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Continued Progress at Fifth Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Round

The United States and its TPP partners – Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam – concluded the fifth round of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations in Santiago, Chile today, marking continued progress toward the goal of developing a high-standard, 21st-century trade agreement.

Having exchanged initial tariff offers in January, the teams from the nine TPP countries began goods negotiations in Santiago, agreeing to exchange lists of requests for improvements in these initial offers next month ahead of the sixth round. The partners also agreed to exchange initial offers on services and investment and initial offers on government procurement before the next round. In addition, the teams began consideration of how best to develop a TPP rule of origin, which will help support development of a regional trade agreement, and agreed to exchange proposed product-specific rules of origin in March.

TPP countries made further progress in developing the agreement's legal texts, which will spell out the rights and obligations each country will take on and that will cover all aspects of trade and investment relationships. The teams carefully reviewed the text proposals made by each country, ensuring understanding of each other's proposals so negotiations could advance. With consolidated negotiating texts in most areas, partners began seeking to narrow differences and to consider the interests and concerns of each country.

TPP partners also further developed approaches addressing the new cross-cutting issues that will be incorporated into the agreement, including a proposal for promoting competitiveness and facilitating business; how to promote the participation of small- and medium-sized businesses in international trade; deepening the production and supply chain linkages between TPP countries; enhancing the coherence of the regulatory systems of TPP countries to facilitate trade; and promoting development.

As in previous rounds, the teams received input from a wide range of representatives of business, civil society and other stakeholder groups on a variety of issues. The labor delegations attended a seminar on Chilean labor law and practice, with presentations by government officials, trade unions, and industry. The sanitary and phyto-sanitary group participated in a seminar on electronic certification and risk-based inspection programs, with presentations by Australian, Chilean, and U.S. officials. In addition, the technical barriers to trade team participated in a seminar on non-tariff barriers, including in the organic sector.

Reflecting the direction of the nine TPP Leaders for the TPP negotiators to conclude as expeditiously as possible, the teams agreed to intensify their work, planning an ambitious agenda ahead of the next negotiating round in Singapore in late March and agreeing to extend the length of the round so negotiators would have more time to make progress in each group. As it prepares for the sixth round, the U.S. team will continue its close and detailed consultations with Congress and stakeholders in order to ensure that the TPP Agreement deals with the issues U.S. businesses and workers are facing in the 21st century and reflects U.S. values.