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**TRADE  
HUB**  
SOUTHERN AFRICA

## SUCCESS STORY

# Source Africa Stitches Up Another Success

**USAID supports major trade show designed to boost exports to the U.S. and enhance the sector throughout Africa**



### ***Textiles & Apparel: Changing Lives Around the World***

In her keynote speech at Source Africa 2014, AUSTR Gail Strickler discussed the importance of the textiles and apparel industry as a catalyst for industry globally and a sector with a multiplier effect that changes the livelihoods of the community around it. She spoke both in her capacity as a trade expert but also drew on personal experience: explaining that her own grandmother, orphaned at 16, found employment and betterment for herself and her siblings by working in an apparel factory in New York in the last century. “There are 300,000 garment workers employed in factories in Africa that utilize AGOA,” she explained. “A job is not merely the extraction of labor, and our ultimate goal is that these jobs created through AGOA would be increasingly productive, skill-building and sustainable, becoming a channel through which more entrepreneurs, ideas and technology are birthed. With duties as high as 32%, US apparel importers want your products, and you are learning to satisfy their demands.”

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Source Africa 2014 took place June 18-20 in Cape Town, South Africa, supported by USAID’s Southern Africa Trade Hub and valued partners LTE, the American Apparel and Footwear Association, and the African Cotton & Textile Industries Federation. The pan-African Textiles and Apparel trade show drew 1,185 visitors, up 25% from last year’s inaugural event. The trade show welcomed 214 exhibitors from 18 countries including South Africa, Mauritius, Egypt, Madagascar, Botswana, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Lesotho, Swaziland, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Cote d’Ivoire and saw brisk foot traffic on both days of the exhibition.

The textile and apparel industry is one of the most accessible manufacturing industries worldwide and has historically been the cornerstone of industrial development for developing countries. The clothing sector in particular has generated thousands of jobs in the Southern Africa region, 80% of which go to women. USAID is supporting the industry to enhance economic growth in Southern Africa, increase exports and encourage regional integration.

Source Africa 2014 used a sophisticated business-to-business matchmaking system to connect suppliers with buyers most likely to be interested in their product. Early lead generation results a week after the show already clocked in over USD \$1 million, even though most sales will only be finalized in the months to come. The trade show was accompanied by a series of well-attended business seminars and panel sessions with key industry figures. Source Africa’s four seminars over three days focused on the themes of sourcing requirements for the US market, navigating policies for African trade and intra-African trade, free market agreement policies affecting Africa, and the challenges that African countries are addressing to attract foreign direct investment.

A major theme of Source Africa 2014 was the importance of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and its “seamless renewal,” which the Obama Administration has stated as an important goal. CG Erica Barks-Ruggles from the US consulate in Cape Town noted at the plenary that AGOA has created over 100,000 jobs in Southern Africa alone since inception. Assistant US Trade Representative for Textiles Gail Strickler gave the keynote address emphasizing the strategic advantage AGOA offers to African companies trading with the U.S. and discussed specific, concrete ways suppliers can maximize those benefits. Abisha Tembo, Chief Director, Clothing, Textile, Footwear and Leather (IDD) from South Africa’s Department of Trade and Industry also addressed the session, explaining how the government’s industrial policy action plan is designed to increase the growth of the sector.

With enthusiastic participation in the panel sessions, key industry leaders sharing their expertise, a busy exhibition floor and networking opportunities throughout the three days of the show, Source Africa 2014 turned out to be a success on all counts.