



SOLIDARITY  
MOVEMENT

January 19, 2026

The Honorable John Thune  
Majority Leader  
The United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Thune,

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chairperson of the Solidarity Movement, a prominent South African civil society organization dedicated to advancing workers' rights and economic self-reliance and cultural preservation, particularly that of Afrikaans-speaking communities.

Founded as a trade union in the mining sector, and evolving into a broader movement encompassing over 25 institutions, including the Solidarity trade union and AfriForum (a civil rights organization), the Solidarity Movement represents more than 600 000 members and focuses on 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.

On behalf of the Solidarity Movement, I respectfully urge you and your colleagues in the Senate to expedite the approval of the AGOA Extension Act (H.R. 6500), recently passed by the House of Representatives. This legislation would extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) for three years, restoring duty-free access to the US market for eligible sub-Saharan African countries and providing critical economic stability amid global uncertainties. The renewal of AGOA is vital, not only for South Africa, but for the entire African continent.



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For South Africa, AGOA has facilitated over \$8 billion in annual exports to the US, supporting key industries such as automotive manufacturing, agriculture, and textiles. Such exports have created thousands of jobs, stimulated economic growth and helped diversify our export base beyond raw commodities.

Across Africa, AGOA has promoted regional integration, encouraged value-added production, and lifted millions out of poverty by enabling access to one of the world's largest markets. From the Solidarity Movement's perspective, as advocates for workers and the private sector, AGOA represents a lifeline that empowers businesses and employees to thrive, fostering self-sufficiency and reducing reliance on state interventions that often exacerbate inequality.

It is essential to support South Africa's private sector and its workers who form the backbone of our economy, without conflating their efforts with the policies of the government. While concerns about South Africa's foreign policy alignments and domestic issues such as land expropriation, farm murders and racial laws warrant attention, these can be addressed through targeted diplomatic channels, bilateral negotiations or conditional frameworks rather than broad trade restrictions that disproportionately harm innocent businesses and employees.

Punishing the private sector for governmental actions risks undermining the very economic players driving positive change and innovation in our country. I can confirm that constructive discussions to resolve these tensions and secure South Africa's continued eligibility under AGOA are ongoing between the South African government and the White House.

The Solidarity Movement has actively contributed to these efforts by engaging with US stakeholders, including through recent visits to advocate for our nation's economy and the people who sustain it. We remain committed to facilitating dialogue and finding mutually beneficial agreements that preserve strong ties between our two countries. Geopolitically, the renewal of AGOA is imperative for the United States' strategic interests in Africa.





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As the continent emerges as a key arena in global competition, AGOA serves as a cornerstone for countering the expanding influence of China and Russia that seek to dominate critical mineral supplies, infrastructure, and markets through coercive economic practices. By extending AGOA, the US can bolster democratic reforms, enhance access to vital resources such as cobalt and manganese, and promote stability in a region projected to be home to a quarter of the world's population by 2050.

This aligns with America's goals of fostering free-market economies, securing supply chains, and advancing shared values of human rights and the rule of law. The Solidarity Movement is unwavering in its commitment to fostering a positive and enduring relationship between the United States and South Africa. We believe that renewed economic cooperation through AGOA will strengthen these bonds, benefiting both nations' citizens and contributing to a more prosperous, secure world.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this urgent matter. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you and provide any additional insights from our perspective.

Sincerely,

Flip Buys  
Chairperson  
The Solidarity Movement

