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Statement on the United States – Egypt Trade and Investment Council Meeting

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Washington, DC – The United States-Egypt Trade and Investment Council, established under the 1999 Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), held a meeting on April 9, 2019 in Washington, D.C. to promote expanded bilateral trade and investment in both goods and services. The meeting was co-chaired by L. Daniel Mullaney, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative, and Ahmed Anter, Under Secretary, Egypt Ministry of Trade and Investment.

During the meeting, the United States and Egypt discussed a range of bilateral trade and investment issues and noted positively the increase in bilateral trade during 2018. Officials focused on seeking ways to promote greater reciprocal market access for agricultural and industrial goods. They discussed needed Egyptian labor reforms, improving IP protection including through accession to relevant international treaties, strengthening border enforcement measures, and implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. They also acknowledged the need to recognize international technical standards and to discourage the use of discriminatory policies.

Both Governments agreed that ongoing bilateral engagement on trade under the TIFA should include work that yields benefits for agricultural producers, importers, exporters, and consumers. In this vein, the United States and Egypt are collaborating on the development of scientific, risk-based food safety practices consistent with international guidelines of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. This work will build on private sector and local efforts already underway in Egypt.

The United States welcomes Egypt's acceptance of U.S. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards for the importation of fully assembled vehicles and its decision to modify its Decree 607, relaxing domestic ownership requirements for express shipping companies. The United States also expressed a willingness to explore further technical assistance in Egypt with the aim of promoting enhanced trade and investment.

Both governments agreed to strive to make additional progress in advance of the next Council meeting, to be held in Cairo, Egypt in 2020.

Background

Total bilateral goods trade has grown over the decades to an estimated \$7.5 billion in 2018. Egypt benefits from the participation in the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ) programs, with roughly \$1 billion of Egyptian goods exports to the United States entering the U.S. market duty free every year.