



NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

1920 L Street, NW • Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20036
202.785.0266 • Fax 202.785.0261

WWW.ATR.ORG

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CONTACT: Jonathan Collegio
202-785-0266

Unanimous Senate Passes Africa Growth and Opportunity Act

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate Thursday unanimously passed legislation extending the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a trade program designed to help sub-Saharan Africa develop and grow economically. The House passed identical legislation earlier this month.

Originally passed in 2000, AGOA created a new trade partnership between the U.S. and sub-Saharan Africa, granting duty-free access to the U.S. market for most products of eligible countries and bring new jobs and investment to the region, stimulating economic growth, and helping to integrate sub-Saharan Africa into the global economy. Twenty percent of the region's total exports in 2002 were to the United States, making the U.S. sub-Saharan Africa's largest single-country export market.

“The Bush Administration has been tireless in its promotion of free trade,” said taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist. “The benefits AGOA has brought to some of the world's poorest nations is just further proof of the benefits of free trade. Just imagine how a world free of tariffs would benefit people in rich and poor countries alike.”

Thirty-seven of the 48 sub-Saharan African countries are now eligible for AGOA, and U.S. imports under AGOA were valued at over \$14 billion in 2003, a 55 percent increase from 2002. The U.S. direct investment position in sub-Saharan Africa increased 12 percent at year-end 2002, to \$8.9 billion.