



UNITED STATES COUNCIL FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

NEWS RELEASE

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USCIB Applauds Progress on Colombia Trade Agreement

New York, N.Y., April 6, 2011 – The United States Council for International Business (USCIB), which represents America’s top global companies, welcomed today’s announcement of major progress to finalize the U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement. It urged swift consideration of the market-opening deal by Congress.

“We commend the Obama administration for making completion of this agreement a top priority,” stated USCIB President and CEO **Peter M. Robinson**. “From the business perspective, this agreement will level the playing field, since many Colombian products already enter the U.S. duty-free. We also believe that the U.S. has a compelling foreign policy interest in supporting a democratic ally like Colombia through enhanced economic ties.”

Once the agreement is ratified, 80 percent of U.S. exports of consumer and industrial products to Colombia would become duty-free, with the remaining tariffs phased out over the next 10 years. More than half of U.S. agriculture exports to Colombia would also become duty-free, with almost all tariffs eliminated within 15 years.

Mr. Robinson said he was gratified that the agreement’s labor provisions are based on the May 2007 bipartisan trade deal that incorporates the International Labor Organization’s 1998 *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, which was developed at the initiative of USCIB and the other business constituents of the ILO.

“Colombia has clearly demonstrated its willingness to work with the ILO to meet its international commitments,” he stated. “We encourage the United States to support the role of the ILO to help its member states realize the principles of the ILO Declaration in their national laws.”

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Mr. Robinson said USCIB strongly supports ratification of the Colombia, Korea and Panama FTAs, as well as completion of the WTO's Doha Round and other market-opening initiatives.

About USCIB

USCIB promotes open markets, competitiveness and innovation, sustainable development and corporate responsibility, supported by international engagement and prudent regulation. Its members include top U.S.-based global companies and professional services firms from every sector of our economy, with operations in every region of the world. With a unique global network encompassing leading international business organizations, USCIB provides business views to policy makers and regulatory authorities worldwide, and works to facilitate international trade and investment. More information is available at www.uscib.org.

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