

U.S., Uruguay Hold Trade and Investment Council Meeting

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The third meeting of the Trade and Investment Council (TIC), established by the United States - Uruguay Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), was held today in Washington. The U.S. delegation was headed by Assistant United States Trade Representative (AUSTR) for the Americas Everett Eissenstat. Uruguayan Minister of Foreign Affairs Gonzalo Fernández led the Uruguayan delegation.

"Today's meeting demonstrates the continuing close friendship and collaboration that continues to characterize the trade relations between our countries," said Everett Eissenstat, Assistant United States Trade Representative for the Americas. "I am especially pleased that our two governments met with the Trade and Environment Policy Advisory Committee (TEPAC) earlier this week to discuss enhancing public participation under our agreed TIFA protocol on Trade and Environment. This demonstrates the commitment we share to fully implementing the protocols under our agreement."

"I agree that the protocols on trade and environment and trade facilitation are very important," expressed the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uruguay Gonzalo Fernández. "I am pleased that we also reviewed progress to date on a number of important issues covered under our work program and note the importance of continued progress in these areas."

During today's meeting, Minister Fernández and AUSTR Eissenstat took stock of discussions undertaken pursuant to the TIFA Work Program. In doing so, both governments acknowledged the strong progress that has been made in deepening and broadening the United States-Uruguay trade and investment relationship since the TIC last met in Washington, D.C. on April 30, 2008. Some of the work completed includes the signing of two protocols to the TIFA covering substantive commitments in the areas of trade facilitation and public participation in trade and environment.

Prior to today's meeting, representatives of both governments met with the Members and Liaisons of the Trade and Environment Policy Advisory Committee (TEPAC) to discuss the commitments made under the TIFA Protocol concerning public participation in trade and the environment. The TEPAC members and liaisons provided advice on how to promote public participation and increase transparency in trade and environmental policies and decision-making based on their experience in the United States.

BACKGROUND

The U.S.-Uruguay commercial relationship has developed significantly in the past several years. In 2002, Uruguay and the United States created a Joint Commission on Trade and Investment (JCTI) to exchange ideas on a variety of economic topics. The Commission served as an important mechanism for the two countries to work to enhance and broaden their trade relationship, and facilitated the successful negotiation of the United States - Uruguay Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT), which entered into force on November 1, 2006.

The United States and Uruguay signed the United States - Uruguay TIFA on January 25, 2007. The TIFA established the United States - Uruguay Trade and Investment Council (TIC) and serves as a mechanism to further deepen the trade and investment dialogue. On October 2, 2008, both governments signed protocols to the TIFA covering substantive commitments in the areas of trade facilitation and public participation in trade and environment.

The TIFA contains an annex that established a work program calling for the two governments to address such matters as liberalization of bilateral trade and investment, intellectual property rights, regulatory issues, information and communications technology and electronic commerce, trade facilitation, trade and technical capacity building, trade in services, government procurement, and cooperation on sanitary and phytosanitary measures. The annex provides for the TIC to add other matters

to the work program.

In implementing the TIFA, both parties reconfirmed their commitment to expand economic opportunities between Uruguay and the United States while simultaneously coordinating their efforts to promote greater trade liberalization through the World Trade Organization (WTO).