

President Donald Trump has signed a short-term extension of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the 26-year-old trade program that allows eligible African countries duty-free access to the U.S. market.

The extension, signed into law on February 3, 2026, runs only until December 31, and will be applied retroactively to when the program expired on September 30, 2025, the U.S. Trade Representative's office confirmed.

Originally launched in 2000, AGOA grants 32 sub-Saharan African nations preferential access to U.S. markets, covering more than 1,800 products including clothing, vehicles, and agricultural goods. At the time of its expiration last year, many African exporters feared the return of tariffs could deal another blow to economies already grappling with reduced U.S. aid and global trade pressures.

The program was briefly revived as part of a \$1.2 trillion spending package passed by the U.S. House, which included reauthorizing AGOA for the remainder of the year. But analysts warn that such a short-term extension risks creating uncertainty, discouraging long-term investment and leaving African exporters in a precarious position as they plan for the future.

From Washington's perspective, AGOA has consistently served both economic and strategic goals, supporting jobs, boosting access to critical minerals, and reinforcing U.S. energy security, key priorities under the Trump administration's America First agenda. The State Department has described AGOA as "the cornerstone of U.S. economic engagement with sub-Saharan Africa."

Still, the truncated extension comes amid broader tensions over trade policy. The agreement will be adjusted to account for U.S. tariffs on other countries, reflecting Washington's ongoing push for reciprocal trade measures. While it provides temporary relief, the uncertainty underscores the need for a durable, predictable U.S.-Africa trade framework that allows businesses on both sides to plan and invest confidently.