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PRESS RELEASE

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Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Textiles Visits Lesotho

Maseru, Lesotho . . . June 17, 2015 . . . Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Textiles Gail Strickler visited Lesotho on June 16 to highlight the successful partnership between the United States and Lesotho under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and see first-hand the impact of U.S. programs that support the textile industry and overall economic development in the Kingdom. During her visit she met with government officials, including the Minister of Trade and the CEO of the Lesotho National Development Corporation. She also visited several Lesotho apparel factories and met with Basotho exporters who, with support from the U.S. government through the Southern Africa Trade Hub, participated in the *MAGIC Las Vegas* fashion trade show this past February.

Strickler said she was pleased to see what has been accomplished in Lesotho under AGOA and noted that the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives recently passed bills reauthorizing AGOA for an additional 10 years. *“The legislation needs to be reconciled but we hope to see final enactment soon, and when we do, the 10-year time horizon will be a game changer, opening up windows for significant new investment across Africa”* Strickler added.

The Southern Africa Trade Hub, a U.S. assistance project managed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), plays a pivotal role in strengthening the impact of AGOA in Southern Africa by enhancing value chain development, increasing export opportunities to the U.S., and expanding quality standards and entrepreneurship across the region. The Trade Hub also works to expand the reach, integration, and opportunities for designers, manufacturers, and workers that comprise the textile, apparel, and footwear industries in Southern Africa.

Strickler joined the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) after almost 30 years in the textile and apparel industry. She is responsible for supervising negotiations affecting textile and apparel products, advising the USTR on textile and apparel trade policy and working to expand the industry's access to foreign markets.

For more information on the South African Trade Hub visit their website at: www.satradehub.org.

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