
U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



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USTDA PROMOTES AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT AT AGOA FORUM

Acting Director Zak Reaffirms USTDA's Commitment to Advancing Africa's Priorities

NAIROBI, KENYA – Acting Director Leocadia I . Zak reaffirmed USTDA's long-term commitment to Africa's development during a plenary session she co-chaired today with Ethiopia's Minister of Trade and Industry, His Excellency Girma Birru, entitled "Africa: Successes, Challenges and Prospects." In support of this commitment, Ms. Zak signed a grant agreement with the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) to support the development of regional rail integration. In addition, USTDA announced additional programs it intends to support in the areas of transportation, customs modernization, and meteorology. The grant signing and announcements, which took place during the eighth African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Forum, are designed to further the establishment of the necessary infrastructure and capacity in sub-Saharan Africa to generate sustainable growth and support enhanced U.S.-Africa trade relations.

"In his speech last month in Ghana, President Obama laid out the commitment of the United States to be a partner and a friend of Africans working for transformational change on the continent," said USTDA Acting Director Zak. "In many cases, regional solutions to Africa's development challenges hold great promise. By looking broadly at issues that cross borders and pooling ideas and resources, countries can strengthen their connections to the global market and better utilize the trade benefits under AGOA as a catalyst for growth. USTDA is pleased to be an active partner in furthering Africa's infrastructure priorities and in supporting Africa's regional integration efforts."

Recognizing the importance of transportation infrastructure to trade and economic growth, UEMOA has prioritized the development of stronger regional transportation connections throughout West Africa. The \$750,000 USTDA grant awarded today will support this effort by funding a feasibility study on a proposed rail line from Bamako, Mali to Mali's southeastern border with Côte d'Ivoire that would provide a reliable transport link for land-locked Burkina Faso and Niger to the Port of Dakar in Senegal. Acting Director Zak and UEMOA Commissioner Christophe Dabiré signed the grant agreement on behalf of the U.S. government and UEMOA, respectively.

The grant was awarded under USTDA's African Trade Lanes Partnership, which is designed to promote regional cooperation and connectivity in all modes of transportation, including aviation, maritime, land, and rail.

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In addition to signing the grant agreement, Acting Director Zak announced the launching of a regional intermodal transportation training program under the African Trade Lanes Partnership. The three-week program will include delegates from Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, and Tanzania, who will attend courses at the Global Maritime and Transportation School at the Merchant Marine Academy in New York. The delegates will also meet with U.S. suppliers and visit a number of maritime ports to see U.S. technologies in operation.

Also under the African Trade Lanes Partnership, Acting Director Zak announced USTDA's intention to award a grant to the Namibia Airports Company to fund a feasibility study on updates to the master plan for Hosea Kutako International and Eros airports. USTDA plans to sign an agreement to confer this grant early next week.

Acting Director Zak also announced USTDA's intention to award a grant for a feasibility study that will assess the systems and facilities requirements of the Uganda Department of Meteorology. Recognizing the importance of timely and informative weather information to the agricultural and aviation sectors, the study will recommend technical solutions necessary to deploy a system that will provide real-time information on weather that will directly affect wide portions of Uganda's economy.

In the customs arena, Acting Director Zak announced USTDA's plans under the agency's Global Customs Initiative (GCI) to fund a training program on customs modernization for the East African Community. USTDA launched GCI in 2006 to improve host country policies, procedures, and regional cooperation; integrate participating countries more closely into the global trading environment; and enhance the global trade and investment climate.

The contracting opportunity associated with the USTDA grant to UEMOA will be competed on the Federal Business Opportunities (FBO) website. A link to the FBO announcement will be posted on USTDA's website at www.ustda.gov. U.S. firms should submit proposals according to the instructions contained in the announcement. UEMOA will select the U.S. firm that will conduct the study.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds technical assistance, feasibility studies, training, and orientation visits that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creating an enabling environment for trade and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that may benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.