



International  
Growth Centre

International Growth Centre  
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## Ministry of Trade and Industry and IGC to launch National AGOA Strategy to increase Sierra Leone exports to US markets

### Press Release

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) in collaboration with the International Growth Centre (IGC) are launching the *National African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Response Strategy* at an event on **Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at the Golden Tulip (formerly Kimbima) Hotel, Aberdeen, starting at 8:30 am.**

Hon. Peter B. Konteh, Minister of Trade and Industry, will launch the AGOA Strategy, which will be followed by a *Forum on New Directions for Trade and Private Sector Expansion in Sierra Leone.*

AGOA, an initiative of the US Government, allows low-income countries to access the US market on very favourable trade terms. Implementation of the new AGOA Strategy will allow Sierra Leone to benefit from duty free access to US markets when exporting products produced in the country.

Although the initiative has been in place for almost 20 years, Sierra Leone had not made use of the opportunity. The Government recently requested support from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to develop a strategy for accessing the US market through AGOA. The IGC, in collaboration with MTI and the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA), undertook extensive consultations and research over the past year to help develop the AGOA Strategy.

After the strategy launch, a panel of policymakers and private sector representatives will discuss the findings of some of the studies that influenced the design of the strategy. The IGC aims for these studies, among others, to inform a new direction in the development of the private sector in Sierra Leone.

The research on the private sector ranges from details of cross-border trade with neighbouring countries, employment of graduates in the formal sector, supply-side constraints to expansion of manufacturing, and most importantly, the underlying factors restraining growth and expansion of the private sector and the economy. The results of the studies point to changes needed for the private sector to play the role expected in the development of the state including creating jobs and generally enhancing the transformation of the economy. A summary of the findings and recommendations of these studies will be presented at the forum.

Herbert M'cleod, IGC Sierra Leone Country Director, said: *"We hope the forum will be an opportunity for frank discussions on challenges and opportunities facing trade and the development of the private sector in Sierra Leone, including their impact on future growth and sustainable development. Given the intention of the government to promote trade and developing the private sector to diversify the economy, the recommendations from the event should contribute towards the national trade strategy and set the foundations for the government's reform efforts".*

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The public is hereby encouraged to follow and contribute to the discussion on radio and/or television.

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