

## **Joint Statement of the Labor Affairs Council of the United States – Korea Free Trade Agreement**

Washington, D.C.  
March 19, 2013

The Labor Affairs Council (the Council) of the United States – Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) convened its first meeting on March 18-19, 2013 in Washington, D.C. Pursuant to Article 19.5 of the KORUS FTA, the Council is comprised of senior officials from the labor ministries and other appropriate agencies or ministries and is responsible for overseeing the implementation of Chapter 19 (the Labor Chapter) of the FTA, including activities of the Labor Cooperation Mechanism established under Article 19.6. Officials from the U.S. Department of Labor, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Korean Ministry of Employment and Labor and the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade participated in this first LAC meeting.

During the meeting, the Council reaffirmed the Parties' commitments under the Labor Chapter, including the commitment to adopt and maintain in law and practice the rights as stated in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The Council further clarified the domestic mechanisms, institutions, and procedures that each Party has established to advance the fulfillment of the Chapter's provisions. The Council also held in-depth discussions on areas for future cooperation on specific priority areas, including: (1) information sharing on employment and labor statistics; and (2) collaboration on issues related to global supply chains. First, under the oversight of the Council, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Korean Labor Market Analysis Division of the Ministry of Employment and Labor exchanged technical information related to the collection and analysis of labor statistics. Second, recognizing the importance of corporate compliance with international labor standards in global supply chains, the Parties also shared information on different means for advancing this objective and agreed to further exchange of relevant information.

At the conclusion of the Council meeting, the Parties convened a public session with workers' and other civil society organizations, employers, and the general public. Public sessions are critical to strengthening communication among the FTA Parties, ensuring transparency in the administration of the Labor Chapter, and furthering the successful implementation of the Chapter's commitments.