



Trade, Industry and Competition Minister, Ebrahim Patel

South African Minister supports call for reauthorisation of AGOA

Trade, Industry and Competition Minister, Ebrahim Patel, has thrown his weight behind the reauthorisation of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as swiftly as possible and with refinements that do not require lengthy discussions.

Patel was delivering closing remarks at the three-day 20th African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum held at Nasrec in Johannesburg.

“One idea that's come up from the discussions is whether we should consider, if needed, a two-stage programme. But the first stage firmly focused on reauthorisation as rapidly as possible, maybe with a modest package of refinements that does not require lengthy discussions.

“The second stage with further and perhaps deeper improvements that require more time and further study, and that can be done fairly shortly thereafter. We are particularly keen to get the reauthorisation in the earliest part of 2024, so this will be very helpful.

“These are ideas that we want our friends in the United States to think through and consider. We are also reflecting a little bit on these weighing up the pros and cons,” the Minister said.

The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act is a unilateral trade preference scheme that provides qualifying sub-Saharan African countries with duty-free, quota-free access into the United States market. AGOA remains the cornerstone of the

USA's commercial relations with sub-Saharan Africa.

The Minister said that discussions at the forum also looked at a graduation system once countries reach a particular level of advancement, adding that they can be even considered a "constructive conversation about the matrix of that level of advancement".

Patel also emphasised that there are policy areas that need to be relooked, adding that polishing existing policies would make room for more African products to make it to the international market.

"Those colleagues who've been enjoying our fruits, SA citrus fruit from the region, which can be available in larger quantities, we can resolve those things. Matters we constructively engage in, for example relating to steel and aluminium, these are practical solutions we believe can unlock the value of trade. In different parts of the continent, in West Africa, there are constraints in accessing the American market. In East Africa, there are different products we need to refine."

Patel highlighted that the discussions also looked at the idea of small businesses to small business partnership between the African continent and the United States.

For more information: [sanews.gov.za](https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/patel-supports-call-reauthorisation-agoa) (<https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/patel-supports-call-reauthorisation-agoa>).

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