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The United States and Malaysia Hold Third Meeting under Trade and Investment Framework Agreement

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Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – U.S. Government officials met on October 10 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with their Malaysian Government counterparts for the third meeting under the United States-Malaysia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), which was signed in May 2004. Malaysia is America's 10th largest trading partner, with two-way trade totaling nearly \$40 billion during 2004.

During these productive meetings, led by Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Southeast Asia and Pacific Affairs Barbara Weisel and Secretary General of Malaysia's Ministry of International Trade and Industry Dato Sidek Hassan, the two sides continued their detailed discussion on progress in addressing outstanding bilateral trade issues as well as coordination on regional and multilateral issues. The wide-ranging bilateral agenda covered priority trade issues for both countries, including improving market access in the automotive, financial services, and agriculture sectors, strengthening the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights, upgrading customs procedures, and addressing investment concerns. Malaysia and the United States also discussed cooperation and trade capacity building projects that will help further our countries' interests in strengthening our trade relationship, including areas such as customs, IPR enforcement, and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements.

The United States and Malaysia also discussed coordination on APEC and WTO issues. Malaysia is continuing its active and constructive participation in the Doha round negotiations, and U.S. officials appreciated the opportunity to discuss both countries' commitment to an ambitious result in the Doha round.

The United States concluded the TIFA with Malaysia last year under the Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative (EAI), which was announced by President George W. Bush in October 2002. As part of this initiative, the U.S. Government is seeking to further strengthen U.S. trade and investment ties with ASEAN, both as a region and bilaterally. The EAI offers the prospect of negotiating FTAs, such as our proposed free trade agreement with Thailand, with ASEAN members that have bilateral TIFAs with the United States, are WTO members, and are committed to economic reforms and openness.

The first meeting under the United States-Malaysia TIFA took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in February this year and the second meeting occurred in May in Washington, D.C. The two sides agreed to meet again early next year to continue the TIFA discussions.

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