

Trans-Pacific Partnership Negotiations Maintain Strong Momentum

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Lima, Peru – During the 17th round of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations, which ended today, officials reported that they continued to forge ahead toward their goal of concluding an ambitious 21st-century agreement in the timeframe envisioned by President Obama and the Leaders of the other ten TPP countries. Through the TPP, the United States is seeking to advance a next-generation trade and investment agreement that will enhance U.S. competitiveness, expand U.S. trade in the Asia-Pacific region, and support the creation and retention of U.S. jobs, while at the same time promoting labor rights, environmental protection, and transparency.

In their work during this 10-day round, negotiators were guided by the plan of action agreed by the trade ministers from the United States and the other TPP countries – Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam – when they met last month on the margins of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Surabaya, Indonesia. In line with that plan and the direction of ministers to find pragmatic solutions to outstanding issues, the negotiators made progress across the agreement. The negotiating groups covering services, government procurement, sanitary and phytosanitary standards, trade remedies, labor, and dispute settlement moved their work forward significantly. The TPP countries also successfully advanced work on the other legal texts, including technical barriers to trade, e-commerce, rules of origin, investment, financial services, intellectual property, transparency, competition, environment and other issues. On the more challenging issues of intellectual property, competition, and environment, negotiators had productive discussions and agreed on next steps to continue their work.

In addition, negotiators made further progress on building the comprehensive packages that will provide access to their respective markets for industrial, agricultural and textile and apparel products, services and investment, and government procurement. They moved forward in constructing tariff packages and rules of origin, reflecting input from stakeholders on how best to promote trade and regional integration that would benefit the companies and workers in the United States and the other TPP countries.

The 11 TPP countries discussed plans for smoothly integrating Japan into the TPP negotiations. Japan will join the negotiations following the successful completion of current members' respective domestic processes. With Japan's entry, TPP countries will account for nearly 40 percent of global GDP and about one-third of all world trade.

On May 19th, the TPP negotiations were temporarily suspended so negotiators could meet with the 300 stakeholders from the United States and other TPP countries. Stakeholders presented views to negotiators on a wide range of issues under discussion in the TPP, and met informally with U.S. and other negotiators to provide further input to them. Barbara Weisel, U.S. chief TPP negotiator, and the chief negotiators from the other 10 countries also briefed stakeholders on the status of the negotiations and responded to their questions on specific issues and the process going forward.

Ministers from the TPP countries will continue to engage regularly over the coming months to guide the negotiators' work, find solutions to outstanding sensitive issues, and ensure that the negotiations achieve the TPP Leaders' objective of a high-quality, ambitious, and comprehensive agreement this year. Meanwhile, the negotiating teams agreed on detailed intersessional work plans so that the momentum achieved during this week's round in Lima can be maintained.

The 18th round of TPP negotiations will be held in Malaysia from July 15th-25th.