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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE  
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Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss U.S. trade preference programs. In particular, I will focus on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's perspective on the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

**Introduction**

U.S. trade preferences, such as AGOA, support the Administration's goal for improved food security in Sub-Saharan Africa. USDA, both in Washington and overseas, plays an important role in accomplishing AGOA's objectives of expanding U.S.-sub-Saharan African trade and investment, stimulating economic growth, and facilitating sub-Saharan Africa's integration into the global economy. Nearly 20 USDA personnel are located at American embassies and trade hubs on the sub-Saharan African continent. Since agriculture accounts for one-third of sub-Saharan Africa's gross national product and employs two-thirds of its workers, it forms the basis on which the continent can reach its full potential.

## **AGOA Successes**

USDA is committed to providing capacity building, technical assistance and training, and research programs that will enhance Africa's ability to trade in agricultural products. This assistance has contributed to a \$100-million increase in exports of agricultural products – including non-traditional and value-added products – from Sub-Saharan countries to the United States since 2001, AGOA's first full year of implementation. Products imported include fruits and nuts, coffee and tea extracts, wines, fruit juices, cocoa products, prepared vegetables, cut flowers, and prepared seafood.

Before we can permit the import of agricultural products into the United States from any country, our Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) must complete an extensive analysis of the pest and disease risks associated with those products and determine if and how those risks can be mitigated to allow for safe importation. Under the AGOA initiative, APHIS has completed several pest risk analyses from potential trading partners in sub-Saharan Africa. To simplify and expedite the regulatory process for approving new fruit and vegetable imports and pest-free areas, APHIS published a final rule in July 2007 that has been used to expedite the imports of several types of agricultural products including those from Africa,

while still providing pest risk assessments for public comment. This new process has been used to allow the import of products such as baby carrots and baby corn from Kenya; currants and gooseberries from South Africa; and peppers, eggplant, and okra from Ghana. We have also permitted the import of certain commodities under our traditional approval system, including blueberries from South Africa; and baby squash from Zambia.

However, it is important to note that, even if APHIS determines that the pest and disease risk associated with the import of these products can be appropriately mitigated, this does not mean that export of these products to the United States will begin immediately. USDA efforts at analyzing risk and granting import approvals are more effective if infrastructure is in place to take advantage of exporting opportunities. A country or industry may not have the ability to take the steps needed to mitigate the pest and disease risk associated with its products, or may not have the transportation or marketing infrastructure in place. For example, APHIS approved the import of peppers and eggplant from Ghana; however, the country's irradiator is not currently functional. Ghana needs to overcome this technological hurdle to treat fruits and vegetables to mitigate pest and disease risk.

Recognizing these challenges, USDA, working in concert with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), continues to assist African

host countries in strengthening their sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) safeguarding capacity. Together, USAID and USDA have positioned SPS advisors at three USAID-funded Africa Trade hubs. These advisors work with their African counterparts to implement SPS improvement activities that are critical to building the institutional regulatory capacity necessary to facilitate trade. In Swaziland, USDA supported the initiation of a honeybee pest surveillance program to meet requirements for regional trade. In Mozambique, USDA and the Ministry of Agriculture collaborated to design and implement a national fruit fly surveillance program that is required to maintain market access for Mozambican fresh horticultural exports.

Since AGOA was enacted, USDA has conducted training on phytosanitary issues for more than 35 sub-Saharan countries. USDA has several flagship programs that provide technical training and research opportunities for policymakers, scientists, private sector representatives, university professors, and other agricultural professionals. These programs include the Cochran Fellowship Program, the Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program, the Faculty Exchange program, and the Scientific Cooperation Research Program.

Successes include a Cochran fellow who has doubled milk production on his small Kenyan dairy farm and implemented marketing strategies that

improved the prices he gets for milk, while also helping hundreds of fellow farmers by conducting on-farm training and contributing to a farm radio talk show. A woman Cochran graduate from South Africa now owns her own company and is leading industry efforts to improve product quality and expand the range of soy food products throughout Southern Africa.

A successful Borlaug initiative is our public-private partnership with the World Cocoa Foundation. This partnership helps cocoa producing countries learn state-of-the-art modern production and processing techniques to improve overall quality and increase exports of high quality cocoa and cocoa products worldwide. Currently, nine Borlaug fellows from six African countries are receiving training in organic production and marketing management in the United States that will facilitate collaboration between the U.S. organics industry and African producers, leading to increased incomes and improved food security for small-scale sub-Saharan African farmers. Recognizing the important role that women play in agricultural production in Africa, USDA is hosting three African Borlaug Women in Science fellows who are currently receiving water resource and livestock disease management training at the University of Florida. This training will also help increase incomes and promote food security.

In addition, USDA's two food assistance programs—the Food for Progress (FFPr) and the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition (McGovern-Dole) Programs—contain unique, long-term developmental aspects. Our FFPr program is benefitting 72,000 smallholder livestock owners in Ethiopia by developing the animal feed industry through activities that strengthen feed distribution channels and improve feed formulation and manufacturing and feedlot management and forage production. In Tanzania, the FFPr is empowering rural women entrepreneurs by developing their leadership skills and providing micro-credit loans that help them increase their incomes, allowing them to obtain better medical services, food and education. The McGovern-Dole program in Senegal has extended health services to more than 58 maternal and child health sites in vulnerable communities so that mothers, pregnant women, and children benefit from health services in their villages.

### **Administration's Food Security Strategy**

Agriculture is not only a basis for achieving AGOA's objectives, it is the heart of the Administration's food security strategy. Achieving a food-secure Africa is a major goal of this Administration.

The U.S. food security strategy is based on the principles laid out in the July 2009 G8 Joint Statement on Global Food Security. USG efforts must be long-term. As part of a whole of government approach under the leadership of State and USAID, we are focusing on the entire spectrum of food security beginning with helping countries develop strategies to increase crop output by adopting the latest seed technology and land management techniques, appropriately applying fertilizer, linking small producers to markets and strengthening post-harvest infrastructure, as well as national and regional trade and transportation corridors.

Our food security strategy employs a whole-of-government approach that links all pertinent U.S. Government agencies together and increasingly partners in the private sector, non-governmental, private-voluntary, and international organizations, civil society, and the poor themselves.

USDA will use its resources to work with the U.S. Department of State and USAID to focus on three key principles of food security: availability, accessibility, and utilization. USDA is tapping into its network of U.S. land-grant universities, research institutions, extension experts, trade associations, private voluntary and non-governmental organizations, and other non-profit organizations and private companies across the country to provide capacity

building, technical assistance and training, and research and food assistance programs.

## **Conclusion**

The Administration is committed to assisting sub-Saharan Africa, and food insecure countries globally, to achieve food security. Full utilization of AGOA trade preferences is a critical piece of the puzzle. USDA is striving to assist countries to develop the capacity to capitalize on the beneficial terms provided by AGOA. I look forward to your comments and questions. Thank you.