

The Office of the United States Trade Representative

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Statement Regarding Recent Meeting between U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick and the President of Uruguay, Jorge Batlle

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WASHINGTON - The Office of the United States Trade Representative today issued the following statement regarding the recent meeting between the U.S. Trade Representative, Robert B. Zoellick, and the President of Uruguay, Jorge Batlle:

Ambassador Zoellick and President Batlle considered how they might increase trade between the United States and Uruguay, and promote trade liberalization through the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the Four Plus One mechanism between the United States and MERCOSUR. They agreed to establish a Joint Commission on Trade and Investment (JCTI) as a means of strengthening coordination between the two countries on trade and investment issues of mutual interest. The United States created a similar mechanism with Chile in 1998. As with the JCTI established with Chile, the main goals of this Commission will be to discuss ways to increase trade and address specific bilateral trade issues. The United States and Uruguay have agreed to initiate a work program for the Commission, which will hold its initial meeting during March 2002, including the establishment of working groups on issues of mutual interest.

Such a Commission recognizes the importance of our bilateral relationship, and will facilitate a dialogue on our mutual interest in moving forward in the FTAA and the new round of negotiations in the WTO.

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