

# United States and Paraguay Convene First Trade and Investment Council

September 16, 2022

WASHINGTON – This week, the United States and Paraguay convened the first meeting of the Trade and Investment Council under the U.S.-Paraguay Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), which entered into force in March 2021. Daniel Watson, Assistant USTR for the Western Hemisphere, and Ambassador Enrique Franco, Vice Minister for Economic Relations and Integration, led their delegations, which included officials from multiple agencies. They affirmed the importance of the bilateral relationship, including working together to deepen engagement on trade and promote pandemic recovery. They discussed their shared commitment to improve the quality of life of their citizens, including through high labor standards, environmental sustainability, good governance, inclusivity, and equity, including women's equality and economic empowerment and small business development. They also discussed the respective circumstances and opportunities for each of their countries. With these values in mind, they discussed the areas below and plan technical work through the next year. They plan to hold the next TIFA Council meeting in Asunción in 2023.

*Trade Facilitation.* The two countries discussed the importance of full implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in a timely manner. With a view to full implementation, both re-committed to reviewing their customs fees and procedures with the aim of reducing the time and cost of compliance for traders and operators. They also discussed trade facilitation for agricultural goods, focusing on the Trade-Facilitating Agricultural Systems and Technology (T-FAST) program and its work to modernize trade facilitation processes in Paraguay, as well as the e-Phyto program.

*Good Regulatory Practices (GRP).* The two countries reaffirmed their support for the principles in the GRP Declaration issued during the [June 2022 Summit of the Americas](#). To advance those principles, they exchanged detailed information on their respective GRP measures, focusing on processes for coordination among agencies and transparent and inclusive public consultations.

*Anti-Corruption and Transparency.* The two countries agreed on the importance of transparency and anti-corruption measures to trade. The United States invited Paraguay to join the work of the Inter-American Coalition for Business Ethics in the Med Tech Sector, and Paraguay is considering this opportunity. Paraguay also provided an update on planned changes to its procurement law to enhance transparency and encourage greater participation in its procurement regime.

*Digital Economy.* The two countries expressed their commitment to make progress in the WTO Joint Statement Initiative on E-Commerce. They also

agreed to work together on other issues, including building consumer, business, and worker trust in the digital economy.

*Intellectual Property.* The two countries agreed on an Intellectual Property Work Plan that will serve as a roadmap to address issues on the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights in Paraguay. The two countries, with the relevant agencies coordinating, will implement the Work Plan, and review this implementation on an ongoing basis.

*Agricultural Trade.* The two countries discussed agricultural issues. Both countries share many common priorities and interests, including sustainable agriculture, food security, and science-based agricultural policies, including biotechnology. Paraguay has joined the Coalition on Sustainable Productivity Growth for Food Security and Resource Conservation and is willing to consider joining other initiatives to support and incentivize sustainable agriculture, such as the Agricultural Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM-C).

The two countries discussed the current process to authorize import of raw beef products from Paraguay into the United States. The delegation of Paraguay underlined its work to comply with U.S. requirements, and its hope that the necessary processes can be completed as soon as possible in 2023.

In addition, the two countries exchanged views regarding the potential for expanding agricultural trade, including non-traditional products from Paraguay. The delegation of Paraguay also expressed the importance it places on its sugar exports to the United States.

Lastly, the two countries exchanged views on the process of renewal of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), and Paraguay reiterated its interest in its inclusion as a GSP beneficiary.

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