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## **NFTC Urges Congress to Approve U.S.-Colombia FTA**

*Agreement Important to U.S. National Security Interests, Will Fortify Commercial Ties  
with Key Ally in Latin America*

**Washington, DC** - On the heels of an announcement today from the Administration that the president will send implementing legislation for the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement to Capitol Hill tomorrow, the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) released the following statement urging Members of Congress to approve the implementing bill. The Council encouraged committees of jurisdiction to begin scheduling hearings on the FTA, and asked all Members of Congress to evaluate the agreement on its merits and support it on the House and Senate floor. In addition to pressing for action on the Colombia agreement, the NFTC also called for expanding and enhancing the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program.

“The U.S.-Colombia FTA is a well-crafted agreement that reflects the labor and environmental provisions included in the bipartisan framework on trade developed by the Administration and Congress last spring. Given the commercial and national security implications of this agreement between the United States and an important ally in Latin America, we urge Members of Congress to approve the FTA in the coming weeks,” said NFTC President Bill Reinsch. “Equally as important is ensuring that American workers impacted by the trade and technological advancements receive the training, retraining and benefits they need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy, through an expanded and enhanced Trade Adjustment Assistance program. We hope Congress will enact such an expanded program as well.”

“The trade agreement with Colombia will open markets and expand opportunities for American workers employed by U.S. companies with operations, facilities or interests in trade with Colombia. It will also bring increased stability and economic growth to the region at a critical time in its history,” Reinsch continued. “Approving the U.S.-Colombia agreement will send an important signal to other nations in the region that the United States is a reliable ally and committed to helping Latin America fully realize the benefits of an open, rules-based trading system.”

“With the implementing legislation soon to reach the halls of Congress, we ask committees of jurisdiction to be responsible stewards of the legislative process and begin scheduling hearings in the coming days and weeks. As Members begin reviewing the legislation, we encourage them to evaluate it on its merits and cast votes that reflect that thoughtful deliberation,” said Reinsch.

“From a commercial standpoint, Colombia is an important market for U.S. goods and services, but currently our farmers and our manufacturers pay costly tariffs on products exported to Colombia,” said NFTC Senior Vice President Catherine Bennett. “Though many products from Colombia already enjoy duty-free access to the U.S. market under existing preferences programs, the United States does not enjoy such benefits. Congress, however, has an opportunity to change the factors in this lopsided equation by approving the trade agreement.”

Under the terms of the agreement, there will be continued and increased market access for U.S. goods, including medical and construction equipment, chemicals, agricultural exports, plastics and other products. In 2007, U.S. exports to Colombia accounted for \$8.6 billion, and are expected to increase by \$1.1 billion following the agreement’s entry into force.

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***Advancing Global Commerce for Over 90 Years***

*The National Foreign Trade Council ([www.nftc.org](http://www.nftc.org)) is a leading business organization advocating an open, rules-based global trading system. Founded in 1914 by a broad-based group of American companies, the NFTC now serves hundreds of member companies through its offices in Washington and New York.*