

January 19, 2026

His Excellency
President Cyril Ramaphosa
President of the Republic of South Africa
Union Buildings
Government Avenue
Pretoria
0002

Your Excellency,

I am addressing this letter to you as Chairperson of the Solidarity Movement. As you know, the Solidarity Movement represents more than 600 000 members in South Africa and focuses on finding and implementing constructive solutions for South Africa's challenges, such as job creation, skills development and upholding constitutional freedoms while contributing to the nation's overall prosperity.

I respectfully urge you to intensify engagement with the US government and the White House to address their concerns and demands about South Africa's eligibility under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). With AGOA having expired in September 2025 and the recent passage of the AGOA Extension Act (H.R. 6500) by the US House of Representatives (which proposes a three-year extension) we are at a critical juncture where proactive diplomacy could secure our continued participation and avert economic harm.

The importance of AGOA to South Africa cannot be overstated. It has enabled over \$8 billion in annual duty-free exports to the US, bolstering key industries such as automotive manufacturing, agriculture and textiles. This has created thousands of jobs, driven economic diversification and supported the private sector's role in reducing poverty and inequality.





SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

I would like to reaffirm our movement's patriotic commitment to South Africa but also our continued criticism of your government's handling of the diplomatic dispute with the US because it put the country's economic interests at risk.

Instead of proactively utilising diplomatic channels and seeking compromises on foreign policy, as well as domestic matters such as the Expropriation Act, the BELA Act and racial laws, the government has taken ideological positions that harmed the economy and workers disproportionately.

This reluctance contributed to US tariffs on South African goods, while alternative international partners do not offer the same market access or economic stability. The government's initial slow reaction forced civil society organisations such as the Solidarity Movement to intervene in the interest of South Africa's citizens and economy.

We believe that prioritising non-alignment in foreign affairs and upholding constitutional protections for property and cultural freedoms would better serve our nation's stability and attractiveness to investors.

On all the issues the Trump White House is concerned about we hold that an agreement is not only possible but achievable through pragmatic dialogue. Targeted adjustments could align South Africa's policies with AGOA's eligibility criteria without compromising our sovereignty.

I urge you to consider making measured political concessions such as reaffirming commitments to property rights, more efforts to fight all crime including farm attacks and clarifying foreign policy stances to emphasise balanced international relations. These steps could unlock continued AGOA access, safeguard jobs in export-dependent sectors and enhance our global competitiveness, ultimately benefiting workers, businesses and the economy at large.





SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

Punitive tariffs resulting from exclusion would disproportionately harm the private sector and ordinary citizens, exacerbating unemployment and inequality without addressing the root concerns. Over the past 12 months, the Solidarity Movement has consistently demonstrated our willingness to assist in resolving this dispute. We have engaged with US stakeholders through advocacy visits, provided insights on the ground-level impacts of AGOA to South African workers and promoted constructive solutions to bridge the divide between our two nations.

We remain committed to contribute further, whether through facilitating dialogues, offering policy recommendations or mobilising support for mutually beneficial outcomes. The Solidarity Movement is committed to South Africa's success and believes that renewed AGOA participation will strengthen our economy while preserving strong ties with the United States.

I implore you to seize this opportunity for engagement and agreement.

Thank you for your attention given to this pressing matter. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you in person and explore how we can collaborate for the greater good of our country.

Yours faithfully,

Flip Buys
Chairperson
The Solidarity Movement

