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Joint Statement on the Results of the Meeting of the United States-Maldives Trade and Investment Framework Agreement Joint Council

06/25/2019

Malé, Maldives (June 23, 2019) – Delegations from the governments of the Republic of Maldives and the United States met in Malé, Maldives for the latest round of talks under the United States-Maldives Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Joint Council.

The meeting was co-chaired by Minister Fayyaz Ismail from the Maldivian Ministry of Economic Development, and Assistant United States Trade Representative Christopher Wilson, who led an interagency U.S. government delegation.

The Maldivian and U.S. delegations diligently worked through a full agenda that included not only productive meetings to further strengthen fair and reciprocal trade under the TIFA, but also engagement with Maldivian and American businesses.

In the Joint Council meeting, Minister Fayyaz Ismail signaled his government's strong desire to continue the strong relationship with the U.S. government, including access to the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences program. The two sides were also able to make progress on issues related to the protection of intellectual property rights, the unique environmental concerns of the island nation, workers' rights, and labor conditions within the Maldives, and agreed that the governments would continue to cooperate on these issues.

Discussions were also held on improving the investment climate and compliance with the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, including assistance that the Maldives may require in implementing the Agreement. Reforms to government procurement processes, trade capacity building, and responsible business conduct were also discussed.

Both Minister Fayyaz Ismail and Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Wilson acknowledged the positive trends in bilateral trade between the two countries, with two-way trade increasing by nearly 30 percent from 2013-2018 to \$63 million, and hailed the talks as another step forward in ensuring fair trade between the partners