The Office of the United States Trade Representative

Statement of U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab Regarding Entry into Force of the CAFTA – DR for the Dominican Republic

03/01/2007

WASHINGTON D.C. – U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab made the following statement today regarding the entry into force of the CAFTA-DR for the Dominican Republic:

"I am pleased the President has issued a proclamation to implement the CAFTA-DR for the Dominican Republic as of March 1, 2007.

"We have worked closely and intensively with all six CAFTA-DR countries to ensure they meet their obligations and responsibilities under the agreement. Trade with these countries has increased significantly over the past year. We are pleased that the Dominican Republic is now ready to join El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua in putting the agreement into force. I greatly appreciate the diligent effort by President Fernandez and his government to adopt legislation and regulations to implement the Dominican Republic’s commitments under the CAFTA-DR. This step marks an important milestone in our relationship with the Dominican Republic, which will enable us to continue our strong economic and political partnership.

"We will continue our work with Costa Rica with the goal of putting the agreement into effect at the earliest possible date."

Background

The United States, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua signed the CAFTA-DR in August 2004. All but Costa Rica have ratified the agreement.

Implementing legislation for the CAFTA-DR passed the U.S. Senate in June 2005 and the House of Representatives in July 2005 and was signed by the President in August 2005.

The CAFTA-DR entered into force for El Salvador on March 1, 2006, for Honduras and Nicaragua on April 1, 2006, and for Guatemala on July 1, 2006. CAFTA-DR implementation has been positive as trade and economic benefits are expanding. In 2006, U.S. exports to El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua grew by over 18 percent.