

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 21, 2021

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write regarding your intent to terminate the designation of Ethiopia as a beneficiary country under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as of January 1, 2022. We ask that you reconsider this decision to suspend Ethiopia's eligibility on such an abrupt timeline and allow time for all parties in Ethiopia to take the necessary steps to end the conflict, deploy humanitarian aid to those who need it, and continue negotiations to garner peace.

On November 2, the White House announced that Ethiopia would lose its AGOA eligibility at the end of the year. While we absolutely condemn the human rights abuses that have taken place on both sides of this conflict, we are concerned that suspension of AGOA benefits will be counterproductive and disproportionately harm the most vulnerable Ethiopians without contributing to the cessation of hostilities. Loss of AGOA eligibility will reverse economic gains that have been hard won by the people of Ethiopia, American investors, and exacerbate the circumstances of the most vulnerable sectors of the population, including women and children. Furthermore, this decision invites China to strengthen its economic foothold in the Horn of Africa.

We remain deeply troubled by the ongoing war in Ethiopia and repeat our calls for all parties to come to the table to bring an end to it. In light of recent reports that the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is planning to withdraw from the Amhara and Afar regions, we hope that this move can serve as an opening for a negotiated ceasefire.

We urge your administration to explore options for allowing additional time for Ethiopia to come into compliance with AGOA as we continue pressing all sides to come to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Sincerely,



Chris Van Hollen
Chair, Senate Foreign Relations
Committee, Subcommittee on
Africa and Global Health Policy



Karen Bass
Chair, House Foreign Affairs
Committee, Subcommittee
on Africa, Global Health,
Global Human Rights and
International Organizations

CC: Secretary of State, Antony Blinken
United States Trade Representative, Katherine Tai