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<http://agoa2013ethiopia.org/>

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PRESS RELEASE

Origin Africa Designer Showcase Spotlights Ethiopian Talent and Textiles at U.S. African Growth and Opportunity (AGOA) Forum

AUGUST 12, 2013 ADDIS ABABA. The Origin Africa Designer Showcase is a fashion show to express the innovation, resourcefulness and creativity of African designers. It aims to raise awareness of Africa as a place to do business and as a sourcing destination for international buyers.

The Origin Africa Designer Showcase event is a collaborative partnership between the U.S Agency for International Development's (USAID) East Africa Trade Hub and its trade association partner, the African Cotton & Textile Industries Federation (ACTIF). Origin Africa is both an event and an ongoing effort dedicated to improving African trade.

During AGOA 2013 in Addis Ababa, the designer showcase was the highlight of a gala dinner for all the official delegates from around the continent and hosted by the Government of Ethiopia. Eight Ethiopian designers were featured including Mahlet Afework, Aynalem Ayele, Ruth Woldeselassie, Fikirte Addis, Esete Haile, Bethlem Belete, Lilly and Zeze Yohannes, and Genet Kebede. New York-based international fashion model Maya Haile led the Ethiopian models on the catwalk.

"The designer showcase is a testament of the changing paradigm of Africa as a new horizon for sourcing," said Jaswinder Bedi, Chairman, ACTIF. "USAID Trade Hubs are contributing to President Obama's recently announced Trade Africa Initiative that seeks to increase internal and regional trade within Africa, and expand trade and economic ties between Africa, the United States, and other global markets," said USAID Assistant Administrator for Africa Earl Gast.

Global demand for fashion, diversification of sourcing and manufacturing locations around the world, and the growing African middle class has stimulated demand for stylish, African-made apparel. USAID Trade Hubs build on this momentum by supporting efforts, such as the Origin Africa Designer Showcase, to promote Africa as a reliable sourcing destination and to help African business take advantage of trade opportunities available under AGOA.

Since AGOA was signed into law in 2000, apparel exports to the U.S. have risen from US \$746 million to US \$1 billion. AGOA has been as the cornerstone of U.S. trade and economic policy concerning Africa and has had a transformative effect on Africa. This can be seen most clearly in the textile and apparel sector, where AGOA has created an estimated 300,000 new direct jobs, 50 percent of which were for women, and supported an additional three million indirect beneficiaries.



The East Africa Trade Hub, based in Nairobi, Kenya, is a regional program to promote trade, growth, and food security. The Trade Hub helps African firms compete in global markets and benefit from the U.S. African Growth and Opportunity



ACTIF is a regional trade body formed in June 2005 by the cotton, textile and apparel sectors from across sub-Saharan Africa. ACTIF membership is made up of national associations and industry companies representing the cotton textile and apparel value chain of Africa, with currently a total of 47 members from 23 African countries. ACTIF has been at the forefront of engaging the US Government and related agencies on behalf of the private sector on the sustainability of AGOA.

<http://www.cottonafrica.com/>

Participants:

Mahlet Afework, MAFI

Aynalem Ayele, AYNI'S DESIGN

Ruth Woldeselassie, URBAN ROOTS COUTURE

Fikirte Addis, YEFIKIR DESIGNS

Esete Haile, ESETE FASHION

Bethlem Belete, MESHKE

Lilly and Zeze Yohannes, YOHANNES SISTERS

Genet Kebede, PARADIS FASHION

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