

U.S. and Colombia Conclude First Meeting of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Commission

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Washington, D.C. - Today Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Miriam Sapiro hosted the inaugural meeting of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Commission (FTC), the body responsible for supervising the implementation of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement and resolving issues that arise. The Colombian delegation was led by Vice Minister of Trade Gabriel Duque Mildenberg.

The FTC meeting comes six months after the May 15 entry into force of the Agreement. The two sides concluded that operation of the Agreement has gone smoothly and is already bringing benefits to both countries. According to U.S. Government statistics, U.S. exports to Colombia from May to September were over 20 percent higher than for the corresponding period last year.

“All indications are that the Agreement is off to a successful start. The hard work of both our teams to prepare for entry into force appears to have paid off, as our respective exporters have begun to take advantage of the new opportunities the Agreement provides,” said U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk. **“Our statistics show a significant increase in trade in both directions – a classic win-win. In addition, the FTC meeting provides a public signal of the continuing importance both our governments attach to realizing the full potential of one of our closest trade relationships in the Hemisphere.”**

At the FTC meeting the governments took decisions to launch consideration of tariff acceleration and to establish time frames for establishing the dispute settlement mechanism and updating the rules of origin. The parties also monitored fulfillment of commitments with a post-entry into force deadline and reviewed the work of the committees that recently met to date under the Agreement: Technical Barriers to Trade, Agriculture, and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

The U.S. and Colombia also discussed the important engagement that is ongoing between the two governments to ensure that the Colombian Action Plan Related to Labor Rights continues to be fully implemented.

