

USTR NEWS

UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

www.ustr.gov

Washington, D.C. 20508

202-395-3230

For Immediate Release:

May 29, 2008

Contact:

Sean Spicer/Gretchen Hamel (202) 395-3230

The United States and Sri Lanka Conclude the Sixth Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council Meeting

Washington, D.C. – The sixth U.S.-Sri Lanka Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council meeting was held here on May 29. The U.S. delegation was led by Deputy United States Trade Representative John K. Veroneau. Gamini Lakshman (G.L.) Peiris, Minister for Export Development and International Trade, led the Sri Lankan delegation.

“We are honored to play a role in supporting Sri Lanka’s economic development by enhancing opportunities for trade, particularly in the wake of the tsunami that devastated so much of Sri Lanka in late 2004,” Ambassador Veroneau said. “Today’s meetings served to identify areas of common interest and deepen our commitment to expanded bilateral trade and investment between our two countries.”

“Sri Lanka continues to value the importance of long-standing trade and political relations with the United States of America, which is the largest single market for its exports,” said Minister Peiris. “The TIFA process provides an ideal platform for the two countries to engage in a constructive dialogue in further enhancing these relations for their mutual benefit. Enhancing market access for its exports and promoting close cooperation for capacity building in areas such as IPR, customs, anti-dumping and countervailing duties, information technology, etc., rank very high on Sri Lanka’s agenda in this context.”

U.S. and Sri Lankan officials reviewed progress in addressing bilateral trade and investment issues identified at the last TIFA Council meeting in November 2006, including common interests on which the two countries can work together to facilitate expanded trade and cooperation. They discussed the status of the ongoing WTO/Doha negotiations, Sri Lanka’s use of the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program, and U.S. trade capacity building assistance to Sri Lanka. In addition, the TIFA Council discussed issues affecting U.S. exports, such as Sri Lanka’s agricultural biotechnology policies, import tariffs, intellectual property rights protection, and transparency in government procurement.

Background:

On July 2, 2002, the United States and Sri Lanka signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) that provides a forum for both countries to examine ways to expand bilateral trade and investment. The TIFA Council facilitates an ongoing dialogue that helps to increase commercial and investment opportunities by identifying and working to remove impediments to trade and investment flows between the United States and Sri Lanka.

Total two-way trade between Sri Lanka and the United States totaled \$2.3 billion in 2007, with U.S. imports of \$2.2 billion and U.S. exports of \$227 million. The leading U.S. exports to Sri Lanka were cereals (wheat and meslin), electrical machinery, optical and medical instruments and plastics. U.S. imports from Sri Lanka are primarily apparel, rubber, precious stones and machinery. In 2007, U.S. imports from Sri Lanka qualifying for GSP provisions were valued at \$153 million.

###