

Industry

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TODAY

A Magazine of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers



THE FIGHT FOR AGOA RENEWAL

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AGOA is mutually beneficial to Kenya, US – Let s protect it!

As we enter the second quarter of 2025, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a linchpin of Kenya's trade relationship with the United States, is only months from the September 30th expiry.

This deadline casts a long shadow over our manufacturing sector, threatening to disrupt decades of hard-won progress. Yet, it also galvanizes us to act with urgency and vision to secure Kenya's industrial future.

AGOA has been nothing short of transformative. By granting duty-free access to the U.S. market, it has catalyzed a manufacturing boom, positioning Kenya as Sub-Saharan Africa's leading exporter of garments to the U.S. In 2024 alone, Kenya's exports under AGOA reached \$737.3 million, with apparel constituting 72% of it.

This success has translated into tangible human impact: over 58,000 direct jobs and 100,000 indirect jobs in the apparel sector, with a workforce that is 70% women. The stakes could not be higher. A lapse in AGOA risks unravelling this progress, jeopardizing an economic fallout that would reverberate far beyond factory floors.

The potential loss of \$600 million in annual foreign exchange earnings would strain Kenya's ability to finance critical imports, placing pressure on our economic stability. Moreover, the erosion of market access could cede Kenya's hardearned position in global supply chains, as competitors vie to fill the void.

Yet, AGOA's value extends beyond Kenya's borders. It fosters a mutually beneficial partnership, delivering diverse, costeffective products to American consumers while deepening trade ties.

In 2024, Kenya imported \$782.5 million in U.S. goods, from petroleum to pharmaceuticals, underscoring a balanced and dynamic trade relationship. Allowing AGOA to lapse would not only imperil Kenyan industries but also disrupt a supply chain that American businesses and consumers have come to rely on.

This moment demands decisive action. KAM is resolute in advocating for AGOA's extension beyond 2025, urging the Kenyan government to engage proactively with U.S. counterparts to secure favourable trade terms.



TOBIAS ALANDO
Chief Executive
Kenya Association of Manufacturers

Kenya Commits to Circular Economy at Kenya LOOP Forum - 2025 Edition

Kenya took a bold step towards sustainability as the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) launched the third edition of the LOOP Forum Kenya in Nairobi, a two-day event dedicated to advancing circular economy solutions, slashing waste, and boosting resource efficiency.

Themed “Driving Kenya’s Transition to a Circular Economy through Collaboration, Innovation, and Sustainability,” the February forum convened government officials, private sector leaders, investors, development partners, and researchers to foster collaboration and spur investment in circular practices. The event underscores Kenya’s growing commitment to sustainable industrial growth amid mounting environmental challenges.

David Ongare, compliance director at the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), stressed the urgency of circular economy dialogues. “Together, we have the potential to create lasting change,” he said, citing regulatory measures like the National Waste Policy, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations, and plastics laws as critical enablers. “Discussions on circularity are vital for advancing our shared goals.”



KAM chief executive Tobias Alando framed the circular economy as a linchpin for planetary survival. “Sustainability is non-negotiable,” he said. “Through our Centre for Green Growth and Climate Change, we’re driving initiatives like the circular economy resource mapping program, which redesigns processes to cut waste, regenerate resources, and create industrial symbiosis loops.”

Nairobi - KAM Pushes Sustainability in Fashion at Design Week 2025

The Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) is championing local production and value chain integration to position Kenya as a global fashion hub. Speaking at the Kenya Fashion and Design Week 2025, themed “Empowering Kenya’s Fashion Industry Through Sustainability, Innovation, and Collaboration,” KAM CEO Tobias Alando urged support for local industries to curb import reliance and foster creativity. “Consuming local goods creates jobs and balances our economy,” he said, addressing the challenge of second-hand clothing imports stifling local production. KAM’s Jayesh Shah highlighted concerns over high cargo costs, illicit trade, and uncertainties around the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), calling for robust policies to ensure industrial resilience. Industrialisation Secretary Prof. Erastus Gatebe reaffirmed government efforts to bolster cotton farming and market access for Kenyan designers, aiming to strengthen the textile supply chain. DHL’s Edna Kerubo emphasized sustainable logistics, noting



initiatives like electrified delivery fleets and clean fuel use to minimize environmental impact. Organized with partners including TradeMark Africa, DHL, the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), and the Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry, the annual event will continue fostering collaboration to shape a sustainable future for Kenya’s fashion industry.

Kisumu - City Eyes Industrial Hub Status with Export Focus

Kisumu is poised to become a key industrial hub for agro-processing and textiles, with officials pushing for better trade finance and international standards compliance to drive export growth. At the Kenya-EU EPA Sensitization Forum in Kisumu, Trade Principal Secretary Alfred K’Ombudo advocated multi-connectivity solutions and unveiled plans for a Commodity

Exchange (COMEX) to streamline market access. EU Trade Counsellor Filippo Amato stressed value addition to tap the EU market, Kenya’s top export destination. KAM’s Head of Policy, Research, and Advocacy, Miriam Bomett, praised the forums—held across eight regions since 2024—for helping businesses leverage the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and unlock new opportunities.

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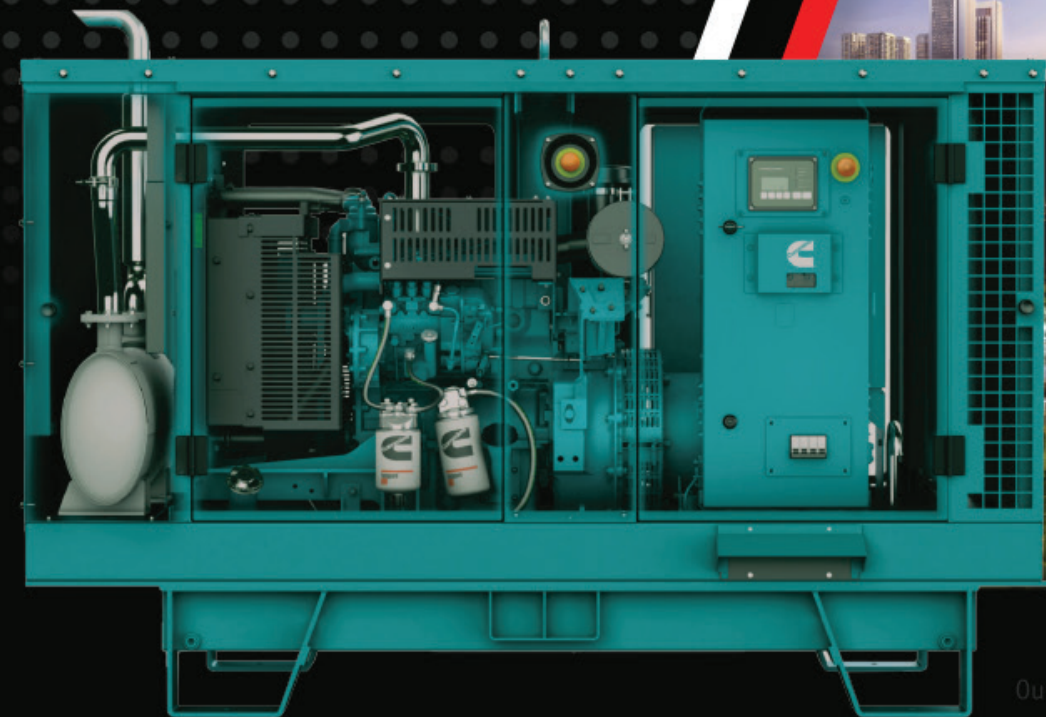
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Industrialists rally for circular economy at KAM's LOOP Forum

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Anxiety and hope as Kenya navigates uncertain future of the AGOA lifeline

It is a delicate dance between anxiety and hope as Kenya's manufacturing sector waits with bated breath for the renewal of a trade lifeline that has fuelled factories, empowered workers, and stitched a legacy of prosperity across the nation.



What is at risk is not just a piece of legislation; it is a shared vision of mutual prosperity. The world is watching. And in the fabric of every Kenyan garment bound for American shelves, there is a plea: for continuity, for partnership, and for the simple chance to keep the dream alive.



By Ochieng Rapuro

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), enacted in May 2000 under President Bill Clinton, has been a cornerstone of U.S.-Africa trade relations for over two decades. Designed to foster economic growth, strengthen commercial ties, and promote development in sub-Saharan Africa, AGOA offers eligible African countries duty-free access to the U.S. market for thousands of products. As the agreement approaches its expiration in September 2025, its impact and future remain critical topics for policymakers, businesses, and communities on both continents. Here's a closer look at what AGOA is, how it works, and why it matters.

What Is AGOA?

AGOA is a U.S. trade initiative that provides eligible sub-Saharan African countries with tariff-free and quota-free access to the U.S. market for over 1,800 products, in addition to the 5,000 products covered under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. Enacted as part of the Trade and Development Act of 2000, AGOA aims to stimulate economic growth in Africa by encouraging exports, fostering market-based economies, and promoting good governance. It also seeks to deepen U.S. economic engagement with a region rich

in resources, talent, and potential.

Unlike a free trade agreement, AGOA is a unilateral preference program, meaning the U.S. grants benefits without requiring reciprocal tariff reductions from African countries. This structure reflects its dual purpose: supporting African development while advancing U.S. economic and foreign policy interests. The program was initially set for 15 years but was extended in 2015 to run until September 30, 2025.

How Does AGOA Work?

AGOA's mechanics are straightforward but rigorous. To qualify, sub-Saharan African countries must meet eligibility criteria, including progress toward a market-based economy, rule of law, political pluralism, anti-corruption measures, and respect for human rights. The U.S. president reviews eligibility annually, and countries can be suspended or reinstated based on compliance. For example, in 2023, President Joe Biden removed Gabon, Uganda, Niger, and the Central African Republic from AGOA due to human rights violations and political issues, while Mauritania regained eligibility for advancing

worker rights.

Eligible countries can export a wide range of goods—textiles, apparel, agricultural products, and manufactured items—duty-free to the U.S., provided they meet specific rules of origin. Goods must be wholly obtained or sufficiently manufactured in an AGOA country, with at least 35% of the product's value added locally, and up to 15% of that value can come from U.S. inputs. This encourages local production and integration with U.S. supply chains.

Why Does AGOA Matter?

AGOA has delivered tangible benefits for both Africa and the U.S., though its impact varies by country and sector. Here are some key outcomes:

For African Countries

Job Creation and Economic Growth: AGOA has spurred job creation, particularly in the apparel and textile industries. In Kenya, for instance, the program has generated over 58,000 direct jobs and 100,000 indirect jobs in the apparel sector, with women making up 70% of the workforce. Across the continent, AGOA is estimated to have created 350,000 direct jobs from 2001 to 2011.

Export Diversification: While oil has historically dominated AGOA

exports, non-oil sectors like apparel, cut flowers, horticultural products, and automotive components have grown. South Africa, for example, exports diverse goods, including metals and minerals, while Kenya leads in apparel.

Foreign Exchange Earnings: In 2024, Kenya's AGOA exports to the U.S. reached \$737.3 million, with apparel accounting for 72%. These earnings bolster foreign reserves, enabling countries to finance imports and stabilize economies.

For the United States

Access to Diverse Supply Chains: AGOA provides U.S. consumers and brands with alternative sourcing options, reducing reliance on other global suppliers.

Mutual Trade Benefits: In 2015, South Africa exported \$9.1 billion in goods to the U.S. under AGOA, while the U.S. gained access to African markets for products like poultry. In 2024, U.S. imports from AGOA countries included \$1.2 billion in apparel alone.

Challenge

Uncertainty Post-2025: With AGOA set to expire, fears of job losses and economic disruption loom. Kenya alone risks losing over 150,000 jobs and \$600 million in export earnings if the program lapses.

The Future of AGOA

As AGOA nears its 2025 expiration, stakeholders are debating its renewal. African countries and some U.S. senators advocate for an early 10-year extension to provide certainty for businesses. Others, including the U.S. Trade Representative, call for reforms to address underutilization, incorporate digital and financial services, and align with climate goals.

The 2024 AGOA Forum in Washington, D.C., themed "Beyond 2025: Reimagining AGOA for an Inclusive, Sustainable and Prosperous Tomorrow," underscored the need to link AGOA with the AfCFTA to strengthen African value chains in agribusiness, textiles, and pharmaceuticals. There's also discussion about post-AGOA frameworks, such as bilateral trade agreements, as seen in Kenya's 2020 pursuit of a U.S. free trade agreement.

Why It's Worth Watching

AGOA is more than a trade program—it is a bridge connecting African ambition with American opportunity. For African nations, it's a lifeline for jobs, industrialization, and global market access. For the U.S., it's a tool for economic engagement and strategic influence in a fast-growing region. As the 2025 deadline approaches, the decisions made will determine whether AGOA continues to unlock prosperity or fades into history, leaving industries and communities to navigate an uncertain future.

— *Sources: United States Trade Representative, Council on Foreign Relations, Reuters, Brookings Institution.

Uplifting Communities, Building a Sustainable Future through AGOA

Founded by Joanna Maiden in 2009, SOKO Kenya was born from a belief that fashion can be a force for good.



By Sophie Lane

As an international sustainable and ethical clothing manufacturer, our mission has always been clear: to put people and the planet at the heart of everything we do. Over the years, SOKO Kenya has grown steadily while standing firm in our values. Today, our factory employs 150 people, primarily women, and our work extends far beyond the production floor into the wider community.

Ethical manufacturing remains at the centre of everything we do. Through our separate charity, the Kujawa Initiative, and our SOKO Community Trust Stitching Academy, we deliver financial literacy programs, reproductive health education, skills training, and initiatives that create long-term opportunities. As part of this work, we repurpose factory offcuts into washable sanitary pads, tackling menstrual health challenges while reducing environmental waste. To

date, we have trained over 500 young women, providing sewing skills and creating pathways to employment and independence for those who might not otherwise have had access to formal education. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has played a vital role in our growth story. It opened the doors to the U.S. market, giving small, value-driven manufacturers like us a real opportunity to compete on a global stage. Through AGOA, we built a strong partnership with the U.S. brand Zuri, whose mission closely mirrors our own. Founded by Ashleigh Miller and Sandra Zhao, Zuri is committed to boosting Kenya's long-term economy by paying fair wages, using local materials, and creating products that people love.

"During our three-year partnership with Zuri, we've seen firsthand their commitment to growing a brand that celebrates beautiful, high-quality clothing while honouring the people and craftsmanship



behind it," shares Jo Maiden, SOKO Kenya's founder.

Since October 2021, we have proudly produced over 100,000 garments for Zuri, growing our team and deepening our work within the community. The partnership has gone far beyond clothing. Together with Zuri, we introduced group savings and loans training for our team, helping employees build financial security and resilience for the future.

Ashleigh Miller, Co-founder of Zuri, adds: "SOKO Kenya has proven that it's possible to produce beautifully made clothing at scale, all while prioritizing employee well-being, environmental sustainability, and community impact."

This collaboration, facilitated through AGOA, has had a lasting impact on both our team and the wider community. It has enabled us to significantly scale our operations and strengthen our support for local artisans and suppliers, further enriching our supply chain while staying true to our commitment to ethical and sustainable practices.

Through this growth, we have also been able to invest in more responsible manufacturing initiatives. We installed solar panels that now supply approximately 75% of our factory's energy needs, saving around 11,000 kilograms of CO2 emissions annually.

We have diverted about 2,500 kilograms of fabric waste from landfills each year by repurposing it into bags and accessories, supporting both the Kujawa Initiative's reusable sanitary pad production and the Stitching Academy's training programs. Additionally, we have achieved full self-sufficiency in water through rainwater collection systems, further supporting our operations in an environmentally responsible way. We know that Kenya cannot compete purely on price with larger manufacturing economies.

“

We know that Kenya cannot compete purely on price with larger manufacturing economies. Labour costs, infrastructure gaps, and scale limitations make that difficult.

Labour costs, infrastructure gaps, and scale limitations make that difficult. That is why AGOA has been so critical. Duty-free access levels the playing field, allowing businesses like ours to grow and thrive based on quality, ethics, and innovation — not just cost alone. Without it, maintaining competitiveness in international markets would be much harder.

Thanks to AGOA, we have been able to pursue a model of sustainable, inclusive growth that uplifts both people and the planet. Our vision is not only to build a successful business but to be part of a movement redefining what fashion can achieve: empowering communities, protecting the environment, and celebrating craftsmanship.

The ideal outcome is for Kenya and the United States to continue strengthening this vital partnership. Renewing and reinforcing AGOA would ensure that businesses like SOKO Kenya can keep delivering positive impacts — creating jobs, supporting artisans, protecting natural resources, and inspiring a new generation of ethical entrepreneurs.

Fashion can be a force for good. With the right partnerships and the right opportunities, we can stitch together a future that benefits everyone.

— Lane is branding and communications lead at SOKO Kenya

Simba Apparel stays positive in the foggy fight for AGOA pact September renewal

In the bustling Mombasa export processing zone (EPZ), Simba Apparel Limited has over the years carved out a niche supplying high-quality clothing to the United States. Yet, as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) approaches its expiration in September, the company's managing director, Thomas Puthoor, is grappling with an uncertain future.



By Lynette Igadwa

The US trade programme, which grants duty-free access to American markets for eligible sub-Saharan African countries, has been the linchpin of Simba's success. But with Washington's deliberations on renewal now stalled, Puthoor remains cautiously optimistic, banking on Kenya's competitive edge to secure an extension.

Enacted in 2000, AGOA has transformed Kenya's apparel sector, making it a leading exporter of textiles alongside horticultural products such as flowers, nuts, and coffee. In 2023, Kenya's apparel exports to the US under AGOA reached \$540mn, accounting for nearly 70 per cent of total exports to the country.

For Simba Apparel, which employs 4,600 workers and specialises in men's and women's fashion, casual wear, workwear, hospital attire, and hospitality uniforms, the duty-free access is existential.

"Duty-free status is the bedrock of our operations," Puthoor told the Industry Today in an interview at the company's Mombasa factory, located just 10 minutes from the port. "Our production costs are 20-25 per cent higher than those in Vietnam, Bangladesh, or India. Without AGOA, we couldn't compete." The proximity to the port enables Simba to ship exclusively to the US, a market that absorbs the company's entire output. Alternative markets, such as Europe or Africa, are either too small or lack the capacity to handle Simba's



volumes, while Kenya's domestic market is not viable.

Simba's growth mirrors the broader success of Kenya's apparel industry under AGOA. Founded a decade ago when Puthoor and his team took over a pioneering EPZ factory in Mombasa, the company has more than doubled its workforce from 2,200 to 4,600. Across Kenya, 32 apparel factories employ over 62,000 people, with thousands more in supporting industries along the value chain. Yet, the looming expiry of AGOA has cast a shadow over expansion plans. "We're all in the same boat," Puthoor said. "Until the US clarifies its stance, our focus is on sustaining existing operations and protecting jobs."

Puthoor, who also serves as vice-chair of the Kenya Apparel Export Manufacturers Association, part of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), recently joined a delegation to Washington, DC, to lobby for AGOA's renewal. "We demonstrated how Kenyan manufacturers deliver affordability for US consumers," he said. "Products from Kenya are 25-30 per cent cheaper for American buyers than those from other destinations. That aligns with America First."

Despite the challenges, Puthoor's confidence is rooted in Simba's track record. The company operated at full capacity throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, avoiding layoffs or closures—a testament to its resilience. "We've been supporting America First from day one," he said. "Kenya deserves AGOA's renewal, not just for us, but for the thousands of workers who depend on it."

However, structural hurdles persist. Kenya lacks a textile mill capable

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Our production costs are 20-25 per cent higher than those in Vietnam, Bangladesh, or India. Without AGOA, we couldn't compete.”

of producing high-quality fabric for global buyers, forcing Simba to import raw materials from India, China, and Pakistan. This reliance in imports increases costs and undermines competitiveness. "Setting up a textile mill is capital-intensive, and costs here would be 20-25 per cent higher than in Asia," Puthoor noted. "There's little initiative from the government or investors to address this."

Simba and other EPZ firms have engaged the Kenyan government with proposals to mitigate the potential fallout if AGOA lapses. These discussions highlight the sector's critical role in employment and export revenue. For Puthoor, the stakes are clear: "My gut tells me AGOA will be extended. US buyers see real value in Kenya. But until we have certainty, we're holding our breath."

As Washington weighs its decision, Simba Apparel and Kenya's broader apparel industry stand at a crossroads. The outcome will determine whether Mombasa's factories continue to hum with activity or face an uncertain future, with ripple effects for workers, communities, and the country's export-driven economy.

For United Aryan, AGOA Renewal is more than Apparel Trade Agenda

Pankaj Bedi stands in United Aryan's sprawling factory in Nairobi's Ruaraka district, surrounded by the rhythmic clatter of sewing machines and the vibrant energy of 10,000 workers. As CEO, he has built an apparel empire that ships eight million pairs of jeans and millions of shirts annually to the United States, riding the wave of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).



By Conrad Onyango

But with the US trade pact set to expire in September 2025 and uncertainty surrounding AGOA's renewal, Bedi's voice holds a quiet note of concern. 'If AGOA is not extended,' he says, his gaze calm but earnest, 'we may be forced to close our operations.' Since its inception in 2000, AGOA has granted duty-free access to the US market for eligible sub-Saharan African countries, propelling Kenya into a leading apparel export hub. In 2023, the sector generated \$540mn in US exports, nearly 70 per cent of Kenya's total shipments to the country.

United Aryan alone accounts for 20 per cent of Kenya's AGOA exports, a testament to its scale and influence. For Bedi, the pact is not just a trade mechanism—it's the lifeblood of his business. "Without AGOA, you don't have buyers," he says. "It's that simple."

Bedi's journey to this moment began in Dubai, trading horn buttons

and apparel trims in an era when business was less about strategy and more about survival. "Opportunities were few," he recalls. "If you were hardworking and ethical, you marched ahead."

In 2002, AGOA's promise of duty-free access drew him to Kenya, where he saw not just a market but a mission. "Kenya had energy," he says. "The export processing zone (EPZ) offered policy stability, Mombasa's port provided logistics, and the workforce was eager to learn and grow."

The early days were a crucible. Ruaraka, then a desolate enclave, was plagued by unemployment and desperation. "Youth stole copper cables, not out of crime, but hunger," Bedi says. He engaged community elders, promising jobs and training, which shifted the tide.

But as United Aryan began operations, Kenya's 2002 political

transition brought a wave of national strikes that temporarily stalled industrial activity. 'We had machines installed, orders lined up, and goods waiting at the port—but we couldn't begin,' Bedi recalls. Determined to move forward despite the uncertainty, he addressed the crowd gathered outside the EPZ gate, urging unity and resolve. His bold step that day marked the beginning of a transformative journey for the company.

From those turbulent beginnings, United Aryan has grown into a socio-economic force, employing 10,000 workers—75 per cent of them women—and supporting 150,000 livelihoods through its network of vendors and suppliers. "We've built a community, not just a company,"

Bedi says, his voice softening. It's the workers' stories that fuel his resolve: young recruits finding discipline in their first jobs, couples who met on the factory floor and went on to build families, former inmates reclaiming their dignity, and persons with disabilities earning with pride. "When a worker says, 'Because of this job, my children are educated,' that's priceless," he says.

AGOA's stability underpinned this growth, enabling Bedi to reinvest profits despite global shocks like the 2008 financial crash and Covid-19, which slashed his workforce from 16,000 to 10,000. His initial vision—to employ 100,000 directly—remains a distant dream, but the company's impact is undeniable. "We came for business, but the purpose shifted to impact," he says. Yet, the looming expiration of AGOA threatens to unravel it all. "It's easy to destroy what's built," Bedi warns. "Rebuilding is the hard part."

While alternatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and local markets hold long-term promise, they are not immediate substitutes for AGOA. Despite duty-free access to regions such as Europe, the UK, and Africa, 98 percent of Kenya's apparel exports are directed to the US, driven largely by the scale and consistency of demand. "AfCFTA represents a valuable future opportunity" Bedi notes. 'But in the near term, it cannot match the commercial advantages AGOA provides'

Kenya's textile sector compounds the challenge. Lacking modern mills, United Aryan imports fabric from Asia, as local producers like Rivatex fail to meet global quality or price standards. "The textile industry needs an overhaul—new plants, skilled workers, and a global mindset," Bedi says. While local supply chains for trims like cartons and labels have thrived, their growth is tied to AGOA's demand. Without it, the ecosystem faces collapse. The Kenyan government is ill-equipped to bridge the gap. "No government can subsidize a



Despite duty-free access to regions such as Europe, the UK, and Africa, 98 percent of Kenya's apparel exports are directed to the US, driven largely by the scale and consistency of demand.



50 per cent cost disadvantage," Bedi says. Proposals to cushion the sector exist, but their impact is limited without AGOA. A lapse would devastate United Aryan's 10,000 jobs and ripple across the community, disrupting suppliers, small businesses, and families. "The impact will be massive," Bedi says. "Why let something good collapse when we can protect it?"

As chairman of the Kenya Apparel Manufacturers & Exporters Association, Bedi has lobbied in Washington, framing AGOA's renewal as a win for both nations. He imagines a direct pitch to Donald Trump, whose "America First" stance has US buyers on edge: "Mr President, Kenya has played by the rules. We deliver quality at affordable prices for American consumers. AGOA secures your supply chain sustainably. Why break what works?" He argues that Africa, not Asia, is America's best alternative. "We're not cheap—we're committed and capable," he says.

Yet, the uncertainty gnaws. If AGOA expires, Bedi is unflinchingly candid: "I'll retire and live happily ever after. Some wars aren't worth fighting." The quip, delivered with a wry smile, belies the stakes—a potential shutdown that would shatter a dream built over two decades. "Taking AGOA away isn't just about closing factories," he says. "It's about breaking lives."

Bedi's closing plea is a call to reason. "Africa doesn't need sympathy—it needs strategy," he says. "AGOA isn't charity; it's smart policy. Behind every shipment are thousands of families transformed." The apparel industry, he insists, is a platform for dignity and stability. "Extend AGOA, not as aid, but as partnership. Kenya is ready. The world needs collaboration" As Washington deliberates, Bedi and his workers wait, their future tethered to a decision that will shape Ruaraka's factories and Kenya's dreams for years to come.



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AGOA Explainer

Unlocking Trade and Opportunity for Africa and the U.S. in 2015 to run until September 30, 2025.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), enacted in May 2000 under President Bill Clinton, has been a cornerstone of U.S.-Africa trade relations for over two decades. Designed to foster economic growth, strengthen commercial ties, and promote development in sub-Saharan Africa, AGOA offers eligible African countries duty-free access to the U.S. market for thousands of products. As the agreement approaches its expiration in September 2025, its impact and future remain critical topics for policymakers, businesses, and communities on both continents. Here's a closer look at what AGOA is, how it works, and why it matters.

What Is AGOA?

AGOA is a U.S. trade initiative that provides eligible sub-Saharan African countries with tariff-free and quota-free access to the U.S. market for over 1,800 products, in addition to the 5,000 products covered under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. Enacted as part of the Trade and Development Act of 2000, AGOA aims to stimulate economic growth in Africa by encouraging exports, fostering market-based economies, and promoting good governance. It also seeks to deepen U.S. economic engagement with a region rich in resources, talent, and potential. Unlike a free trade agreement, AGOA is a unilateral preference program, meaning the U.S. grants benefits without requiring reciprocal tariff reductions from African countries. This structure reflects its dual purpose: supporting African development while advancing U.S. economic and foreign policy interests. The program was initially set for 15 years but was extended

How Does AGOA Work?

AGOA's mechanics are straightforward but rigorous. To qualify, sub-Saharan African countries must meet eligibility criteria, including progress toward a market-based economy, rule of law, political pluralism, anti-corruption measures, and respect for human rights. The U.S. president reviews eligibility annually, and countries can be suspended or reinstated based on compliance. For example, in 2023, President Joe Biden removed Gabon, Uganda, Niger, and the Central African Republic from AGOA due to human rights violations and political issues, while Mauritania regained eligibility for advancing worker rights. Eligible countries can export a wide range of goods—textiles, apparel, agricultural products, and manufactured items—duty-free to the U.S., provided they meet specific rules of origin. Goods must be wholly obtained or sufficiently manufactured in an AGOA country, with at least 35% of the product's value added locally, and up to 15% of that value can come from U.S. inputs. This encourages local production and integration with U.S. supply chains.

Why Does AGOA Matter?

AGOA has delivered tangible benefits for both Africa and the U.S., though its impact varies by country and sector. Here are some key outcomes:

For African Countries

Job Creation and Economic Growth: AGOA has spurred job creation, particularly in the apparel and textile industries. In Kenya, for instance,



the program has generated over 58,000 direct jobs and 100,000 indirect jobs in the apparel sector, with women making up 70% of the workforce. Across the continent, AGOA is estimated to have created 350,000 direct jobs from 2001 to 2011. Export Diversification: While oil has historically dominated AGOA exports, non-oil sectors like apparel, cut flowers, horticultural products, and automotive components have grown. South Africa, for example, exports diverse goods, including metals and minerals, while

Kenya leads in apparel.

Foreign Exchange Earnings: In 2024, Kenya's AGOA exports to the U.S. reached \$737.3 million, with apparel accounting for 72%. These earnings bolster foreign reserves, enabling countries to finance imports and stabilize economies.

For the United States

Access to Diverse Supply Chains: AGOA provides U.S. consumers and brands with alternative sourcing options, reducing reliance on other global suppliers.

Mutual Trade Benefits: In 2015, South Africa exported \$9.1 billion in goods to the U.S. under AGOA, while the U.S. gained access to African markets for products like poultry. In 2024, U.S. imports from AGOA countries included \$1.2 billion in apparel alone.

Challenge

Uncertainty Post-2025: With AGOA set to expire, fears of job losses and economic disruption loom. Kenya alone risks losing over 150,000 jobs and \$600 million in export earnings if the program lapses.

The Future of AGOA

As AGOA nears its 2025 expiration, stakeholders are debating its renewal. African countries and some U.S. senators advocate for an early 10-year extension to provide certainty for businesses. Others, including the U.S. Trade Representative, call for reforms to address underutilization, incorporate digital and financial services, and align with climate goals.

The 2024 AGOA Forum in Washington, D.C., themed "Beyond 2025: Reimagining AGOA for an Inclusive, Sustainable and Prosperous Tomorrow," underscored the need to link AGOA with the AfCFTA to strengthen African value chains in agribusiness, textiles, and pharmaceuticals. There's also discussion about post-AGOA frameworks, such as bilateral trade agreements, as seen in Kenya's 2020 pursuit of a U.S. free trade agreement.

Why It's Worth Watching

AGOA is more than a trade program—it is a bridge connecting African ambition with American opportunity. For African nations, it's a lifeline for jobs, industrialization, and global market access. For the U.S., it's a tool for economic engagement and strategic influence in a fast-growing region. As the 2025 deadline approaches, the decisions made will determine whether AGOA continues to unlock prosperity or fades into history, leaving industries and communities to navigate an uncertain future.

— Sources: United States Trade Representative, Council on Foreign Relations, Reuters, Brookings Institution.



Women Industrialists Honoured at KAM Excellence Awards

The Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) celebrated the transformative contributions of women in the manufacturing sector at the 2025 Women in Manufacturing Excellence Awards, held during the annual Women in Manufacturing (WIM) Gala Dinner in Nairobi.

The event, themed "Accelerating Action: Empowering Women in Manufacturing for Progress," spotlighted trailblazing women who are driving innovation and reshaping Kenya's industrial landscape. The awards recognised women leading the charge in a historically male-dominated industry, underscoring their role in advancing industrialisation. Agnes Netunze, CEO of Arise Collections and Koko Agri Farms Ltd in Uganda, delivered a keynote address, highlighting the need for actionable support for women at all levels—startups, MSMEs, and large corporations.

"Manufacturing has been male-dominated for too long, but that is changing," she said. "Women are stepping up, and we must leverage resources, networks, and investment to drive an inclusive future." Netunze noted Africa's untapped potential, with manufacturing

contributing less than 12 per cent to most African countries' GDP and under 2 per cent globally. "With the world's fastest-growing population, women must be central to scaling up industrialisation," she added.

Mary-Ann Musangi, chairperson of KAM's WIM Program, acknowledged the growth of women-owned businesses but highlighted persistent barriers. "Limited access to markets, finance, and opportunities still hold many back," she said. "We need to empower women at the grassroots, in every county and sub-sector." The WIM Program has been pivotal, offering mentorship, market linkages, and knowledge-sharing to equip women for success.

KAM chief executive Tobias Alando reaffirmed the association's commitment to inclusivity. "Our mission is to break down barriers and



ensure women thrive,” he said, citing WIM’s capacity-building, mentorship, and policy advocacy as key drivers of competitiveness for women-led businesses.

The awards honoured six women across various categories, recognising their leadership, innovation, and impact. Below is the full list of winners: KAM, representing over 1,300 companies since 1959, continues to champion a more inclusive manufacturing sector. The 2025 awards not only celebrated individual achievements but also signalled a broader push to elevate women’s contributions to Kenya’s industrial growth.

Award Category	Nominees	Name	Company Name
WIM Startup/ Innovator of the Year Award	2nd Runners Up	Adrienne Juma	Tiankara Creations
	1st Runners Up	Tei Mukunya Oundo	Natures Lock
	Overall, Winner	Harriet Chebet Ng'ok	Harriet Botanicals
WIM ESG Warrior Award	2nd Runners Up	Mary Wangere	Haco Industries Kenya Ltd
	1st Runners Up	Joanna Emma Maiden	Soko EPZ
	Overall, Winner	Mary Ngechu	LinePlast Group Ltd
WIM Lifetime Achiever Award	1st Runners Up	Mary Ngechu, MBS	LinePlast Group Ltd
	Overall Winner	Miriam Ngolo	Bamburi Cement PLC
	2nd Runners Up	Ruth Mbithe Muindi	Elex Products Limited
WIM Executive of the Year Award	1st Runners Up	Dr. Gasheri Mugao	Sheth Group of Companies
	Overall Winner	Lina Githuka	KWAL
WIM Industrialist of the Year Award	2nd Runners Up	Alexandra Chappatte	African Originals
	1st Runners Up	Mary Ngechu, MBS	LinePlast Group Ltd
	Overall, Winner	Mary-Ann Musangi	Haco Industries Ltd
Special Recognition: WIM AfCFTA Award	Overall	Melvins Marsh International	
	1st Runners Up	KTDA	
	2nd Runners Up	Sanaa Industries Limited	

Kenya’s VAT refund crisis stifles manufacturing growth

Picture this. You are a Kenyan manufacturer, producing high-quality products for export. After months of sourcing raw materials, investing in machinery, and ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements, your first shipment is finally ready. The buyer, whether in Europe, Asia, America, or even within Eastern Africa, is eager to receive the consignment. Your team processes the necessary paperwork, the goods leave the factory, and you breathe a sigh of relief. The deal is sealed, and you anticipate the return on your investment. But beneath this optimism lies an unsettling reality: the Value Added Tax (VAT) refund you are owed is nowhere in sight.

By Tobias Alando

As an exporter, you were assured that your goods are VAT zero-rated, a tax incentive designed to encourage exports and keep Kenyan businesses competitive in the global market. The logic is simple: since exported goods are not consumed locally, VAT should not be a cost burden. However, while no VAT is charged on the final product, businesses still incur VAT on raw materials, machinery, and utilities. The law provides for a refund of this input VAT, ensuring businesses are not unfairly taxed on goods destined for international markets. In theory, this system should work seamlessly. However, in reality, it has become an endless waiting game.

For many manufacturers, VAT refunds are not just a matter of convenience. They are crucial to cash flow. Delays in processing refunds mean businesses are left in financial limbo, unable to reinvest in production, pay suppliers on time, or expand their operations. The government, too, faces the challenge of balancing tax collection with expenditure needs, making it critical to find sustainable solutions that support both economic growth and fiscal responsibility.

Looking at global best practices, some countries have successfully streamlined their VAT refund processes, demonstrating that efficiency is achievable. South Africa processes VAT refunds within 21 days through a real-time risk assessment system that fast-tracks low-risk claims. Singapore has automated most VAT refund processes, ensuring businesses receive payments within 30 days. Egypt provides VAT refunds within 45 days, demonstrating how a well-structured tax administration can support exporters.

The Kenyan government has made efforts to improve tax administration and enhance revenue collection, recognizing the importance of a robust business environment. However, balancing tax collection with timely VAT refunds remains a challenge. Addressing this issue is crucial, as delayed refunds create unintended consequences that can slow economic growth. Industries that require significant capital investment and are heavily involved in exports such as agro-processing, textiles, and apparel, are the hardest hit. Many operate on thin margins and rely on timely refunds to sustain

operations. A steel manufacturer exporting construction materials to the EAC, a confectionery company exporting candy to Central Africa, or a vehicle manufacturer exporting trailers to Southern Africa all face the same issue. Without predictable VAT refunds, their ability to plan and grow is severely constrained.

Meanwhile, competitors in other countries enjoy better cash flow, allowing them to scale their businesses more effectively. This makes Kenya a less attractive investment destination. To salvage their situation, the manufacturers do voluntary export restraint; just to ensure that they reduce their cash flow erosion to non-paid VAT refunds. To Kenya, this amounts to losses in jobs, foreign exchange and economic growth.

An underlying key issue on these delays is the mismatch between VAT refund claims and the budget allocated for processing them. While refund claims stand at approximately Ksh. 5 billion per month, only Ksh. 2.5 billion is allocated, creating a shortfall. Additionally, inefficiencies in tax administration have further complicated the process. For example, import VAT remains locked within the customs system due to integration issues between KRA’s integrated Customs Management Systems (iCMS) and iTax platforms. This disconnect means businesses cannot access rightful refunds simply because the systems do not communicate effectively. Concerns over fraudulent claims have also led to heightened scrutiny, often causing unnecessary delays for legitimate claims. While curbing fraud is critical, there is a need to distinguish between high-risk and low-risk claims to ensure efficiency.

Government, too, faces the challenge of balancing tax collection with expenditure needs.



The writer is the Chief Executive of Kenya Association of Manufacturers and can be reached at ceo@kam.co.ke.

How Kenya can empower the next generation of women industrialists

By Mary-Ann Musangi

Women entrepreneurs and industrial leaders face barriers far beyond finance—limited market access, scarce mentorship, inconsistent policy implementation, and entrenched cultural biases that still gatekeep the boardroom.

Progress is undeniable. Over the past decade, more women have claimed leadership roles in boardrooms, government, and industry across Kenya. Yet, the glass ceiling persists. The 2025 International Women's Day theme, "Accelerate Action," demands more than policy debates—it calls for measurable outcomes to advance gender equality in education, employment, and leadership.

Handing women opportunities solely because of their gender is a flawed approach. It risks fostering pity rather than recognizing capability. Women are skilled, innovative, and driven. The focus must shift to ensuring fair access to opportunities based on talent and results, not tokenism.

Globally, women lag in industrial sectors. While UN Women notes near-parity in educational attainment, gender gaps in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields endure.

Women make up nearly 40% of the global workforce but remain underrepresented in high-tech and manufacturing industries. In Africa, the picture is mixed. The continent leads with one in four women engaged in entrepreneurship, per the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Yet, many of these businesses stay informal, hamstrung by limited market access and growth opportunities.

In Kenya, manufacturing—a linchpin of economic growth—sees rising women-led enterprises. Still, scaling these businesses is tough. Poor industrial infrastructure, restricted supply chains, and male-dominated norms persist. The International Labour Organization (ILO) reports women comprise just 16% of Kenya's manufacturing workforce, and female executives in the sector are even rarer. Leadership representation remains a critical gap. The next generation deserves our focus. We stand on the shoulders of trailblazing women who shattered barriers. Now, we must ensure smoother paths for those

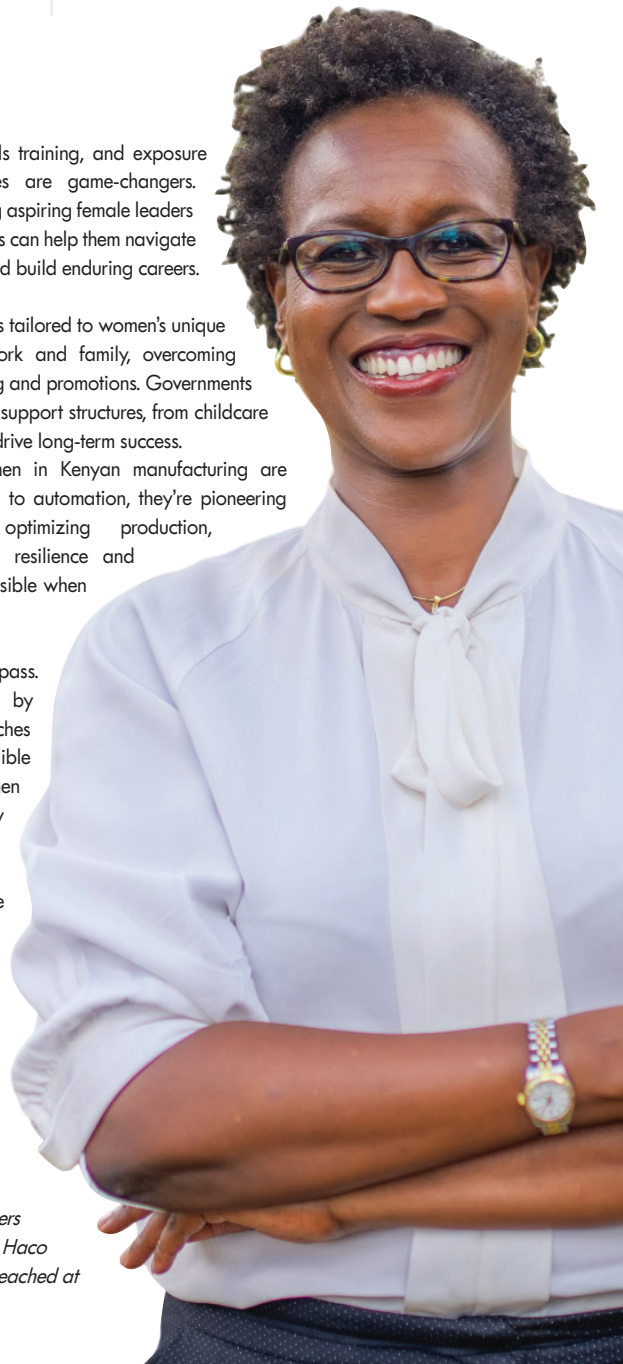
following. Mentorship, skills training, and exposure to industrial opportunities are game-changers. Structured programs linking aspiring female leaders with seasoned professionals can help them navigate male-dominated spaces and build enduring careers.

Inclusivity demands policies tailored to women's unique challenges—balancing work and family, overcoming unconscious biases in hiring and promotions. Governments and industry must invest in support structures, from childcare to leadership pipelines, to drive long-term success. Despite the hurdles, women in Kenyan manufacturing are thriving. From agribusiness to automation, they're pioneering sustainable solutions, optimizing production, and creating jobs. Their resilience and ingenuity prove what's possible when opportunity meets talent.

The baton is ours to pass. Progress isn't measured by policies drafted or speeches delivered but by tangible change for young women entering industry. Every door we open must stay open. Every barrier we break must stay down. We must move beyond funding and rhetoric to action and impact. Lifting one woman lifts communities, industries, and generations.

- Mary-Ann Musangi is Chairperson of the Women in Manufacturing Caucus at the Kenya Association of Manufacturers and Managing Director of Haco Industries Ltd. She can be reached at info@kam.co.ke.

For too long, the narrative around women in industry has fixated on funding. Access to capital is vital, but it's only one piece of the puzzle. The real question is: Now that funding is increasingly available, what's next?



Techpak pioneering packaging innovation in East Africa at 30!

In Kenya's rapidly expanding industrial landscape, Techpak Industries stands as a beacon of innovation, marking 30 years of reshaping the packaging sector across East and Central Africa.

From its humble beginnings in 1995, the Kenyan manufacturer has grown into a market leader, delivering cutting-edge solutions for food, beverage, and horticultural industries. As it celebrates this milestone, Techpak's journey reflects a relentless pursuit of quality, sustainability, and customer-centric innovation—a story of resilience and ambition in a dynamic market. Founded to address critical gaps in packaging for Kenya's burgeoning food and horticulture sectors, Techpak has evolved into a regional powerhouse. Its early focus on durable, functional packaging quickly set it apart, meeting the needs of exporters and local producers alike.

"Our journey has been driven by innovation, customer needs, and an unwavering commitment to quality," the company says. This ethos has propelled Techpak to serve a diverse clientele, from small-scale farmers to multinational brands, across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and beyond. At the core of Techpak's success is a vision to lead through innovation. This ambition has shaped its strategic goals, steering investments into advanced technologies and sustainable practices. The company has embraced techniques such as paper and kraft packaging, direct printing, shrink sleeving, in-mold labelling, and state-of-the-art moulding processes.

These advancements enhance product quality and efficiency, ensuring Techpak remains ahead of industry trends. Its in-house tool room, a hub of creativity, has birthed lightweight yet durable packaging, improved insulation solutions, and designs that optimise material use—innovations that balance cost, functionality, and environmental impact. Sustainability is not an afterthought for Techpak; it's a cornerstone. As global demand for eco-friendly packaging surges, the company has doubled down on recyclable materials, biodegradable alternatives, and waste-reduction initiatives.

"Sustainability is a key focus," Techpak notes, pointing to its recycling programmes and material innovations that minimise environmental footprints while meeting stringent customer requirements. These efforts align with Kenya's broader push towards a circular economy, positioning Techpak as a leader in responsible manufacturing.

The company's market dominance in East and Central Africa stems from a potent mix of quality, innovation, and responsiveness. "Our leadership is built on product excellence, customer-centric solutions, continuous innovation, and a robust distribution network," Techpak explains. Its ability to tailor packaging for the evolving needs of food, beverage, and horticulture industries—whether through custom designs or sustainable options—has cemented its reputation. Ongoing research ensures alignment with consumer trends, such as the growing preference for eco-

conscious products and smart packaging.

Looking ahead, Techpak is poised to harness emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI). The company is exploring AI for predictive maintenance, quality control, and production optimisation, aiming to boost efficiency and sustainability. "AI will drive automation and smarter systems in manufacturing," Techpak predicts, noting that early adopters are already reaping benefits. While the industry's AI adoption is gradual, Techpak's proactive stance signals its intent to stay at the forefront of technological disruption.

Beyond its commercial achievements, Techpak's commitment to community and environmental stewardship stands out. The company supports local communities through job creation, skills training, and sustainability initiatives, ensuring its impact extends beyond factory walls. "We strive to make a positive difference in the regions we operate," Techpak says, highlighting programmes that empower workers and promote responsible packaging. Its

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partnership with recycling initiatives and investment in eco-friendly materials underscore a broader mission to protect the environment while delivering value to customers.

As Techpak reflects on three decades of growth, its gaze is firmly fixed on the future. The packaging industry, it anticipates, will increasingly pivot towards eco-friendly solutions, smart packaging, and greater customisation. These shifts present opportunities for innovation and market expansion, areas where Techpak is well-positioned to lead. Over the next five to ten years, the company aims to deepen its regional footprint, enhance its sustainable offerings, and pioneer technological

advancements. “We see ourselves as a leader in sustainable packaging and innovation across the region,” Techpak asserts.

Techpak’s 30-year milestone is more than a celebration of longevity; it’s a testament to its ability to adapt, innovate, and thrive in a competitive landscape. From filling market gaps to setting industry standards, the company has transformed how East Africa packages its goods. Its blend of cutting-edge technology, environmental responsibility, and community engagement offers a blueprint for sustainable industrial growth. As Techpak embarks on its next chapter, it carries a legacy of excellence—and a bold vision to shape the future of packaging.

Elite Tools Marks 25 Years of Industrial Excellence



As the world turned a leaf to usher in a new millennium, a modest venture took root with a bold ambition—to equip East and Central Africa with tools and solutions that drive progress. Starting off as a specialised distributor, Elite Tools Ltd went into business with an expansive vision—to empower industries to build, innovate, and thrive. Twenty-five years later, as the company celebrates a milestone anniversary, it stands as a multi-division powerhouse, a trusted partner across the region, and a testament to resilience, integrity, and innovation.

From its humble beginnings on Pemba Street, Elite Tools has grown into a regional leader, operating six specialized divisions that cater to diverse industrial needs. The journey has been one of calculated expansion and unwavering commitment to quality. “We started small, but our dreams were big,” says a company spokesperson. “Our focus has always been on understanding the needs of our clients and delivering solutions that make a difference.”

The company’s core division, Tools & Equipment, remains its backbone, supplying world-class brands like Bosch, Stanley, Irwin, and Beta to industries ranging from construction to automotive. These tools, backed by robust after-sales service and readily available spares, have become synonymous with reliability. In Kenya, Elite Tools’ partnership with Bosch has positioned it as a leading supplier, offering an arsenal of powerful tools and accessories that professionals rely on daily. Safety and precision are at the heart of Elite Tools’ Welding & PPEs division. Partnering with global leader ESAB, the company provides advanced welding machines—arc, TIG, MIG, and plasma cutters—alongside certified safety gear, including



SUPPLEMENT FEATURE

harnesses, heavy-duty boots, and goggles. This division reflects Elite Tools' commitment to protecting workers while delivering high-performance solutions for fabrication and manufacturing.

The Light Construction Equipment & Utilities division has played a pivotal role in supporting East Africa's infrastructure boom. From concrete mixers and vibrators to plate compactors and water pumps, Elite Tools equips contractors with machines designed for durability and efficiency. Innovations like surface finishing machines and road safety solutions, such as traffic cones and convex mirrors, underscore the company's role in shaping safer, more efficient construction sites.

In 2017, Elite Tools launched its Industrial Lifting & Rigging division, addressing the growing demand for safe and efficient material handling. With certified wire ropes, chain hoists, and fall protection systems, this division serves industries from logistics to high-rise construction. The company's emphasis on quality is evident in its partnerships with brands like Mantall, ensuring that every piece of equipment meets rigorous safety standards. The Elevator Division, introduced in 2019, marked Elite Tools' foray into vertical transportation. Offering modern passenger and goods lifts, this

division caters to residential, commercial, and industrial clients, providing tailored solutions that blend efficiency with cutting-edge design. Similarly, the Aluminium & Glass Division has transformed modern architecture across the region, delivering sleek facades, balustrades, and skylights that enhance both aesthetics and functionality. Elite Tools' growth has been underpinned by its state-of-the-art facilities in Nairobi, including a cutting-edge showroom and a fully equipped workshop. These resources, combined with a passionate team, enable the company to offer not just products but comprehensive solutions. "We're not just suppliers," the spokesperson notes. "We're partners to contractors, fabricators, manufacturers, and developers. Our goal is to go the extra mile—always."

Over the past 25 years, Elite Tools has forged enduring relationships with global manufacturers, from ESAB to Stanley, ensuring access to the latest technologies and innovations. The company has powered iconic projects across East and Central Africa, from skyscrapers in Nairobi to infrastructure developments in Mombasa and Zanzibar. Its retail footprint has expanded too, with stores on Enterprise Road, Addis Ababa Road, and in Mombasa, bringing its solutions closer to clients. The company's

2017
In 2017, Elite Tools launched its Industrial Lifting & Rigging division, addressing the growing demand for safe and efficient material handling



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values—passion, innovation, and integrity—have been its guiding light. These principles are reflected in its “M.A.D” philosophy: Make a Difference, Always. Whether through empowering its team, fostering community growth, or delivering exceptional service, Elite Tools strives to leave a lasting impact. Its workforce, described as the “Elite Team,” is trained to challenge conventions, think critically, and embrace accountability, ensuring that every client interaction is meaningful.

As Elite Tools reflects on its 25-year journey, it acknowledges the challenges overcome and the milestones achieved. The 2007 opening of its first retail store on Addis Ababa Road marked a significant step, followed by the launch of the Aluminium & Glass Division. By 2016, the company had three divisions; by 2019, it had five, with retail stores in Mombasa and Zanzibar. Each expansion was a testament



to Elite Tools' ability to adapt and innovate in a dynamic market.

Looking ahead, Elite Tools is poised for further growth. The company is exploring new technologies and sustainable solutions to meet the evolving needs of its clients. “The next chapter is about impact and transformation,” the spokesperson says. “We want to continue shaping industries and building a legacy that inspires.”

As Elite Tools Ltd celebrates its silver jubilee, it extends gratitude to its clients, partners, and team members who have made this journey possible. From a small distributor to a regional leader, the company's story is one of vision, perseverance, and excellence—a story that continues to unfold with promise and purpose.

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Secure360: Why a Holistic Cybersecurity Strategy is No Longer Optional

A deep dive into Liquid C2's Secure360 Framework – a comprehensive approach to cybersecurity that strengthens resilience in today's digital landscape.

In today's hyper-connected digital economy, cybersecurity is no longer a background function—it's mission-critical. Enterprises across all industries face increasing threats targeting sensitive data, intellectual property, customer information, and core operational infrastructure. With constantly evolving attack vectors and an expanded attack surface due to hybrid work models and cloud adoption, a fragmented or reactive approach to security is no longer sufficient.

Organizations must embrace an always-on, multifaceted strategy that protects endpoints, detects breaches early, and enables rapid response. An “assume breach” mindset is essential—combining prevention with real-time detection and incident response capabilities. Implementing a Secure360 Framework offers an integrated, end-to-end

approach that addresses the full spectrum of cybersecurity needs. It supports a defense-in-depth model that layers controls across systems, users, data, and networks—enhancing protection while reducing complexity. The Secure360 framework prioritizes proactive risk management, leveraging threat intelligence and automation to improve detection accuracy and response speed.

This comprehensive framework integrates governance, risk, compliance, threat assurance, and defense services to help organizations adapt to a rapidly evolving threat landscape. It supports resilience by ensuring that all digital layers—from infrastructure and applications to identities and data—are protected with consistent and aligned security controls.

Liquid C2's Secure360 Framework

Core Pillars of a Secure360 Framework

To establish a holistic cybersecurity posture, enterprises can align with the four foundational pillars of Secure360:

- **Governance, Risk & Compliance (GRC):** Establishes robust policies and controls in line with industry standards and regulatory requirements.
- **Cyber Threat Assurance:** Conducts regular assessments and testing to validate and enhance defenses.
- **Cyber Defence Services:** Delivers real-time threat monitoring, detection, and incident response.
- **Cybersecurity Solutions:** Deploys advanced technologies to safeguard endpoints, networks, identities, and critical data assets.

Organizations benefit from a Secure360 approach through comprehensive visibility, streamlined vendor management, and enhanced operational efficiency. This not only mitigates risk but also accelerates security maturity and supports long-term resilience.

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Mitchell Cotts Powers Kenya's Trade with Special Economic Zones

In Mombasa's Kibarani area, where the Indian Ocean breeze carries the faint tang of salt, a new kind of energy pulses through the landscape. Here, amid sprawling Container Freight Stations (CFS) and neatly stacked containers, Mitchell Cotts is rewriting the rules of logistics.



In Mombasa's Kibarani area, where the Indian Ocean breeze carries the faint tang of salt, a new kind of energy pulses through the landscape. Here, amid sprawling Container Freight Stations (CFS) and neatly stacked containers, Mitchell Cotts is rewriting the rules of logistics. The recently commissioned Special Economic Zone (SEZ), a humming trade hub, is a testament to the company's century-long legacy of keeping Kenya moving. Mitchell Cotts' story began in 1926, when it took its first steps as a freight-forwarding outfit. By 1989, it had transitioned to Mitchell Cotts Freight Kenya Limited following its acquisition by Kenyan investors from UK-based Mitchell Cotts Plc.

Over the decades, the company has evolved from a modest operator to a regional heavyweight, expanding into Uganda, Rwanda, and South Sudan. Plans are underway to establish a physical presence in Tanzania and Ethiopia this year.

At the company's helm is Mr Daniel Tanui, a logistics veteran whose vision extends beyond profit. "We're not just moving cargo," he says, looking out from his office in the expansive air cargo terminal at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, the company's head office. "We're building pathways for growth through trade facilitation, having established facilities in key cargo entry and exit points."

That vision has driven Mitchell Cotts to its latest milestone: the creation of SEZs in Mombasa and Nairobi (through their affiliate), designed to streamline

trade and supercharge the economy. Coupled with a reliable global network, these facilities enable Mitchell Cotts to facilitate imports and exports from any country of origin to any destination around the world.

Coastal Powerhouse

Mitchell Cotts' Mombasa facilities handle everything from containers to project cargo, with a total static capacity of 8,782 TEUs and an annual throughput of 262,152 TEUs (add for the three). Their 46 reefer plugs keep perishables fresh. The giant facilities handle wide-ranging consignments, including real estate fittings, mining equipment, heavy construction equipment for re-export to the region, upstream oil mining equipment, heavy equipment for use in short-term projects, and later re-exported. Mitchell Cotts's deep understanding of applicable legislation for reverse logistics saves businesses significant taxation costs, freeing up cash for deployment in core business areas and investment.

The Kenyan economy feels the ripple effects. By easing port congestion, Mitchell Cotts' efficiency has boosted Mombasa's throughput, handling \$700 million in goods last year alone. For a country aiming to industrialize under its Vision 2030 blueprint, this is the rocket fuel needed to power that growth. The Mombasa SEZ, gazetted in 2024, is a visionary development. Spanning 30 acres within close proximity to the port, strategically designed to function as a free port, industrial park, and a special economic zone in one integrated facility.

This set up affords Mitchell Cotts the flexibility to deliver customised, value-



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driven trade and logistics solutions, including warehousing, duty suspension, and deferment services, value addition, inventory consolidation, and last-mile fulfilment. Whether for regional redistribution or global re-exports, the SEZ enables clients to optimise cost, time and compliance — all under one roof. Importers and traders from Kenya's landlocked neighbouring countries stand to benefit significantly from the SEZ's strategic location and integrated services, with tailored logistics solutions, the SEZ offers a reliable gateway to expand cross-border trade efficiently and cost-effectively.

The zone's fiscal incentives are a magnet for businesses. Companies enjoy a corporate tax rate of 10% for the first decade, rising to 15% for the next 10, compared to the standard 30%. Imports are free of VAT, excise duty, and import declaration fees, while exports dodge levies entirely. Withholding taxes on payments to non-residents—for dividends, interest, or royalties—are capped at 5%, a fraction of typical rates. Add a 100% deduction on capital expenditure, and it's no wonder firms are flocking here.

Businesses seeking to leverage the advantages of Mitchell Cotts' SEZ can access its facilities through multiple pathways, including operating as a client-owned SEZ enterprise or utilizing Mitchell Cotts as an Importer of Record (IOR) agent. For those opting to establish their own SEZ enterprise, the process begins with submitting a Letter of Interest and an SEZ Investment Project Proposal Form to the SEZ Authority, accompanied by supporting documents such as a business plan or project concept note. Upon approval, businesses must then make a formal application, providing critical documents like a certificate of incorporation, KRA PIN, Tax Compliance Certificate, and a NEMA license. This structured pathway ensures compliance while allowing businesses to tailor their operations within the SEZ's tax-advantaged environment, ideal for manufacturing, trading, or logistics.

New Frontier

Over in Nairobi's northern fringes, at Tatu City, Mitchell Cotts — through its equity stake in a strategic affiliate, offers a distinct yet equally compelling narrative. The affiliate operates a leading facility in temperature-controlled

logistics, providing state-of-the-art cold storage and distribution solutions across multiple industries. Its core services include temperature-controlled storage, ranging from +26°C to -30°C, with 14 specialized chambers that manage humidity and temperature independently, ensuring optimal conditions for products like ice cream, fresh produce, fish, pharmaceuticals, and frozen goods. Green ammonia gas is also used to slow down the ripening of fruits and greens, adding one more layer to the quest for food security and a huge advantage for Kenya's fledgling horticulture industry.

Beyond storage, the Nairobi facility excels in cold chain logistics, delivering temperature-controlled transportation across East Africa with a fleet of advanced trucks for both urban and long-haul routes.

Broader Impact

The SEZs' benefits extend beyond their gates. In Mombasa, reduced port delays will lower costs for importers across East Africa, strengthening regional trade. In Nairobi, the green initiatives—70% solar power, recycled water—offer a model for sustainable industrialization. Nationally, the zones align with Vision 2030, boosting GDP through exports and foreign exchange. Last year, SEZ-related trade added \$300 million to Kenya's coffers, a figure set to climb as capacity grows.

Looking Forward

Mitchell Cotts isn't resting. Plans are afoot to build state-of-the-art warehouses after securing the SEZ license in collaboration with light manufacturers. "Kenya's potential is limitless," Mr Tanui says, his voice steady with conviction. "We have not just invested in facilities, we have cultivated a healthy ecosystem where businesses can thrive, partnerships can thrive, growth is sustainable and inclusive for a nation forging its path to global competitiveness."

As dusk settles over Mombasa's SEZ, the cranes still swing, their silhouettes sharp against the sky. In Nairobi, at the JKIA head office, a beacon of progress is alive. Mitchell Cotts has built more than zones—it's built momentum, for businesses, for people, for a nation on the rise.

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Effective Office Management and Administration	3 days	23 rd - 25 th June 2025
Leading with Emotional Intelligence	3 days	25 th - 27 th June 2025
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Leadership and Governance - Board Matters and Effective Meetings	3 days	9 th - 11 th July 2025
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Trade Cabinet Secretary Lee Kinyanjui, the KAM chairlady Jane Karuku, members of the executive council, and guests pose for a photograph during the launch of KAM's Manufacturing Priority Agenda report in Nairobi.



A participant tees off during the KAM Annual Corporate Golf tournament held at Windsor Golf Club, Nairobi.



Exhibitors talk to guests during the Kenya Loop



KAM CEO Tobias Alando poses for a photograph with the winners during the Women in Manufacturing Awards and Gala dinner in Nairobi



Participants pose for a group photo during the Interplast Pack Africa 2025 Event in Tanzania.



Participants pose for a group photo during the launch of TechWin Limited's DREEM Hub project.



Plastics Containers Printers PVT Ltd Photo during Interplast.



A model poses on stage during the Second Edition of the February Kenya Fashion Week event held in Nairobi.



CP Solar's Milestone Achievement in Kenya's Off-Grid Electrification Initiative.



The Winner of the KAM Annual Corporate Golf tournament receives his awards.



Participants pose for a photograph during the Copycat Group Open Day held in collaboration with Ricoh.



Copy Cat Group and Red Hat collaborate to support Safaricom Decode 2025.



Panelists discuss the future of Kenya's manufacturing during the launch of KAM's 2025 Manufacturing Priority Agenda in Nairobi.



KAM Head of Consulting & Sustainability Ms. Joyce Njogu addresses participants during the Kenya LOOP Forum 2025 (Circular Economy Conference & Expo).

Bidco maintains startup mentality to power growth at 40!

Bidco Africa, Kenya's largest homegrown multinational, is charting an ambitious course to become Africa's leading fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) company by 2030, leveraging strategic acquisitions, sustainable agribusiness, and cutting-edge technology to drive growth as it celebrates 40 years.



By Conrad Onyango

Founded in 1985 by Bhimji Depar Shah along with his two sons Vimal and Tarun, the family-owned company has evolved from a modest soap-making plant into a regional powerhouse with over 50 brands, including Elianto cooking oil, Kimbo cooking fat, and Msafi soap.

Operating in 17 African markets, Bidco has a portfolio spanning edible oils, fats, baking powder, detergents, soaps, beverages, cereals and snacks, baby diapers, and animal feeds. Its vision to "grab, grow, and sustain" the number one market share in Africa hinges on fostering "happy, healthy living" and achieving continent-wide consumer loyalty as the first African-born corporation to dominate the FMCG sector.

"Bidco operates with a founder's mindset and a startup

mentality," Vimal Shah, the company's chairman, told Industry Today at its Thika headquarters, a 40-minute drive from Nairobi. "Even today, we're a startup, driven by an ethos of 'yes, we can do it!'"

This agility has propelled Bidco from its origins in a faltering garment business, which collapsed amid Kenya's textile sector decline in the 1980s, to a diversified manufacturer with factories in Thika, Nakuru, and Ruiru in Kenya, and facilities in Uganda and Tanzania.

The Shahs' pivot to soap-making came after banks rejected their ambitious plans for integrated farming and manufacturing. Advised by the International Finance Corporation to start small, they launched a Nairobi plant in 1985. Soap production began in 1986, followed by edible oils in 1991 with Bidco, a palm oil shortening that became a kitchen staple. The company later ventured

17
Operating in 17
African markets,
Bidco has a
VAST portfolio

Vimal Shah,
Chairman, Bidco Africa

70%
Women now
account for
70% of its
administrative,
finance, sales,
and operations
departments

into seed-crushing and manufacturing of animal feeds through contract farming for sunflower, soybean, and maize, linking 30,000 East African farmers to its supply chain.

"Our philosophy is to work backward, from the oil on the shelf to the seeds in the field," Shah said, emphasising local sourcing. This model has transformed livelihoods, as seen with Jane Wabui, a 45-year-old farmer in Subukia, near Nakuru. "Bidco buys my sunflower at fair prices and pays promptly," she said. "It's helped my family eat better."

Acquisitions have been a cornerstone of Bidco's growth strategy. In 2002, it acquired Unilever's Kenya's edible oils and soaps portfolio, including Kimbo and Cowboy, cementing its status as a rival to global giants. Recent moves include the 2024 purchase of Suntory Beverage and Food Kenya, maker of internationally renowned brands Ribena and Lucozade, and the 2025 acquisition of GroupaCo Holdings, a cereals and snacks producer known for Fillows, Shappies, and Elbin.



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-Henry Ford

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Other purchases include Elianto from Unga Group and Tanzania's Shivji soap factory, bolstering Bidco's regional footprint. To support its expanding product range, Bidco is deepening its agribusiness investments, particularly in Uganda, where it is scaling up palm oil plantations to produce a key ingredient for its goods. The company is committed to sustainability, prioritising renewable energy, carbon offsets, and waste reduction. "We're building a value chain that's inclusive and sustainable," Shah said, noting partnerships with small-scale farmers to ensure a steady supply of oilseeds like soybeans and sunflowers.

Bidco's focus on gender diversity is reshaping its workforce. Women now account for 70% of its administrative, finance, sales, and operations departments and are increasingly visible in roles from forklift driving to team leadership up to the Board level, having women's representation in all key decision-making areas in the company. "Women are meticulous and responsible—three times smarter than men," Shah said, aiming for a 50-60% female workforce across the company. This shift, he added, brings fresh perspectives to serve diverse markets.



Technology is central to Bidco's vision. From typewriters and telex machines in the 1980s, it adopted SAP ERP in 2010 and SAP HANA, Copilot, and Robotics for real-time analytics, enabling agile decision-making. "We need dashboards, not dusty reports, to course-correct in the present," Shah said. The company is now integrating artificial intelligence, with plans for AI agents to sharpen consumer insights, reducing reliance on outdated research methods. This technological edge, Shah noted, allows Bidco to compete with multinationals like Unilever by adapting their systems and building a bespoke playbook.

While majority of the board comprises of family members with Bhimji Shah, 93, as patriarch emeritus, Vimal steering strategy, and Tarun overseeing operations, professional managers with diverse global experience run daily activities, making Bidco a rare blend of family-owned and expertly managed. "We're planters, not harvesters," Shah said. "The mission is bigger than us." Profits are reinvested to fund acquisitions, even in tough economic climates, with recent purchases underscoring this commitment.

Bidco's trajectory hinges on understanding local markets and maintaining a "can-do" attitude. "Multinationals have systems and scale," Shah said. "We learned from them and realised we can compete from here." With a presence in Central, East, and Southern Africa, and plans to explore new markets, Bidco is positioning itself as a trailblazer. As it pursues its 2030 goal, the company's startup mentality, sustainable practices, and relentless innovation signal a bold bid for Africa's FMCG crown.

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Machakos County eyes manufacturing powerhouse status

Machakos County is positioning itself as the leading manufacturing hub in the Lower Eastern Region, leveraging a decade of strategic initiatives to attract investment and spur industrial growth.

By Conrad Onyango

After years of hosting marketing conferences, the county government is now fostering direct engagement with industry leaders, signaling a robust commitment to creating a business-friendly environment.

In March 2025, Machakos hosted a pivotal forum with key figures from Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM), aiming to strengthen partnerships and address challenges within the manufacturing sector. Governor Wavinya Ndeti emphasized the county's dedication to fostering an ecosystem that is conducive to business expansion, investment, and job creation.

"We are committed to ensuring a supportive environment for manufacturers. We have established a dedicated committee which will work closely with industry stakeholders to resolve challenges facing manufacturers in Machakos County," she said.

The county is prioritizing industrial expansion and youth employment, with plans to enroll over 2,000 young people annually in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. These trainees will be linked with local

manufacturers to supply a steady stream of skilled labor for both existing and new enterprises. "We will collaborate with KAM to showcase our programs and invite industry leaders to support these initiatives," Ndeti added. Tobias Alando, KAM Chief Executive, praised the county's proactive approach, saying, "This is a pioneering effort by the County Government of Machakos to engage directly with investors and address their concerns. We are fully committed to supporting Machakos in preparing its youth for manufacturing roles and attracting new industries."

To accommodate industrial growth, Machakos has allocated over 2,000 hectares for industrial use within the ambitious New Machakos City project. Strategic industrial zones are being mapped along Mombasa Road, a key economic corridor, to catalyze development and draw further investment.

"Industries are central to my vision for Machakos. We have seen how industrialization has driven the growth of Mavoko, and our goal is to replicate this across the county," Ndeti remarked, noting the migration of rural residents to urban areas for industrial jobs.

2,000
Hectares of land has been allocated for industrial use within the ambitious New Machakos City project



A flagship initiative bolstering these efforts is the Kenya Leather Park (KLP), launched in January 2025 by the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenia, Machakos. Spanning 500 acres, KLP is designed to produce 10 million pairs of shoes annually, revitalizing Kenya's leather industry. The project is expected to increase the sector's economic value from KSh15 billion to KSh175 billion annually and create 100,000 jobs, up from the current 17,000.

Since the advent of Kenya's devolved government system in 2013, Machakos has consistently worked to establish itself as a prime destination for manufacturing and investment. The inaugural Machakos International Investment Conference in 2013 laid the groundwork for the New Machakos City project, demonstrating the potential of county-led industrial initiatives.

In 2019, the Machakos SME Summit underscored the role of small and

medium-sized enterprises in driving wealth and employment. More recently, 2024 roundtable advanced public-private partnerships to foster economic growth.

In parallel, the Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry has identified Machakos as a key region for the County Aggregation Industrial Parks (CAIPs) project, which focuses on agro-processing and value addition in the avocado, coffee, and cotton sectors. These efforts align with the Machakos County Annual Development Plan, which rests on three pillars: Food Security, Socio-economic Empowerment, and Infrastructure Development.

As Machakos intensifies its industrial push, its blend of strategic planning, targeted investments, and proactive engagement with the private sector positions it as an emerging economic powerhouse in Kenya's Lower Eastern Region.



Kenya unveils ambitious strategy to boost exports

Kenya has launched an ambitious blueprint to transform its export sector, aiming to position itself as a digitally empowered, globally competitive hub for high-quality goods.



Joyce Njogu, Head of Consulting & Sustainability at KAM

The strategy, launched at a high-level event in Nairobi on April 23, aligns with Kenya's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda and the Fourth Medium-Term Plan. It also responds to global trade challenges such as uncertainties surrounding the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), strained logistics, and tightening climate regulations.

Tobias Alando, KAM's chief executive, underscored the need for proactive measures. "Trade is no longer just about what you sell, but how you move, measure, certify, and connect," he said.

"This strategy ensures Kenya is helping shape the global trade landscape, not merely reacting to it." The RTM Strategy is built on five pillars: market diversification, digital preparedness, compliance and sustainability, financial resilience, and value addition through export clusters.

A key focus is leveraging trade agreements like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the EU-Economic Partnership Agreement, and the Common Market for Eastern



Manager Danish Industries East Africa - Klaus Christensen

and Southern Africa (COMESA) to access new markets.

A centralised digital platform will provide exporters with real-time data and market insights, while efforts to meet international standards, such as ISO and HACCP, aim to appeal to eco-conscious consumers.

Dr Juma Mukhwana, principal secretary for the State Department for Industry, highlighted the urgency of boosting intra-African trade, which accounts for just 15 per cent of the continent's commerce despite Africa housing 17 per cent of the world's population. "Africa contributes only 3 per cent of global manufactured goods," he said. "We have a responsibility to remove non-tariff barriers and trade more among ourselves."

Susan Mang'eni, Principal Secretary for the State Department of MSMEs Development, reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting small and medium enterprises through instruments such as the Draft MSME Policy, which prioritises value chain integration and cluster development.

“Africa contributes only 3 per cent of global manufactured goods, We have a responsibility to remove non-tariff barriers and trade more among ourselves”

The strategy also addresses financial resilience by improving access to trade finance and de-risking cross-border transactions. By promoting value addition and leveraging Special Economic Zones, Kenya aims to move beyond exporting raw materials to scaling up high-value manufacturing. With global trade dynamics shifting, the RTM Strategy offers a bold yet pragmatic framework. Over the next three years, success will depend on

collaboration between government, industry, and partners like Danish Industries East Africa, alongside a commitment to innovation and measurable outcomes. KAM, representing over 1,300 companies since 1959, positions the strategy as a cornerstone of Kenya's industrial ambitions. As the country steps forward with clarity, the focus is on turning its geographic and economic potential into a competitive edge on the global stage.



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Manufacturing sector faces challenges and opportunities in 2025

Kenya's manufacturing sector stands at a crossroads, with the potential to drive economic growth and job creation tempered by high production costs, policy uncertainties, and untapped market opportunities, according to the Kenya Association of Manufacturers' (KAM) Manufacturing Outlook 2025, released at the end of March.

The launch of KAM's Manufacturing Priority Agenda (MPA) 2025 in Nairobi outlined a strategic roadmap to bolster local industries, enhance global competitiveness, and create a stable business environment. The initiative aims to address longstanding barriers such as rising operational costs and limited market access, which have constrained the sector's growth despite its role as a cornerstone of Kenya's economy.

Jane Karuku, KAM's board chair, emphasised the need for sustainable industrialisation to foster national prosperity. "Our purpose is to create prosperity through sustainable industrialisation, advocating for policies that empower manufacturers and create jobs," she said. Karuku highlighted the growing enthusiasm among younger Kenyans for locally made products, urging greater adoption of the "Buy Kenya, Build Kenya" campaign to drive domestic consumption.

Tobias Alando, KAM's chief executive, called for deliberate policy reforms to enhance the sector's global edge. "A predictable tax environment is critical for business growth," he said, stressing the need for export competitiveness, support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and a regulatory framework that facilitates industrial expansion.

Kenya's strategic geographic position offers significant advantages for regional and international trade, yet intra-African trade remains low at just 15 per cent, according to Dr Juma Mukhwana, principal secretary in the State Department of Industry. "We rely heavily on external markets, while China manufactures ten times more than the entire African continent," he noted, underscoring the need to equip local industries to meet rising demand.

Energy costs and multiple county-level levies were flagged as major concerns by Hon. Lee Kinyanjui, cabinet secretary for the Ministry of Investments, Trade, and Industry. "A balanced approach to taxation that considers long-term industrial growth will be key to unlocking the sector's potential," he said, advocating

“

A balanced approach to taxation that considers long-term industrial growth will be key to unlocking the sector's potential.”



CS Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry Hon. Lee Kinyanjui and KAM Board Chairperson Ms. Jane Karuku flanked by the PS for Industry Dr. Juma Mukhwana, KAM Board Members and Leadership Team at the launch of the 2025 Manufacturing Priority Agenda in Nairobi.

1,300
KAM, representing over 1,300 companies across 14 sectors, has positioned itself as a leading voice for Kenya's industrialists since its founding in 1959.

for collaborative solutions to ease the cost burden on manufacturers.

The outlook draws parallels with countries like Vietnam and China, where targeted policies and investments have transformed manufacturing into a driver of economic progress. For Kenya to emulate this success, stakeholders—including government, industry, and

development partners—must align on bold, coordinated action, the report says. KAM, representing over 1,300 companies across 14 sectors, has positioned itself as a leading voice for Kenya's industrialists since its founding in 1959. The association's seven regional offices underscore its commitment to advancing a policy environment that supports global competitiveness while providing tailored support to manufacturers.

As Kenya navigates the challenges and opportunities of 2025, the MPA offers a blueprint for industrial transformation. However, its success will hinge on the government's ability to implement reforms and the private sector's willingness to innovate and scale.

Industrialists rally for circular economy at Kenya LOOP Forum 2025

Kenya took a bold step towards sustainability as the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) launched the third edition of the LOOP Forum Kenya in Nairobi, a two-day event dedicated to advancing circular economy solutions, slashing waste, and boosting resource efficiency.



Themed “Driving Kenya’s Transition to a Circular Economy through Collaboration, Innovation, and Sustainability,” the forum convened government officials, private sector leaders, investors, development partners, and researchers to foster collaboration and spur investment in circular practices. The event underscores Kenya’s growing commitment to sustainable industrial growth amid mounting environmental challenges.

David Ongare, compliance director at the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), stressed the urgency of circular economy dialogues. “Together, we have the potential to create lasting change,” he said, citing regulatory measures like the National Waste Policy, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations, and plastics laws as critical enablers. “Discussions on circularity are vital for advancing our shared goals.”

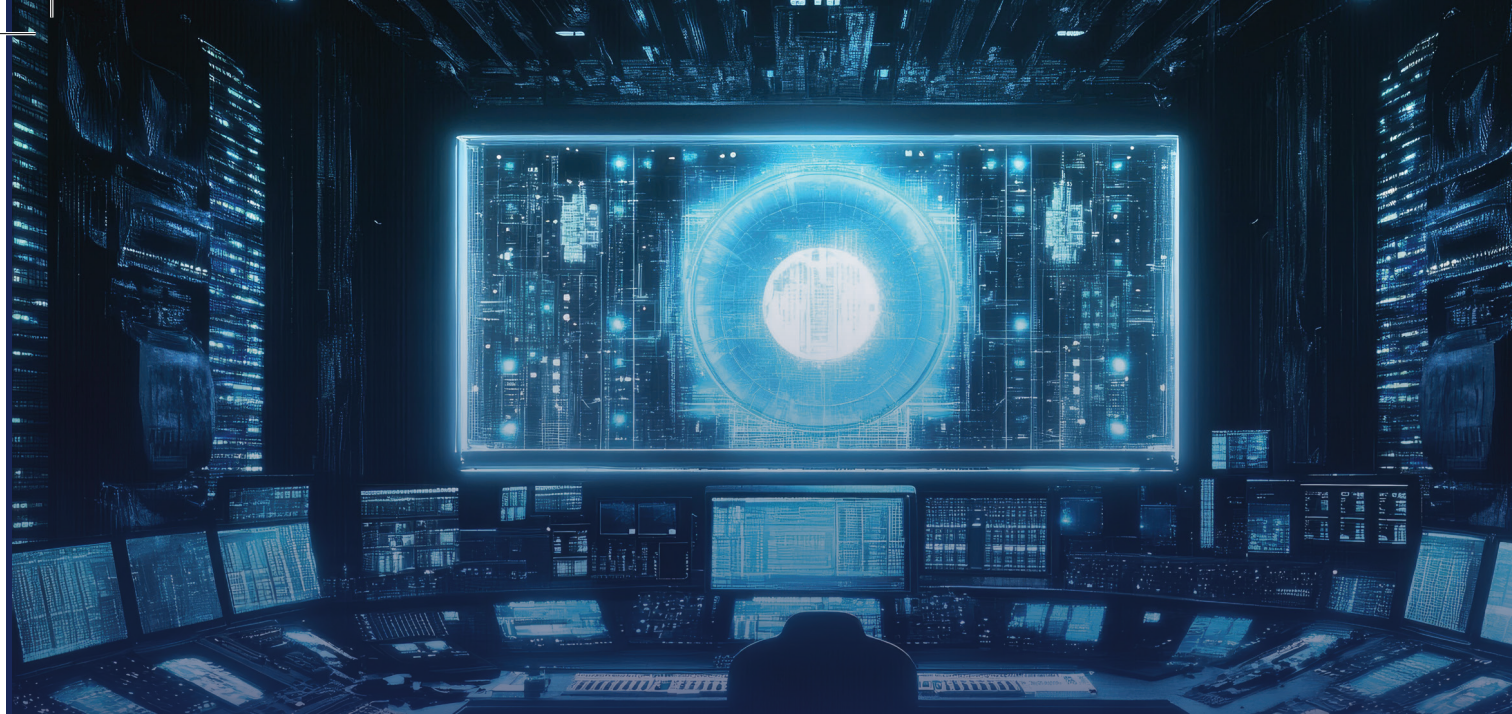
KAM chief executive Tobias Alando framed the circular economy as a linchpin for planetary survival. “Sustainability is non-negotiable,” he said. “Through our Centre for Green Growth and Climate Change, we’re driving initiatives like the circular economy resource mapping program, which redesigns processes to cut waste, regenerate resources, and create industrial symbiosis loops.”

KAM’s partnerships, including with the Packaging Producer Responsibility Organisation (PAKPRO) and the Kenya Extended Producer Responsibility Organisation (KEPRO), aim to tackle plastic waste and align manufacturers with EPR mandates.

Joyce Gachugi, PAKPRO’s chief executive, cast the circular economy as a business opportunity, not a burden. “Complying with EPR isn’t just about meeting legal requirements—it’s about turning waste into a valuable resource,” she said. “This transition positions businesses for long-term success while protecting the environment.”

The forum’s second day will feature the Kenya Fashion and Design Week, spotlighting sustainable fashion through eco-friendly designs, upcycled materials, and circular business models. The event aims to showcase how Kenya’s fashion industry can lead in sustainability.

KAM, representing over 1,300 companies across 14 sectors since 1959, is leveraging the LOOP Forum to cement Kenya’s role in the global shift to circularity. With regulatory backing and industry buy-in, the country is positioning itself as a hub for sustainable manufacturing, though scaling these efforts will require sustained investment and coordination.



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