

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

May 14, 2015

The Honorable Christopher Coons
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coons:

Thank you for your letter regarding the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) reauthorization legislation that is currently pending in the Congress and asking how we would implement it to address the concerns that have been raised about barriers to South Africa's market, including South Africa's measures with respect to American poultry. As you know, we share your concerns about those measures, which we must resolve quickly to ensure that American businesses and workers are given an opportunity to compete fairly in the South African market.

The Obama Administration is deeply committed to the early and seamless renewal of AGOA, which is the cornerstone of our economic relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa, as I know you are, and we recognize that AGOA's eligibility criteria are a critical part of the statutory scheme. We share the concerns that you and other Members and stakeholders have raised about whether South Africa is continuing to meet the AGOA eligibility criteria. We and other senior Administration officials, including Vice President Biden, have engaged extensively with the South African government regarding these concerns and have alerted them to the risks for South Africa's continued AGOA eligibility if these concerns are not addressed.

In March, I conveyed in a letter to South Africa's Trade Minister Davies several areas of serious concern related to South Africa's continued imposition of barriers and other measures inhibiting U.S. trade and investment. We have also had several bilateral meetings with Minister Davies, senior officials and technical staff to try to resolve the issues, most recently at the U.S.-South African Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council Meeting on April 16th.

Looking ahead, I am committed to working with you to remove these barriers to trade and investment and, to that end, to use all the tools at our disposal, including – should it be signed into law – the out-of-cycle review process included in the pending AGOA reauthorization legislation, and the authority to withdraw, suspend or limit AGOA benefits.

I look forward to continuing our dialogue and working together cooperatively to achieve our shared goal of the resolution of this issue and the renewal of AGOA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Michael Froman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" and last name "Froman" clearly distinguishable.

Ambassador Michael B.G. Froman