

Inicio Fourth round of negotiation for FTA with Israel concludes with three chapters completed

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*Bogota, November 30, 2012.- With the closing chapters of the chapters on Customs Procedures, Trade Protection, and Cooperation, as well as much progress in other subjects, the fourth round for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Colombia and Israel conclude successfully in Bogota.*

- **Chapters were closed on Customs Procedures, Trade Protection, and Cooperation**
- **The fifth round will be held in Israel from April 8 – 11, 2013.**

The Minister of Trade, Industry, and Tourism, Sergio Diaz-Granados, said that the FTA is important for Colombia, given that, among other things, it will form a step towards the deepening and strengthening of relations with the Middle East.

During this round, discussions focused on the issues of market access, rules of origin, customs procedures, SPS, TBT, Trade Protection, Cooperation, Investment, Services, and Public

Procurement.

In the chapter on Customs, the technical teams agreed to issues of procedure, provisions on cooperation, transparency, clearance of goods, automation, risk management, authorized economic operator, simultaneous inspection, confidentiality, review and appeal, advanced resolutions, and the creation of a sub-committee on Customs and Rules of Origin.

In the chapter on Trade Protection, the teams agreed to a bilateral safeguard, whose terms will depend on progress in the chapter on market access. As for the General Safeguard, they agreed on the whole text and emphasis was placed on maintaining the rights and obligations are under the WTO.

On the subject of Antidumping and Countervailing measures, which is part of the chapter on Trade Protection, consensus was reached in respect to referencing the rights and obligations of the WTO Agreements. For this discipline, as well as for safeguards, the teams agreed to the possibility of electing a forum under the chapter on Dispute Settlement.

The teams also reached a conclusion, in respect to the chapter on Cooperation, which will facilitate the implementation of projects in areas such as the development of agriculture technology, telecommunications, innovation and entrepreneurship, biotechnology, and environmental technology, among others.

Colombia's chief negotiator, Javier Gamboa, highlighted the progress that was also made in the other chapters of the agreement. In Access for Goods, the parties made a detailed analysis of agricultural and industrial offers and advanced the definition of the conditions of access for a wide range of products. It was agreed that before the fifth round, there will be another exchange of offers which address the proposals that were discussed in this round, once the respective internal consultations were reached.

On Rules of Origin, the teams agreed to general criteria for the exchange of goods produced from originating and non-originating materials, with two alternatives for certification of origin. The first is the format of certificate of origin (electronic and written), and the second is the import invoice declaration for less than or equal to one thousand dollars.

In the chapter on Technical Barriers to Trade, the teams agreed to the objectives and scope of trade cooperation and facilitation, including technical regulations, among other topics.

In Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, alternatives were discussed on the articles concerning the competent authorities, consultations, and the subcommittee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. The teams reached an agreement, in principle, which they expect to ratify through an exchange of texts prior to the next round of negotiations.

In Public Procurement, the teams resumed the work on the text of the chapter and discussed the bids and requests for improved offers.

In the chapter on Investments, important developments and agreements were reached regarding the investor-State dispute settlement mechanism.

And lastly, in Services, the teams mainly analyzed the subjects of Telecommunications, E-Commerce, Financial Services, and the Temporary Entry of Business Persons.

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