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## **Joint Statement of the United States – Ecuador Trade and Investment Council**

**February 18, 2022**

GUAYAQUIL - On February 15 and 16 the United States and Ecuador held the fourth meeting of the United States-Ecuador Trade and Investment Council (TIC). The U.S. delegation was led by Deputy U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Jayme White, and the Ecuadorian delegation was led by the Minister of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries, Julio Jose Prado.

The TIC meeting and the working group meetings held by officials from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and the Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries highlighted the importance of the United States-Ecuador relationship, ongoing engagement on bilateral issues, and a commitment to collaboration. Both countries reaffirmed their commitment to pursuing a bilateral trade policy that is resilient, supports workers, protects our shared environment, and fosters equitable growth.

On the topic of agriculture, dialogue focused on improving the import licensing system. Meetings held on labor identified progress made to eradicate child labor and improve labor inspections. Both sides agreed to identify areas of technical cooperation. The working group and other bilateral meetings on environment addressed progress made in relation to conservation of natural resources such as fisheries, forests and wildlife, and actions to address climate change and marine debris, including promoting circular economy approaches. In addition, developments in implementing regulations for the fisheries and aquaculture sectors were presented, including efforts to combat illegal fishing and progress to conserve marine resources. Both sides agreed to continue with technical dialogues across the range of shared priority trade and environment issues, including to identify future areas of collaboration.

The meetings also provided an opportunity to review the implementation of the Protocol on Trade Rules and Transparency signed under the auspices of the Trade and Investment Council. As topic of high interest to Ecuador, the next steps for the renewal of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) was addressed, as well as the U.S. Congressional interest in strengthening the U.S. – Ecuador relationship.

The United States and Ecuador also convened an SME Roundtable with representatives of women and Indigenous entrepreneurs highlighting the importance of ensuring the benefits of trade extend to all sectors. Both sides mentioned available tools and resources to assist exporters and improve post-COVID economic recovery.

Both countries will agree on a date for a technical visit to the United States to continue with the dialogue.