

# African Nations Push for Critical Minerals and Industrialization at the Center of AGOA Reform

*AGOA reform proposals aim to expand U.S.-Africa trade while advancing mineral processing, industrialization, and sustainability.*

HUNTERSVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES, June 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The ongoing revision of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) presents a strategic opportunity to redefine economic relations between Africa and the United States, particularly in the area of critical minerals. African governments and stakeholders advocate for a modernized AGOA that moves beyond preferential market access and actively supports industrialization, local value addition, technology transfer, investment, and job creation. Their objective is to transform Africa from a supplier of raw materials into a competitive participant in global critical mineral value chains.

African countries propose that a reformed AGOA encourage local processing, refining, and manufacturing of mineral products while expanding trade preferences to include higher-value mineral-based goods. They also seek stronger U.S. investment in infrastructure, industrial projects, skills development, and regional value chains. Sustainability remains a central concern, with emphasis on traceability, environmental protection, responsible mining practices, and compliance with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards. Inclusive growth, particularly through employment opportunities for women and youth, is also highlighted as a priority.

The recommendations emerging from stakeholder consultations focus on eight key areas: expanded market access, industrialization, investment and infrastructure development, stronger U.S.-Africa partnerships, regional integration, supply-chain security, sustainable development, and social inclusion. Together, these measures aim to increase Africa's participation in higher-



Dr Ngoie Joel Nshisso speaking at DRC-USA conference in Charlotte, NC

value segments of global supply chains and strengthen the continent's economic resilience.

The expert analysis concludes that while AGOA has generated benefits in sectors such as textiles and manufacturing since its creation in 2000, its impact on structural economic transformation has been limited. Most African exports to the United States remain concentrated in raw materials and low-value-added products. Furthermore, the lack of strong regional value chains, infrastructure constraints, and limited industrial capacity have reduced the program's effectiveness in promoting long-term development.

The growing strategic importance of critical minerals and the increasing influence of China in Africa have added a geopolitical dimension to AGOA reform. The United States views access to critical mineral supply chains as a strategic priority, while African countries seek to leverage competition among major powers to secure investments, technology transfer, and industrial development. Experts argue that a "second-generation AGOA" should integrate critical minerals into a broader framework of industrial, technological, and economic partnership.

In conclusion, the proposed AGOA reform aims to transform the program from a simple trade preference mechanism into a catalyst for sustainable industrialization, regional integration, technological advancement, and inclusive growth. For Africa, the ultimate goal is not merely to export more, but to process, innovate, and capture a larger share of global value creation in critical mineral industries.

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