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## Statement by U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman Welcoming WTO Decisions Regarding the Trade Facilitation Agreement

U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Michael Froman, released the following statement welcoming decisions taken at the World Trade Organization (WTO) enabling full implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), the first multilateral trade agreement in the WTO's 20-year history.

**"The WTO has taken a critical step forward by breaking the impasse that has prevailed since July. I am pleased that the United States was able to work with India and other WTO members to find an approach that preserved the letter and spirit of the package of decisions reached at last year's Bali Ministerial Conference.**

**"The Trade Facilitation Agreement has the potential to fundamentally reform global customs practices and substantially reduce the costs and time associated with goods crossing borders. It's a perfect example of how breaking down barriers to trade can unlock new opportunities for developed and developing countries alike, and it's a particularly important win for small- and medium-sized businesses in all countries.**

**"With this win under the WTO's belt, we can once again focus our efforts on revitalizing the organization's core negotiating functions."**

The TFA and other parts of the Bali Package had been put into question on July 1, when a small group of WTO Members blocked adoption of the Protocol of Amendment for the TFA by the deadline established in the Bali Package. The United States recently worked with India to break this impasse, and the General Council adopted decisions today which endorse the approach agreed upon by the United States and India. These decisions include: adoption of a protocol enabling full implementation of the TFA; a decision on public stockholding for food security, clarifying a "peace clause" against legal challenges to certain public stockholding programs will continue until a permanent solution on such programs is agreed and adopted; and a decision to extend until July 2015 the deadline for developing a work program covering all remaining issues in the Doha Round of negotiations.

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