

# USTR NEWS

## UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

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### **Ambassador Schwab Signs Trade and Investment Agreement with the East African Community**

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab today signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) aimed at deepening U.S. economic engagement with the East African Community (EAC). EAC Director-General for Customs and Trade Peter Kiguta signed the agreement on behalf of the EAC, witnessed by trade ministers and other senior officials from EAC member states Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

“The EAC is one of the leading regional economic organizations in sub-Saharan Africa,” said Ambassador Schwab. “It is making significant progress in opening up regional trade and advancing economic integration among its members. We see the TIFA as a major step toward deepening the U.S.-EAC trade and investment relationship, expanding and diversifying bilateral trade, and improving the climate for business between U.S. and East African firms.”

The U.S.-EAC TIFA will establish regular, high-level talks on the full spectrum of U.S.-EAC trade and investment topics, including the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the World Trade Organization’s Doha Round, trade facilitation issues, and trade capacity building assistance.

### **BACKGROUND**

The East African Community was established in 1999 by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Rwanda and Burundi joined in 2007. The EAC has established a free trade area among its members, as well as a customs union and is working toward a common market. Bilateral trade between the United States and the EAC region exceeded \$1.2 billion in 2007. U.S. imports from EAC members under AGOA and the Generalized System of Preferences totaled \$265 million in 2007. All five member states of the EAC are eligible for trade benefits under AGOA.

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