



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 11, 2006

Press Office: 202-712-4320

Web site: www.usaid.gov

FACT SHEET

ADVANCING AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY THROUGH GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Overview

U.S. Government assistance and trade policies offer opportunities for African countries to build free markets and increase foreign investments that promote economic growth, create jobs, and raise living standards. At the Fourth Annual African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Ministerial Forum in Senegal in July 2005, President George W. Bush announced the African Global Competitiveness Initiative (AGCI) to build sub-Saharan Africa's capacity for trade and competitiveness. The AGCI, under AGOA, is providing \$200 million of additional resources over five years to expand African trade with the U.S., other international trading partners, and regionally within Africa to promote the export competitiveness of African countries. The AGCI's four strategic objectives will:

- Improve the policy, regulatory, and enforcement environment for private sector-led trade and investment;
- Improve the market knowledge, skills, and abilities of private sector enterprises;
- Increase access to financial services for trade and investment; and
- Facilitate investments in infrastructure.

Through AGCI, the U.S. Government collaborates with host-country governments, regional organizations, and private sector partners to promote a range of activities focused on advancing economic growth and trade. The AGCI coordinates the resources of the U.S. Government to build capacity and stimulate investment in Africa. Areas of emphasis include private sector development; information and communication technologies dissemination; export diversification; financial sector strengthening; infrastructure investment facilitation; and international quality standards and inspection requirements compliance.

Hubs for Global Competitiveness (Trade Hubs)

Assistance will be provided through USAID headquarters, as well as USAID's regional hubs for global competitiveness located in Gaborone, Botswana; Accra, Ghana; Nairobi, Kenya; and Dakar, Senegal, as well as through USAID bilateral missions. Additional assistance will also be provided by other U.S. government agencies. Competitiveness Hubs respond to region-specific needs and serve as a central point for information and technical assistance on trade, investment, and business activities in the region, including training opportunities.

Currently, a wide range of activities are underway in each Hub, such as promoting exports of agricultural commodities, generating business opportunities for the export of textiles and apparel, and removing policy and infrastructure constraints that hamper trade. The Hubs have established AGOA resource centers to provide information and technical assistance on AGOA legislation, and to build relationships with U.S. businesses.

All four Hubs are staffed by experts in various trade-related fields. For example, advisors from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service work on coordinating pest risk assessments and facilitating the export of agricultural products. In addition, the Hubs focus on products eligible for duty-free treatment under AGOA in sectors specific to their region, such as the Dakar Hub's work with fish and other seafood producers.

For more information on USAID programs, visit www.usaid.gov.

###