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EPREUVE ECRITE D'ANGLAIS

Cette épreuve comporte deux (2) pages

US – African Trade Lagging Despite Free Access

Trade between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa is in a difficult situation despite a 2000 US law designed to boost access to the American market. The African Growth and Opportunity Act, which in 2015 was extended to 2025, provides tariff-free access on 6,500 products to 39 countries, ranging from oil and agricultural goods to textiles, farm and handicrafts.

Trade quadrupled in value from 2002 to 2008, a year when it reached \$100 billion, but fell back in 2017 to just 39 billion, according to figures compiled by the US agency USAID. The surplus is widely in Africa's favor, but most exports to US are in oil or petroleum-based products not the industrialized goods that provide a value-added boost to local economies.

"I do not think that AGOA has been the game-changer for many countries on the continent that we hoped it would be" Constance Hamilton, assistant US trade representative for Africa, told the 18th AGOA Forum, ending in the Ivory Coast's economic capital Abidjan on Tuesday. "AGOA has not led to the trade diversification for which we originally hoped", she said in remarks on Monday. "Petroleum products continued to account for the largest portion of AGOA imports, with a 67 percent share", Hamilton said. "And the volume of AGOA trade remains modest. In the AGOA clothing sector, for example, we get about \$1 billion per year from Africa," he said, adding that this amounted to just one percent of all US clothing imports.

The United States is Africa's third biggest trade partner after the European Union and China. But Africa attracts only about one percent of all US foreign investment. Deputy US Trade Representative Curtis Mahoney said Washington had drawn up a "variety of new initiatives" to "lay the groundwork for an even closer trade and investment partnership".

"We will combine the promise of the AfCFTA with these new US initiatives and help maximize the potential of US-Africa trade", he said. The AfCFTA – the African Continental Free Trade Area – is a scheme for demolishing trade barriers among the 55-member African Union. The long-negotiated agreement was ceremonially launched at a summit in July, but will need a year to become operational, the AU (African Union) says.

According to the conclusions of a pre-forum meeting of ministers ahead of the Abidjan conference, only 18 out of 39 countries have set down a national strategy for exploiting the benefits of the AGOA. Many African companies either do not know of the advantages that are on offer, or they do not know how to use them, the ministers found.

Adapted from Agence France-Presse, August 2019.

Vocabulary

- In the doldrums : to be in a difficult situation

A. Guided Commentary

- 1) Basing on the text, say what AGOA stands for? (2 points).
- 2) According to the text, what is the objective of AGOA? (2 points)
- 3) Find out in the text three (3) African products that benefit from tariff – free access. (3 points)
- 4) Relying on the text explain the paradox in US – Africa trade relationships. (3 points)
- 5) Point out from the text two (2) weaknesses of AGOA. (4 points)

B. Essay: (6 points)

In your opinion, will opening borders be beneficial or detrimental to your country? Justify your answer.
