



BERRY & DONALDSON  
(Pty) Limited  
GLOBAL FREIGHT LOGISTICS  
Established 1963

# NEWS

## 25 February 2015

### **Billionaire hits out at US exclusion of Swaziland from Agoa**

Following a scathing attack against the United States (US) for its exclusion of Swaziland in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa), questions have been raised in the media around the motives for the removal.

In an interview with daily online business publication, BDLive, South African-born Swazi billionaire, Natie Kirsch, claimed that the US's exclusion of Swaziland from Agoa was hurting Swazi citizens in order to send a message to Swaziland's absolute monarch, King Mswati III.

US news service, Bloomberg, reported in December last year that Kirsch had urged the US to review its decision on excluding Swaziland from Agoa. The country had its Agoa privileges terminated as the country had not "demonstrated progress on the protection of internationally recognised worker rights", reported Bloomberg.

However, in response to Kirsch's call, the US government reportedly said Swaziland had made no "measurable progress towards the guarantee and protection" of worker rights, among other failures, and thus it would be excluded from Agoa.

The US based its decision on benchmarks laid down by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Southern Africa, reported BDLive.

Kirsch criticised the ILO Southern Africa, stating that it was unable to justify its position on Swaziland.

Kirsch said Swazi textile factories that had opened and hired tens of thousands of people could now be closed. Swaziland used Agoa to build its textile export industry which employed one-fifth of the nation's workforce.

FTW [www.ftwonline.co.za](http://www.ftwonline.co.za)

