investors, in turn, provide the country with needed foreign exchange capital, he said. Additionally, he said, foreign investors have an "exit window" always at the ready in the capital markets in that they can sell their investments on the open market at any time.

Mathu said the Rwanda Capital Market is now affiliated with its fellow exchanges in East Africa: the Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE), the Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange (DSE) and the Uganda Securities

(Continued on page 18)

Clinton Will Meet with Somali Leader During AGOA Forum

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton plans to meet with President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government on the sidelines at the 8th Annual AGOA Forum to show support for his efforts to restore order to the conflict-weary African nation, a senior U.S. diplomat says.

Clinton will meet with Sheikh Sharif at the U.S.-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, known more commonly as the AGOA Forum, in Nairobi, Kenya, August 4–6. The secretary is launching an 11-day, seven-nation trip to Africa to underscore the U.S. commitment to the continent.

"We think that his government ... offers the best possible chance for restoring stability to southern Somalia, which has been troubled over the last 20 years by enormous violence and civil conflict," Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson said at a July 30 State Department press briefing.

During her visit to Africa, Clinton will travel to Kenya for the AGOA Forum and to South Africa, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Liberia and Cape Verde, Carson said.

"The secretary's trip follows the themes laid out by President Obama during his visit to Ghana: supporting strong and sustainable democratic governments, promoting sustainable economic development, strengthening public health and education,



Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

[and] assisting in the prevention, mitigation and resolution of conflicts around Africa," Carson said.

"The United States wants to partner with African leaders to advance the president's vision, which is also a vision shared by many African leaders," he added.

Carson, who will accompany Clinton along with other senior U.S. officials, said this trip underlines the U.S. commitment to partner with African governments, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations and the public. The trip comes three weeks after President Obama visited Ghana to give an Africa-wide speech on the U.S. concern for Africa's growth and future. (See President Obama in Ghana (http://www.america.gov/obama_ghana.html).)

SOMALIA'S PROBLEMS SPREAD

"We think that the support for Sheikh Sharif and his government offers an opportunity to be able to restore some stability, fight against the Somali Islamic extremists of al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam, the two

groups that are working against them," Carson added.

The problems that plague southern Somalia have begun to carry over to other areas of the region and internationally, Carson said.

"We see in neighboring Kenya, to the south, some 270,000 refugees in the Dadaab refugee camp, 5,000 to 6,000 Somali refugees flowing across the border each month into Kenya, putting enormous stress on that country's infrastructure and also a burden for the U.N.," he said.

And in the international arena, he said, maritime piracy has emerged, generated in large part because of the continuing instability in Somalia. He said the United States is prepared to provide additional assistance to the Transitional Federal Government and the African Union Mission to Somalia, which has Ugandan and Burundian troops in the country.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov's blog Obama Today (<http://blogs.america.gov/obama/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

Envoy Graton Says U.S. Seeks Sustainable Settlement in Sudan

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — President Obama's special envoy for Sudan says a negotiated political settlement to the civil strife in Sudan is the only way to bring a sustainable peace to the Darfur region.

Special Envoy Jonathan Graton said the goal is to conclude an agreement that will allow the Sudanese to return to their homes and resume their lives in safety and security. Previous peace efforts have faltered, Graton testified before a Senate committee July 30, and the United States has learned from those experiences. Graton laid out for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee what he called a "whole-of-government approach" for Sudan that is designed to be integrated and comprehensive.

"We are collaborating with the African Union and United Nations joint chief mediator, Djibrill Bassole, to ensure that the peace process is inclusive and that it adequately addresses the grievances of the people of Darfur," he said in prepared testimony.

To further help restore peace and security, the United States is engaging with the fragmented movements in Darfur to bring them to the peace table with a single voice; is working with Libya and Egypt to end the proxy war between Chad and Sudan; and is supporting the full deployment of the African Union-United Nations Mission in Darfur to protect Darfuri civilians, he said.

The second aspect of the emerging U.S. strategy involves sustaining peace between the north and the south, he said. In January 2005,



This international arbitration panel awarded the Sudanese government control over a large oil field in a boundary dispute.

the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), ending a 22-year war. However, Graton said that more than four years after the agreement, peace remains fragile.

Sudan will hold national elections in April 2010 and referendums in southern Sudan and the Abyei region in January 2011. "Our timeline is so very short; it is urgent that we act now to support the full implementation of the CPA," Graton testified. Tensions and emotions remain high, he added, and the concern is that these tensions could erupt into violence that could derail the peace agreement.

"These are just a few of the major challenges ahead as we help the parties implement the remaining milestones in the CPA," Graton told the committee.

Graton said the U.S. strategy calls for a functioning and stable Sudanese government, and one that either will include a capable government of southern Sudan or coexist peacefully with an independent southern Sudan. The United States is seeking to help the south improve its security capacity and become politically and economically viable if

it chooses independence, he added.

An international arbitration panel meeting in The Hague, Netherlands, July 22 awarded the Sudanese government control over a large oil field, settling a boundary dispute with southern Sudan that had been a source of considerable debate and recent civil strife. The five-member Permanent Court of Arbitration affirmed the northern boundary of the Abyei region that was set by a 2005 boundary commission.

Graton said the United States seeks improved counterterrorism cooperation with the Sudanese, and wants to promote regional security.

U.S. AID TO SUDAN

Since 2005 and the signing of the peace agreement, the United States has provided more than \$6 billion in assistance to Sudan. The program has included helping to create a new regional government that has worked to rebuild and govern the south, conducting wide-ranging civic education programs and immunizing children, said Earl Gast, acting assistant administrator for Africa at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

In addition, USAID has worked to improve economic opportunities and public infrastructure, while also providing food aid and support for Sudan's farmers and entrepreneurs, he said.

"We have saved lives, and we have improved living conditions for millions of Sudanese. But with the continuing challenges [in] Darfur and with less than 24 months left to follow the CPA's road map for

(Continued on page 17)

African Women Making Progress in Legislative Politics

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington — When Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton visits Africa starting August 4, she will be meeting with one of the continent's foremost success stories for women in politics: Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Sirleaf became the first elected black female head of state in 2005 when Liberia's voters elected her president with a margin of nearly 19 percent, a triumph that came only after she endured house arrest and exile during the country's turbulent years.

Women in Africa increasingly are making their presence felt on the political stage, but they still have a long way to go, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). IPU is a Geneva-based international organization established in 1889 to foster worldwide parliamentary dialogue and the firm establishment of representative democracy.

IPU figures show that women hold an average of just 17.5 percent of legislative seats in sub-Saharan Africa. Women would need 30 percent of legislative seats to have a real influence in parliaments, IPU maintains. Even so, democratic elections, according to IPU, are a fact of life across most of Africa; the challenge now is ensuring that women have equal opportunities to vote and to run for office.

GREAT PROMISE FOR AFRICAN WOMEN

Of the African countries where women have made great progress in politics, the Republic of Rwanda stands out. It is estimated that millions of people died in Rwanda dur-

ing the 1990s as a result of ethnic conflict. But today, women play a leading role in the country's struggle to heal. According to IPU, Rwanda currently has the highest percentage of women lawmakers in the world — just more than 56 percent.

Odette Nyiramilimo, for example, was Rwanda's minister of state for social affairs from 2000 to 2003 and a senator from 2003 to 2008. In a recent interview with IPU, she credited the strong presence of women in Rwandan government to strong affirmative action laws in the country.

Women played a great role in rebuilding Rwanda after the conflict, she said, by taking care of the orphans and bringing communities together. "Everybody could see women were key players," Nyiramilimo said. "After that, the reality fell upon us that women's voices need to be heard." But she added that cultural barriers have yet to be completely overcome. Both women and men must grow accustomed to seeing women in leadership roles, Nyiramilimo said.

The East African Community (EAC) — the regional intergovernmental organization that includes Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi — has renewed its efforts to promote gender equality via its campaign for an East African Declaration on Gender Equality. The aim is to have all five countries establish a single binding legal instrument to close gender-based gaps in government decisionmaking. The Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI), a women's rights organization headquartered in Kam-

pala, is leading the campaign. A common, binding law is necessary if member countries are serious about ensuring gender equality, according to Marren Akatsa-Bukachi, the executive director of EASSI. "Rwanda is our role model, so let us all in East Africa be at the same level," she told the Inter Press Service News Agency (IPS). Work on the draft document was to begin shortly, with the goal of having all the governments accept the gender declaration at the end of two years.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

That Secretary Clinton's trip to Africa comes just three weeks after President Obama's trip to Ghana underscores the Obama administration's commitment to building partnerships with African governments, nongovernmental organizations and private citizens. The goal is "to build societies where each individual can realize their full potential," according to Ambassador Johnnie Carson, assistant secretary for African affairs at the U.S. Department of State, who briefed reporters July 30.

In his speech to the Ghanaian Parliament July 11, Obama said "the true sign of success" is whether the United States and African nations "are partners in building the capacity for transformational change."

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) operates 23 bilateral missions on the African continent and provides assistance to 47 African countries. Among its activities is increasing the awareness of the need for women's justice and empowerment through high-level engagement, conferences, public awareness and education via

Conflicts in Africa Exacerbate Gender-Based Atrocities

By Jane Morse
Staff Writer

Washington — When Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton heads for Africa August 4, she will focus a spotlight on the widespread problem of violence against women.

Clinton is visiting seven countries in Africa, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where violence against women has been horrific. Accompanying her will be Melanne Vermeer, a longtime advocate of women's rights and human rights who is the first U.S. ambassador-at-large for global women's issues.

In the DRC, ongoing fighting between factions has subjected women to unprecedented savagery. Some 1,100 rapes are reported each month, with an average of 36 women and children raped every day. Many of the victims are mutilated in the process, according to Vermeer.

"The victims of these crimes are stripped of every shred of their humanity," Vermeer told U.S. senators in a recent hearing. "To the perpetrators, they are nothing more than vessels for carrying out a war strategy — a war these women do not perpetrate and in which they play no voluntary military role."

A WIDESPREAD PROBLEM

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in three women around the world will experience violence in her lifetime. In some countries, that rate can be up to 70 percent.



The United States is supporting programs to alleviate the suffering of victims of gender-based violence in Africa. But the problem will not be solved until perpetrators are brought to justice and the "culture of impunity" is ended.

The violence women suffer can range from domestic and sexual abuse to mutilation and murder. About 5,000 women, WHO found, are murdered each year by family members in the name of "honor."

The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in — or is likely to result in — physical, sexual or psychological harm or suf

fering." The U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights says women and men alike have the right to "security of person" and that no one should be subjected to "inhuman or degrading treatment."

So why does one-half of humanity live under fear of this kind of threat?

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Conflicts in Africa Exacerbate Gender-Based Atrocities . . .

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According to one study by the United Nations, the roots of violence against women “lie in historically unequal power relations” between men and women both at home and in public life. “Patriarchal disparities of power, discriminatory cultural norms and economic inequalities serve to deny women’s human rights and perpetuate violence,” the study said.

LEADERSHIP IS IMPORTANT

To help stop violence against women both in the United States and around the world, the Obama administration has taken a number of steps to establish the necessary leadership to deal with such an intractable problem.

The Obama White House created a new position — the White House adviser on violence against women — charged with advising the president and vice president on domestic violence and sexual assault issues in the United States. In June, Vice President Joe Biden, the author of the landmark Violence against Women Act, announced that Lynn Rosenthal, one of the foremost experts on gender-based violence issues in the United States, would fill that position.

President Obama also created the position at the U.S. Department of State now held by Verveer. Verveer’s job is to mobilize concrete support for women’s rights and political and economic empowerment and combat violence against women and girls in all its forms.

And Hillary Clinton — the third fe-

male secretary of state in U.S. his-

tory — long has championed respect for women and their full participation in economic, political and social life. Her famous speech in Beijing in 1995, when she declared that “human rights are women’s rights, and women’s rights are human rights,” inspired women worldwide.

CULTURE OF IMPUNITY MUST END

President Obama, during his visit to Ghana in July, condemned the violence inflicted on women in Africa, especially in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

“We must stand up to inhumanity in our midst,” Obama told the Ghanaian parliament July 11. “It is the ultimate mark of criminality and cowardice to condemn women to relentless and systematic rape. We must bear witness to the value of every child in Darfur and the dignity of every woman in the Congo. No faith or culture should condone the outrages against them.”

In her May testimony to the U.S. Senate, Verveer said rape has become trivialized and accepted as routine. In the DRC, for example, of the more than 14,000 rape cases registered in provincial health centers between 2005 and 2007, only 287 were taken to trial.

“The culture of impunity must end,” Verveer said.

U.S. SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS

The U.S. Department of State works with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Africa and funds special programs for the pre-

vention of gender-based violence

and to help refugees. In 2008, the State Department provided more than \$6 million for programs seeking to draw attention to and prevent gender-based violence in Africa and around the world, and more than \$2 million for 10 women’s centers in Darfur that help victims of gender-based violence receive psychosocial counseling and referrals for medical services.

In December 2008, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) signed a \$5 million, three-year cooperative agreement with the international NGO Cooperazione Internazionale to work with women victims of violence in the DRC.

The United States has sponsored U.N. resolutions to encourage other members of the United Nations to more aggressively tackle gender violence issues by punishing perpetrators, helping victims and preventing further violence.

The text of Verveer’s congressional testimony (<http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/rls/rem/2009/123500.htm>) is available on the State Department Web site.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>) ♦

IMF Offers New Loans to Low-Income Countries

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced a package of measures aimed at providing loans of up to \$17 billion over five years to low-income countries that have been hit hardest by the global economic crisis.

“This is an unprecedented scaling up of IMF support for the poorest countries, in sub-Saharan Africa and all over the world,” IMF Managing-Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn said July 29 in Washington. The Group of 20 (G20) nations asked the IMF to respond to the global financial crisis, he added, and this is part of that effort.

The resources — which include funds generated by the planned sale of IMF gold — are expected to increase IMF lending up to \$17 billion through 2014, including up to \$8 billion over the next two years, the fund said.

The IMF said there would be no interest payments through the end of 2011 for loans to low-income mem-



*IMF Managing-Director
Dominique Strauss-Kahn*

said.

While the current economic crisis began in the advanced Western economies, its most visible impact has been on emerging-market countries, the fund said. A third wave of the crisis has threatened the economic achievements of the last decade for many low-income countries.

As part of its response, the IMF more than doubled its financial assistance to low-income countries. New lending to low-income countries through mid-July reached \$2.9 billion compared with \$1.5 billion for all of 2008. Supporting this ef-

bers and lower interest rates on a permanent basis after that. “A new set of lending instruments will underpin this increased support,” the fund

fort further, the IMF will double average loan-access limits for the poorest nations.

“All this represents a historic effort by the fund to help the world’s poor,” Strauss-Kahn said. And there will be greater emphasis in IMF-supported programs on poverty reduction and growth objectives, which will include targets to safeguard social and other priority spending, he added.

“We are responding with a historic set of actions in terms of support for the world’s poor. The new resources and new means of delivering them should help prevent millions of people from falling into poverty,” Strauss-Kahn said.

The G20, composed of advanced and emerging economies, met in London in early April, and will meet again in Pittsburgh on September 24–25.

More information on the new IMF program (<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2009/POL072909A.htm>) is available on the IMF Web site. ♦

Envoy Gratton Says U.S. Seeks Sustainable Settlement in Sudan . . .

(Continued from page 13)

consolidating peace, our most critical tasks lie ahead,” Gast added. USAID has worked since March to fill gaps created when the Sudanese government expelled 13 international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), but those measures have been temporary and must be replaced with a more sustainable, long-term strategy, Gast said in prepared testimony for the committee.

Compounding the humanitarian cri-

sis are carjackings, staff abductions and assaults, break-ins targeting NGO facilities, and ongoing military campaigns, which impede the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Darfur and have resulted in temporary and permanent suspensions of life-saving programs, Gast said.

“The U.S. government approach to Sudan’s multiple challenges requires complex and creative solutions, implemented in cooperation with government officials, tribal

leaders and civil society representatives throughout Sudan,” Gast said.

What foreign affairs decisions should President Obama consider? Comment on America.gov’s blog Obama Today (<http://blogs.america.gov/obama/2009/01/21/day-2-what-should-obama%e2%80%99s-top-priorities-be/>).

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See also

<http://www.america.gov/>

Telling America's story

**McDermott: AGOA Forum Promotes Important Economic Inter-
action . . .**

(Continued from page 3)

for a U.S.-Africa trade policy.

"Nothing happened, so finally we wrote AGOA in my office in 1995." But once again, he said, it languished.

A few years later, McDermott said, he went to the then-Speaker of the House, Republican Newt Gingrich, and told him that even though they were from opposite political parties they had something in common: an interest in Africa.

McDermott recalled that Gingrich had written his Ph.D. dissertation on the Belgian Congo. "So he took the bill," pushed it in the House and it ultimately passed in both the House

and Senate and became law, just as President Clinton was getting ready to travel to Africa.

McDermott said he is "very pleased" with AGOA's progress. "It is always a matter of a half-full or half-empty glass. I want to fill it up! But if you look at where we were in 1995 and where we are today, it is at least half full."

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African Specialty Foods Key Part of AGOA . . .

(Continued from page 10)

Thaller said he is hoping to double his revenue volume from African foods by 2010.

The Eighth AGOA Forum, also known as the United States-Sub-Saharan African Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, runs through August 6. It also has a ministerial session, beginning August 5, that will be addressed by

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

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AGOA Spurs African Stock Exchanges . . .

(Continued from page 11)
Exchange (USE).

In the wake of the world financial crisis, African capital markets are now more important than ever, he explained, because more African countries are trading regionally among themselves.

Since the onset of the crisis, he said, "the demand for our commodities has declined," and so "African economies are beginning

to look at alternative" and regional ways to spur economic growth and development.

Returning to the African Growth and Opportunity Act, Mathu said AGOA has done much for the continent.

"AGOA provides the opportunity for eligible countries to export their products to America and trade with America," he said.

Referring to the 8th AGOA Forum, Mathu said, "Out of this conference, African investors will start looking at Africa not in terms of a single country but how at a regional level they can respond to such opportunities" to make the economies of Africa even stronger.

(This is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://www.america.gov>)