



June 14, 2004
(House)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 4103 – AGOA Acceleration Act of 2004

Rep. Thomas (R) CA and 25 cosponsors

The Administration strongly supports House passage of H.R. 4103, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Acceleration Act of 2004, which would extend and enhance AGOA enacted in 2000. AGOA is the centerpiece of the Administration's trade and investment policy to enhance U.S.-African trade, spur regional economic development, encourage economic and political reforms, alleviate poverty in sub-Saharan African countries, facilitate the region's integration into the global economy, and create jobs here at home.

H.R. 4103's extension of AGOA to 2015 fulfills the President's commitment to work with Congress to extend AGOA beyond its 2008 expiration date and will increase investor confidence and underscore continuing U.S. support for boosting African growth and development through trade.

The Administration looks forward to working with Congress as the bill proceeds to address a number of concerns, including those outlined below.

The Administration urges Congress to remain cognizant of ongoing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with certain AGOA beneficiaries.

H.R. 4103 contains several provisions that support targeted trade-related technical assistance, which the Administration believes is important for AGOA's continued success. The development studies called for in H.R. 4103 are generally useful; however, the Administration objects to mandating a study for every country in sub-Saharan Africa, which would include those not designated as AGOA beneficiaries. With respect to technical assistance related to agricultural exports, the Administration opposes a requirement that a minimum of 20 technical experts must be assigned to no fewer than 10 countries. Such mandates limit Presidential discretion to address Africa's resource needs as appropriate.

Similarly, requiring the President to convene the trade and advisory committee on Africa would limit discretion to identify the most effective means to seek timely and useful private sector advice on Africa trade and investment matters. The United States Trade Representative (USTR) currently relies on a robust three-tiered private advisory committee system created by Congress under the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, to provide input on all matters pertaining to the U.S. trade agenda, including multilateral, regional, and bilateral initiatives around the world, including Africa. The current advisory committee system provides ample opportunity for advisor input and dialogue with Administration officials and trade negotiators on AGOA and Africa trade issues.

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