

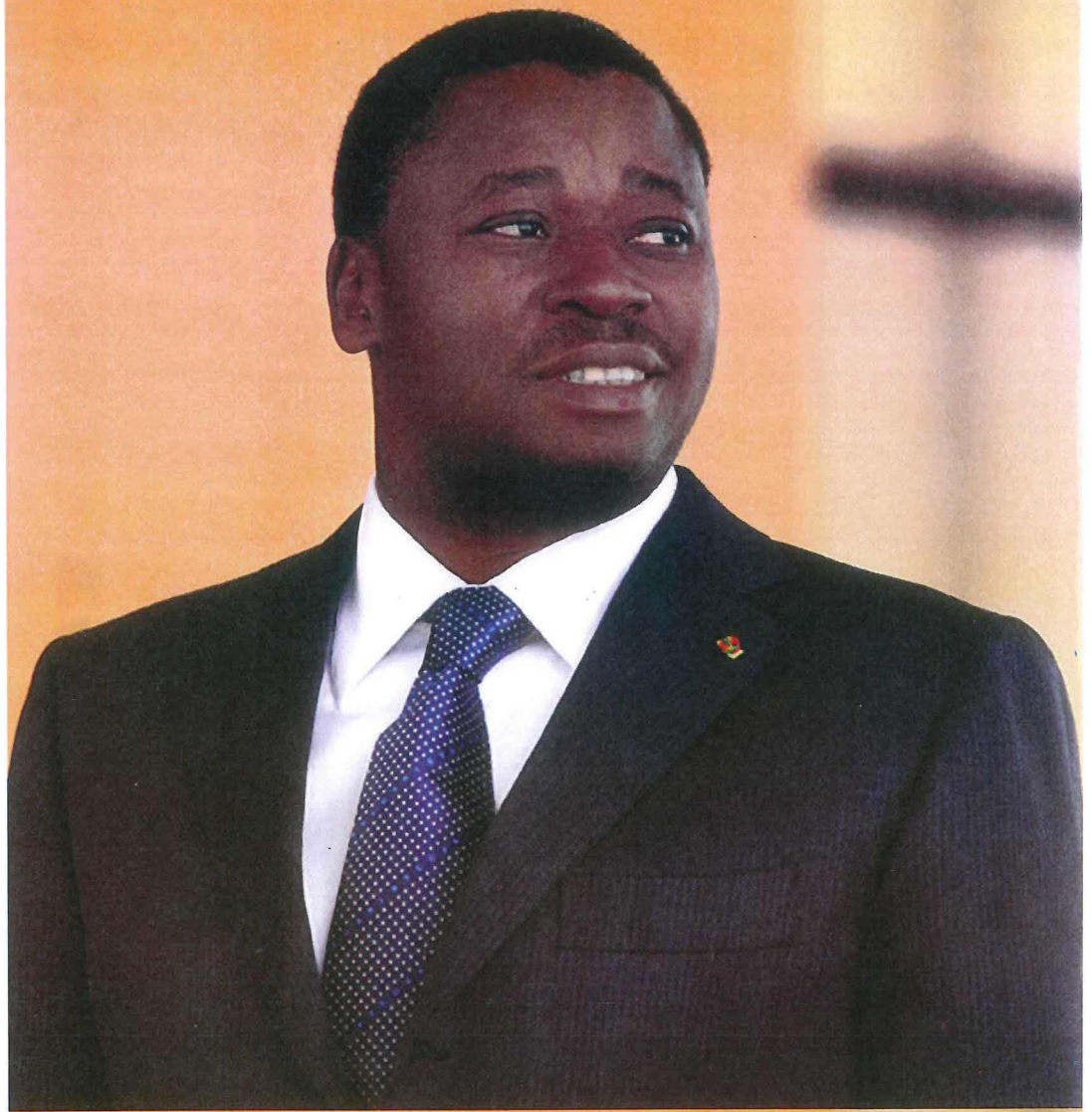


**"The United States and Africa: Partnership for Prosperity through Trade"**

## 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA FORUM SUMMARY REPORT

Lome, 8 - 10 August 2017

[www.agoa-togo.tg](http://www.agoa-togo.tg)



**His Excellency Mr. Faure Essozimna GNASSINGBE**  
*Togolese Head of State*







**Mrs. Dédé Ahoéfa EKOUE**

***President of the AGOA 2017 Forum  
National Organizing Committee, Minister,  
Advisor to the President of the Republic.***

16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum, Lomé - Togo.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Togo and the United States of America co-hosted the 16th AGOA 2017 forum from 08 to 10 August 2017 under the theme "The United States and Africa: Partnership for Prosperity through Trade". This important event saw the participation of nearly one thousand (1000) African and American delegates and was widely acclaimed as the best AGOA forum organized so far. The Hotel 2 Février Radisson Blu, the conference centers of ECOBANK International and the ECOWAS Investment and Development Bank (EBID) were the venues selected for the forum's activities.

### The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum activities in Togo

Three (3) main forums made up the activities of the AGOA eligible countries and U.S. meeting under the AGOA Act. These are the ministerial forum, the private sector forum and the civil society forum.

The private sector and the civil society forums took place on 8<sup>th</sup> august 2017, preceded by a joint opening ceremony chaired by the Prime Minister of Togo,

**His Excellency Mr. Komi Sélom Klassou.**

The ministerial symposium held on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> august 2017. It was marked by a solemn opening ceremony co-chaired by **H.E. Mr. Komi Sélom Klassou**, Prime Minister, Head of Togolese Government, representing the Togolese Head of State, **His Excellency. Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé** and **His Excellency Mr. Ambassador Robert Lighthizer**, U.S Trade Representative and Personal Representative of the U.S President, **His Excellency. Donald Trump**, followed by activities in plenary and breakout sessions.

**Her Excellency Mrs. Bernadette Essossimna Legzim-Balouki**, Minister of Trade and Private Sector Promotion, chaired the closing ceremony and gave the closing speech of the Forum.

The ceremony also concluded with remarks by **H.E. Mr. David Glimour**, U.S Ambassador in Togo followed by an occasional address by **H.E. Mrs. Dede Ahoefa Ekoue**, Minister, Advisor to the President of the Togolese Republic, President of the 16<sup>th</sup>

### **The African Senior Officials and Experts meeting**

As a prelude to the forum and to prepare the session of African Ministers of Trade Consultative Group, a meeting of African Senior Officials, Experts and Ambassadors was held on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2017 in Lomé, Togo. The meeting provided an opportunity to examine, amend and adopt the conclusions and recommendations of the AGOA mid-term review held in Washington, DC, on July 17-18, 2017.

The works were carried out by a Bureau comprising the Ambassadors of Togo, Mauritius, Uganda, Lesotho and Congo. The meeting was co-chaired by the Economic Development Committee of the African Ambassadors Group in Washington DC, **H.E. Mr. Frédéric Edem Hegbe**, Ambassador of Togo in the U.S and **H.E. Mr. Sooroj Phokeer**, Ambassador of Mauritius in the U.S.

### **The African Ministers of Trade Consultative Group meeting**

Held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017 in Lomé, the purpose of the meeting is to present the conclusions and recommendations of the Senior Officials meeting and to discuss key issues to be addressed at the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum.

The opening ceremony was chaired by **H.E. Mr. Lazare Sehoueto**, Minister of Trade, Industry and SMEs in Benin.

At the ceremony, **H.E. Mr. Albert Muchanga**, African Union Commissioner of Trade and Industry, Representative of the African Union Commission Chairperson, stressed on the issue of regional integration and stated that the AGOA eligible countries should create a win-win partnership with the U.S.

### **Activities of the 16th AGOA Forum of Togo**

The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum was comprised of three major events. These were the ministerial forum, the private sector forum and the civil society forum.

The private sector and civil society forums took place on August 08, 2017, preceded by a joint opening ceremony, chaired



by the Prime Minister of Togo,  
**H.E. Mr Selom KLASSOU.**

The ministerial forum was held on 09 and 10 August 2017. It was marked by a solemn opening ceremony presided over by the Prime Minister representing the President of the Republic, followed by work in plenary sessions

The objective of the 16th AGOA Forum at the level of the eligible states of sub-Saharan Africa and the United States of America was essentially to identify strategies to optimize the use of AGOA as a lever for exports toward the United States, for promoting the prosperity of our people. Specifically, it was a matter of formulating relevant recommendations, building the capacities of the different actors in sub-Saharan Africa and fostering networking.

The forum agreed on suitable strategies to boost AGOA exports by 2025. African governments are called upon to implement recommendations on Regional Integration and Transport, Industry including agro-industry, standards and

research, business financing, capacity building, technology, smallholder inclusion, security and political space.

The recommendations are as follows:

### **Recommendations of the Ministerial Meeting**

The Ministers of Trade of the AGOA eligible countries met on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017 in Lomé, Republic of Togo and below are the major recommendations:

### **Regarding the challenges and solutions for the implementation of AGOA**

1. AGOA countries remain largely exporters of primary products, including but not limited to agriculture. This necessitates that we must encourage industrialization to promote value-addition so as to change the structure of our economies.
2. There is also a need to enhance cooperation on

standards, as well as sanitary and phytosanitary measures in order to overcome challenges that come with trade in food and other agricultural related products in the global trade.

3. There is demand for various products in the U.S. However, AGOA countries cannot easily export into the U.S. market under its stringent standards. AGOA beneficiaries need to undertake thorough market research and produce products that meet the U.S. standards. Further, the United States is encouraged to continue to provide capacity building to overcome existing non-Tariff Barriers within a timeframe of 3 to 5 years.

4. Undertake to promote African clinical research while protecting people often used as subjects of trials to ensure local solution is sought for clinical

challenges specific to Africa.

5. We call upon UNECA in collaboration with USG agencies to promote the exchange of AGOA best practices through the organization of regular workshops.

6. Encourage the setting up of a consultative committee comprising of representatives from the African Ambassadors Group (AAG), USTR, US Department of Commerce, US Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. to monitor all AGOA related issues under agreed terms of references that still need to be developed by all stakeholders. The committee will engage with private sector and civil society from both sides.

7. Africa should highlight the importance of security in order to enhance trade.

8. Strengthen the focus on:



- a. Linkages between investment, industrial development and trade and;
- b. Efforts to attract US investors and broaden US investment beyond the current concentration in the Mining Sector.

9. AGOA beneficiaries are encouraged to take maximum advantage of the presence of the Trade and Investment Hubs located across Africa to diversify their export sectors.

10. On Intellectual Property (IP), the African Union Commission (AUC) is encouraged to work with relevant institutions such as World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to ensure a development approach to IP and build capacity within the continent. Fundamentally, policies must contribute to the

economic transformation agenda, preserve Africa's biodiversity and traditional knowledge amongst others.

11. Emphasize the importance of policy space to promote structural transformation of the African continent.

#### ■ Concerning the regional integration

1. The trade and investment relationship with the US should support the continent's efforts to industrialize in line with Agenda 2063 and contribute to regional integration. Policy issues should be on the basis of cooperation and should not limit use of key policy tools Africa needs to industrialize.

2. Strengthen African Regional Integration agenda through initiatives such as the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), bearing in mind the outcomes of the RECs, which will address trade cost,

boost Intra-Africa trade and promote the development Regional Value Chains and boost industrial development. This will increase the utilization of AGOA preferences and expand benefits across a greater number of African countries. In addition, there is a need for African countries to develop a common position on the trade and investment relationship with the United States.

▪ **Regarding the out of Cycle Review of AGOA-Eligible Countries**

1. Recall that AGOA is an Act of congress to promote two-way trade and investment that promotes sustainable development, as well as regional integration. Recognize that the out-of-cycle review is an integral part of AGOA legislation, however, the out of cycle review should not be used in a way that would be detrimental to the spirit of AGOA itself.

2. The US is urged to consider the legitimate public policy issues of Africa in considering petitions for out-of-cycle reviews.

▪ **Towards the US Government**

1. Call upon USG agencies to scale-up support to AGOA-eligible countries for implementation of the WTO TFA, especially land-locked countries to lower trade costs and move goods across borders and promote Africa's integration into the global economy. The cooperation on the TFA must be on the basis of agreed programs at the Regional Economic Community level so as to promote regional integration.
2. Encourage the US Government not to cut budget to USAID in a bid to facilitate resources for countries in maximizing their AGOA utilization Strategies.
3. Since Africa is currently making steady progress



towards continental regional integration, the consensus is that these actions will facilitate the continent integration into global supply chains and distribution networks. In this regard, we call upon our US partners to support these efforts.

4. Call upon the US not to implement out-of-cycle reviews in a way that would be detrimental to the spirit of AGOA itself which is premised on predictability and certainty.
5. Africa is making progress toward continental integration, we call upon the US to support the regional integration agenda in order to promote Africa's integration into the global economy.

#### **Recommendations of the Private sector Forum**

#### **Panel 1: AGOA Successes and Challenges and the Way Forward**

1. The lack of understanding of the US market and labor laws needs to be addressed. The US market is not impenetrable as witnessed by several of the success stories that were highlighted in the Private Sector Dialogue.

2. The private sector noted that there is a gap that exists between the AGOA legislation that grants access to the US market and African implementation of export policies that promote utilization of AGOA. USAID, through its trade HUBS as well as other US government agencies seek to bridge that gap.

3. The lack of adequate infrastructure needs to be addressed by governments to enable products to move to markets. African governments also need to create the enabling environment to facilitate trade.

4. Successful AGOA exporters advised that new market

investors should start small and build up supplying the U.S. market. African suppliers of goods to create economies of scale.

5. The expectation of buyers/importers in the U.S., is that African suppliers will deliver on time shipments of quality goods.

### **Panel 2: Logistics, Transport Operations and the Global Supply Chain**

1. Diversify sources of financing beyond banks -such as commodity exchanges, credit cards, bonds, hedging and retirement funding- to allow trade and investment to occur.
2. There needs to be increased government support for connectivity, especially using technology. Also, government need to promote trade facilitation by acceding to and implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), integrating customs data across borders and identifying any other bottlenecks impeding trade. Finally, governments need to lower taxes to help African

companies become more competitive.

3. Government in coordination with the private sector should promote clustering networks such as industrial parks and infrastructure financing that enable African businesses to compete globally. African governments also need to enforce the sanctity of contracts for businesses to make the right investment decisions.
4. Together, governments and the private sector should promote more reverse trade missions that are targeted to specific sectors.
5. Finally, governments and businesses should encourage more marketing and branding of African products to penetrate global supply chains.

### **Recommendations of the Civil Society /AWEP forum**

#### **1. AGOA COUNTRY UTILIZATION STRATEGY AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:**

- We call on AGOA eligible countries to support the work of the AGOA Civil Society Organization



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### **Recommendations of the Civil Society /AWEP forum**

1. **AGOA COUNTRY UTILIZATION STRATEGY AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:**
  - We call on AGOA eligible countries to support the work of the AGOA Civil Society Organization

Network Secretariat in strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations and the African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) in Africa regarding the issues of AGOA country utilization strategies and compliance with eligibility criteria to provide the planning that is necessary in making success possible in using AGOA benefits to support micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) development.

- Governments of eligible countries should work, closely, with their CSOs AWEP, Labor and Youth in the design of their AGOA Country Utilization Strategy to ensure efficiency, and inclusiveness.

## **2. TRADE FACILITATION, REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND TRANSPORTATION LINKAGES:**

- We call on all AGOA eligible countries to ratify and implement the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Facilitation Agreement to increase transparency, reduce transaction costs and increase the competitiveness of African businesses and exports. Member governments should work closely with civil society and AWEP on the implementation of trade facilitation agreements.
- We call on the African Union to unveil its Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) which encompasses free movement of business persons and investment, establishment of custom unions, harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization, trade facilitation and instruments



across regional economic communities (RECS) on time.

**3. FAIR TRADE:**

- We call on Governments to provide incentives for investment in testing laboratories, agency standards, micro lending, and other support mechanisms that are required to obtain the Fair Trade Certificate
- We call on private sector institutions, i.e., Ecobank, the Africa Development Bank, Ethiopian Airlines and others to support AWEP members and other MSMEs in obtaining finance, and addressing logistic and transportation challenges that they face in doing business.

**4. YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS:**

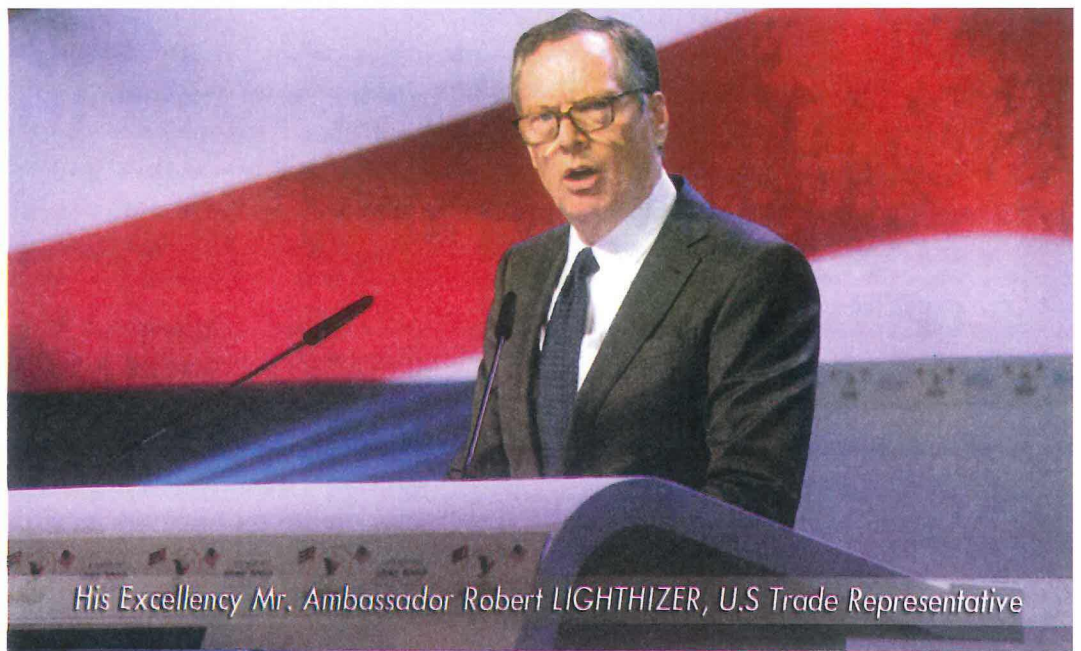
- We encourage member governments to promote policies that encourage "clustering" to grow economies of scale, and strategic partnerships with

universities, the private sector and government agencies to provide fellowships, internships and skills training for the youth.

- We urge member governments to provide widespread access to digital-age technology, including, internet access, mobile technology, e-commerce and other new media to promote entrepreneurship among youth and women.

**5. MICRO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE VALUE CHAIN:**

- We call on member governments to increase their support for trade and technical capacity building programs in their countries to strengthen micro, small, and medium sized enterprises so they can better participate in global value chains.
- We encourage member governments to enact policies that will attract







*H.E. Mr. Komi Sélom KLASSOU, Prime Minister, Head of Togolese Government, Opening Speech*



*Partial view, Togolese Government Members*

foreign direct investment, including that from Diaspora, and partnerships with U.S. multinationals in order to foster inclusion of MSMEs in their global value chains.

#### **6. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

AGOA Civil Society Organization Network Secretariat to organize training and provide capacity building and technical assistance in partnership with AWEF and network members quarterly in West; East; Central and Southern Africa regions.

#### **Success factors of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum**

Several factors contributed to the resounding success of the forum. These are, namely:

1. The commitment of the Togolese Government
2. The high quality cooperation between the Government of the United

States of America and the Government of Togo

3. The strong mobilization and the quality contribution of the eligible countries and the African regional and sub-regional organizations.
4. The quality of the collaboration with the U.S technical partners
5. The effectiveness of the African countries Ambassadors Committee and the African Union in Washington
6. The strong mobilization and active participation of private sector delegates and non-governmental organizations from Africa and the U.S.
7. The proactive leadership of the Togolese private sector and civil society in organizing the forum

The high professionalism of service providers





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS OF THE TOGOLESE GOVERNMENT



Ms. Bernadette E. LEGZIM-BALOUKI  
Togolese Minister of Trade and  
Private Sector Promotion.

The 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum between the U.S. and the eligible countries of Sub-Saharan Africa was held from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> August 2017 in Lomé, Togo, under the theme: **"The U.S. and Africa : Partnering for Prosperity through Trade "**. This high-level economic and trade cooperation forum between US and Africa has fulfilled all its promises,

According to the participants and the observers, the AGOA 2017 Forum was the best organized thus far. This merit goes first and foremost to the highest authorities of the host country, who managed to provide the necessary dynamic and all the

facilities for the success of this great intercontinental forum. To this end, we would like to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Head of State, President of the Togolese Republic, H.E. Mr. **Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé** for the confidence placed in the AGOA Forum National Organizing Committee and for the important support to the organization of the forum.

The Organizing Committee expressed its gratitude to the Prime Minister, Mr. **Komi Selom Klassou** for his support throughout the process and to all the members of the Government who worked for the outstanding success of the forum.





Our thanks go to the U.S. Government, to H.E. Mr. Ambassador **Robert Lighthizer**, U.S. Trade Representative for his presence at the Lomé Forum and his commitment to facilitating trade between the United States and Africa, to the entire U.S. delegation that accompanied him, and to H.E. Mr. **David Glimour**, the U.S. Ambassador in Togo. We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the U.S. inter-agency teams that supported us throughout the process. We particularly thank Mrs. **Connie Hamilton**, Acting U.S. Trade Representative for Africa, Mr. **Peter Barlerin**, Deputy Assistant Secretary, State Department's African Affairs Bureau, Mr. **Harry Sullivan**, State Department, Africa / Bureau of Economic and Regional Affairs Acting Director and Mr. **Frédérique Stewart**, Department of Commerce, Africa Bureau Director. We would especially like to salute Mrs. **Tawanna Davidson**, State Department, Africa / Bureau of Economic and Regional Affairs, AGOA Forum Logistics Lead who worked closely with the National Committee and all stakeholders

for a successful logistics preparation. The Government also thanks U.S. technical partners, the Corporate Council on Africa, the AGOA Civil Society Network, the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program, the West Africa Trade Hub and AGOA.info of the Trade Law Center, which worked closely with the National Committee in preparing the forum.

My warmest congratulations and thanks to all the governmental delegations of eligible countries who took part in the Lomé Forum, to the Private Sector, Civil Society and the Diaspora actors as well as all the stakeholders who marked the event.

The gratitude of the Togolese Government is also addressed to Group of Ambassadors of the eligible countries and the African Union based in Washington for their technical leadership which enabled the excellent preparation of the eligible countries. Special thanks also go to H.E. Mr. **Frédéric Edem Hegbe**, Ambassador of Togo in the U.S and H.E. Mr. **Soorooj Phokeer**,



Ambassador of Mauritius in the U.S.

Transnational Incorporated Group for the outstanding

We would particularly like to congratulate the President of the AGOA 2017 Forum National Organizing Committee, Minister, Advisor to the President of the Republic, Mrs. **Dédé Ahoéfa Ekoue**, for her personal commitment and high quality leadership in coordinating all activities related to the forum. We worked in good synergy and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of her team and that of the Ministry of Trade who worked together and in the same dynamic.

May all the members of the National Organizing Committee, the chairpersons and members of commissions, chairpersons and members of technical committees for the private sector forum and the civil society forum, find hereby the gratitude of the Government and the people of Togo as a whole.

The Government of Togo expresses its deep appreciation to Mr. **Ade Ayeyemi**, Chairman and CEO of ECOBANK

contribution of this pan-African institution to the success of the forum. The Government extends its deep gratitude to Mr. **Olowo-N'djoTchala** of the Togolese Diaspora in the U.S., Founder and Manager of ALAFFIA for all the commitment and investment made for the success of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum.

We salute the diaspora members who took the initiative to participate in and contribute to the forum and we thank Mr **Victor Adoukonou**, President of the "Togolese Diaspora in the USA" association. We would like to congratulate Mr. **Fall Toure** Fashion designer and founder of the Fashion Academy of Lomé Togo (FALT) for the successful organization of the "Lomé AGOA Fashion Week".

May Mrs. **Rachel Ebaneth**, Focal point of the 14<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum in Gabon, Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade SMEs, Crafts and Service Development in Gabon, be warmly thanked for her



availability to exchange with the Togolese counterparts about good practices of the 14<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum.

We would like to thank all the service providers involved in the organization of the forum, the national and international media, all the good-wills and all those who contributed in a way or another to the successful organization of this forum.

Indeed, the Lomé Forum was a great success and led to important recommendations for a better AGOA utilization. During this important event, all stakeholders renewed their commitment to make AGOA, a more dynamic framework of win-win U.S. – Africa partnership.

In this vein, the Government of Togo will work closely with the Private sector, the Civil Society and the Diaspora, whose contribution is essential to ensure the implementation of the Operational Action Plan for the AGOA utilization for an economic and inclusive development.

For the next eight (8) years of AGOA, it is our deepest hope that all Sub-Saharan Africa eligible countries will implement AGOA utilization strategies and operational plans and take maximum advantage of this opportunity for the benefit of our economies and our respective populations.

To accompany this process, a general report of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA forum is produced and available on the official website of the forum ([www.agoa-togo.tg](http://www.agoa-togo.tg)) and on the experience sharing website of the 16<sup>th</sup> AGOA Forum ([www.agoatogo2017.info](http://www.agoatogo2017.info)) set up by the Forum's Strategic Coordination Unit.

Full success to AGOA, the foundation of U.S. – Africa economic partnership for prosperity through Trade.



Ms. Bernadette E. LEGZIM-BALOUKI









H.E. Mr Frédéric Edem HEGBE, Ambassador of Togo in USA





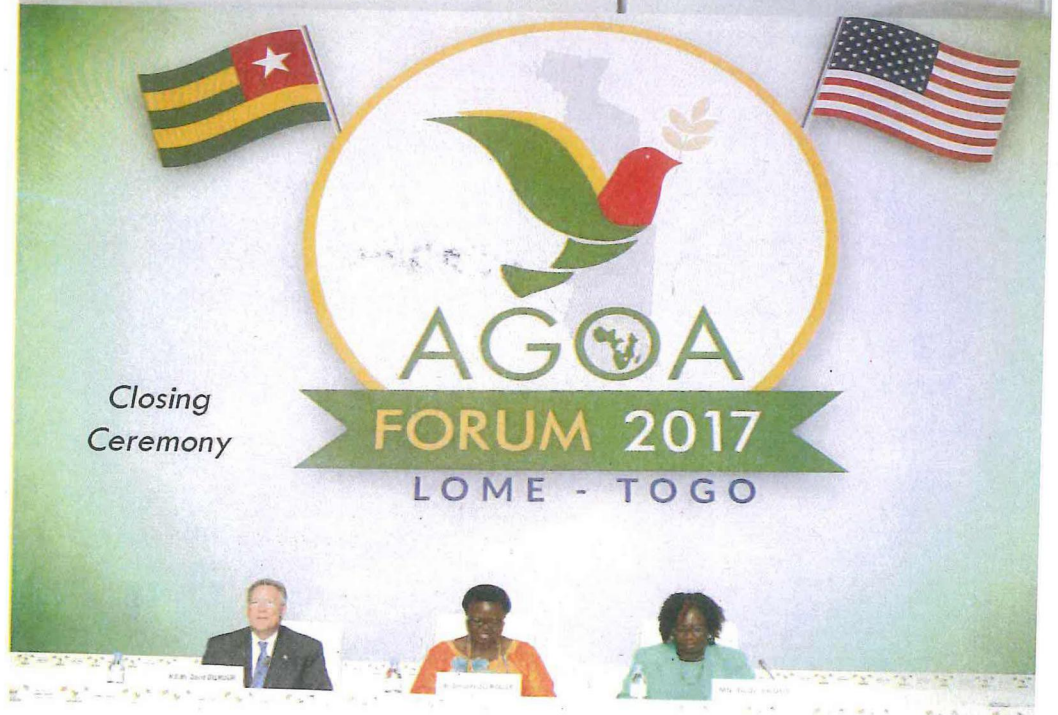




















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