

**As Prepared For Delivery**  
**Remarks By Ambassador Demetrios J. Marantis**  
**University of Witwatersrand**  
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Just over twenty years ago, during my senior year in college, I sat in a room not unlike this one, with fifty other students not much different from you. I had organized a South African film festival, and we had just turned on the lights to discuss a dozen hours of movies by and about South Africans. Euzhan Palcy's *A Dry, White Season*, Richard Attenborough's *Cry Freedom*, Zoltan Korda's *Cry, The Beloved Country* and many more.

I realize now that few of us in that room cared much about what had played out on the screen. We had studied South Africa and appreciated these movies. But we were anxious to see the next film about South Africa. We wanted to see the film yet shot, to hear the plot still undeveloped, and read the script yet unwritten. It was 1990, and we knew that South Africa had just begun to develop a new chapter in its history that would shape your country, Africa, and the world.

Sure enough, before we graduated Nelson Mandela was released from jail. As we started our first real jobs after college, South Africans held historic elections. In the months and years that followed, we watched in awe and solidarity as South Africa charted a new political and economic course, stuck to it, and shaped a new vision of its future.

Over the two decades since that film festival, South Africa and the subsequent exciting scenes in its history continued to captivate me. Which is why I am so excited to be back in South Africa, and why I am especially honored to be with all of you at the University of Witwatersrand. I am excited to be with all of you, because I know the next scene in South Africa's future is in your hands. All of you are writing the script, manning the cameras, and setting the stage. You are writing the future of South Africa.

Some key elements about your future we already know. We know, for example, that in coming years and decades South Africa will be anchored in a global economy. A global economy where South Africa is already an important player as a dynamic and growing middle-income country. We know that with its economic weight – accounting for nearly a quarter of Africa's economic output – South Africa will be positioned to help shape sub-Saharan Africa's growth and development as it embraces new and exciting opportunities, as well as confronts persistent but not insurmountable challenges.

And we know that your future will unfold in a global economy where the United States will continue to be a strong partner in economic growth, trade, and investment. The future you build will be on an already strong foundation. Last year, U.S.-South African trade was up 33 percent and U.S. investment hit nearly \$6 billion in 2009. Just last week, Walmart announced that after working with your regulators and other key stakeholders, it would invest \$2.4 billion in Massmart – the largest U.S. investment in South Africa.

Over 600 other American companies are investing and do business here. U.S. exports to South Africa – machinery, vehicles, and other manufactured goods – rose by one quarter to well over \$5 billion. South Africa’s exports to the United States – precious stones, metals, and vehicles – grew to over \$8 billion. Over \$3 billion of these exports entered the United States duty-free under the United States’ trade preference program for sub-Saharan Africa, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

But we can do more, which is why I am in Johannesburg this week on behalf of the Obama Administration and the U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Ron Kirk. Yesterday Trade Minister Robert Davies and I led our governments’ respective delegations at a meeting under the reinvigorated U.S.-South Africa Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). The TIFA is the premier bilateral forum for resolving trade and investment concerns and working together to realize our common ambitions for strong trade and investment ties.

We re-launched the TIFA last year and we are off to a good start. We covered technical regulations concerning trade in agricultural products and are working to make sure these regulations are non-discriminatory and science-based. Rules that will help grow trade in agricultural products between our two countries. We discussed regional integration and transportation infrastructure development to buttress our growing trade and investment relationship and support your growth. Our delegations talked about ways to strengthen intellectual property rights protection to make sure your ideas and innovations are valued and protected. And we discussed the importance of reducing barriers to foreign investment, which we know strengthens our economies.

Every TIFA discussion has a very real and clear goal in mind – to increase exports, drive new investment, and ultimately support good jobs for Americans and South Africans alike in a rules-based trade environment. And we approach the TIFA as equal partners with a common interest in a mutually beneficial, job-creating bilateral relationship. Both the United States and South Africa can gain and prosper from this relationship.

In addition to TIFA talks, we also know that central to assuring our common future prosperity is learning from our past experience. In 2003, the United States and the five member countries of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) -- Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland -- launched negotiations toward a free trade agreement. Eventually, we learned that our interests and goals were not aligned. The time was not right to pursue that two-way agreement. By contrast, we see over a decade of success in South Africa’s experience with the one-way AGOA preference program. South Africa has been the biggest non-oil beneficiary of all the 37 AGOA eligible countries, exporting the most diverse mix of goods under AGOA and taking greatest advantage of this program’s benefits.

South Africa has also been a leader in promoting regional economic integration, fostering trade and investment with your neighbors. Greater integration can create regional markets to attract greater investment, foster specialization and establish efficient regional supply chains. Ultimately, integrated communities reap economies of scale no single African economy can achieve. Europe, North America, and the Asia Pacific have been moving toward greater regional integration for decades and have seen tangible results.

African intra-regional trade has increased to 16 percent of total trade over the past decade, but remains below what we see in other regions of the world. For its own competitiveness, Africa's regional economic communities should do more. And we applaud South Africa for hosting next week's summit of three of the continent's major regional economic communities to advance efforts toward a free trade area from Cape Town to Cairo.

These successes, ambitions, and shortcomings should inform our next steps. A key next step is deciding what to do next on our preference program for Africa. AGOA is set to expire in 2015, and the Obama Administration is actively engaging AGOA beneficiaries, Congress, and stakeholders to determine what approach to take as we consider a possible renewal of AGOA.

It is only logical that South Africa is at the heart of this discussion. Your industries' utilization of AGOA for a diverse range of exports is an example for many other AGOA countries, many of which have yet to take full advantage of the program. So we are asking, how can we replicate South Africa's experience? What can other sub-Saharan countries learn? Many of South Africa's exporting industries are also world-class and globally competitive. So we are asking, how should AGOA account for these South African successes? Your country is also now in the ranks of the "BRICS," the rising middle-income countries of Brazil, Russia, China, and India. So we are asking, how do we help South Africa transition from a trade preferences recipient to a status more befitting of a competitive and growing global economic stakeholder? And how do we achieve such a transition in light of South Africa's still uneven economic development? These questions, and their answers, are critical to your future.

Twenty years ago, I turned on the lights as the credits rolled for the last film, looking at fifty other students staring at the screen. We sat a few quiet seconds in wonder and began to ask questions.

Today, a global audience is watching South Africa. Today, your story is unfolding on the world's stage. It is a story that is fast moving, exciting, and full of open questions. Only you in this room – and your generation – know how this scene will end. I, for one, cannot wait for what comes next.