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## **USTR and the U.S. Department of Labor Meet with South Korean Officials to Discuss Labor Rights, Free Trade**

April 27, 2022

WASHINGTON – The Office of the United States Trade Representative and the U.S. Department of Labor met with their counterparts in the Republic of Korea on April 25, 2022 for a meeting of the Labor Affairs Council established as part of the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement, or KORUS.

Led by Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Labor Joshua Kagan and the Department of Labor’s Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs Thea Lee, the delegation participated in an online meeting between the U.S. and South Korea. An online public meeting then followed to discuss the KORUS Labor Chapter, which took place on the evening of April 26, 2022.

“We remain committed to our strong trade and labor relationship with South Korea, which is bolstered through engagement like this,” **said Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Labor Joshua Kagan.** “This Labor Affairs Council meeting under KORUS, including the public session, demonstrates our partnership with South Korea to achieve shared goals in protecting workers globally and advancing labor rights under the agreement.”

“Today – after a decade of working together under the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement – we begin a new chapter of deeper collaboration to strengthen and protect labor rights in our two nations, and across our shared supply chains,” **said Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs Thea Lee.** “The Labor Affairs Council is an important vehicle for productive discussions and continued collaboration.”

During the government-to-government meeting, the council discussed domestic advancements, institutions and procedures that each party is employing to advance the fulfillment of the KORUS’ labor provisions. The council also held in-depth discussions on several topics, including the following:

- Steps to strengthen workers’ rights domestically.
- Exploration of a trilateral cooperation project with the International Labor Organization.
- Advances and challenges in the elimination of forced labor from shared supply chains.
- Areas of future cooperation and technical capacity building.

Workers, employers, civil society organizations and other attendees discussed issues related to the KORUS Labor Chapter’s implementation during the virtual public session.