Statement on Eliminating Forced Labor in Global Supply Chains

We, the Trade Ministers of the United States, Argentina, and Mexico, recognize that the continued existence of forced labor globally represents a major challenge facing our economies. Forced labor is a significant violation of human rights. It also constitutes a major trade concern by allowing actors to unfairly profit from the use of forced labor. The problem is only worsening over time. The International Labor Organization (ILO) most recently estimates the number of people in forced labor, globally, to be 28 million as of 2021, which represents an increase of approximately 10 percent over the prior five years, accounting for 2.7 million additional persons in forced labor. The elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labor is among the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and is essential to protect human rights, promote decent work, and ensure fair and balanced trade.

When goods produced with forced labor enter global markets, they do so with an artificial price advantage, creating unfair competitive conditions. The inclusion of these goods in global supply chains rewards inhumane and illicit behavior, distorts trade and competition, undermines efforts to protect workers and promote responsible business conduct, and disadvantages workers as well as firms that do not use or rely upon forced labor. Most countries prohibit forced labor domestically. However, we recognize that more work needs to be done through domestic measures and international cooperation to prevent actors from continuing to source, use, and profit from imported goods produced in whole or in part with forced labor in other countries. The continued presence of goods produced with forced labor in global supply chains, and the failure to prevent international trade in these goods, negatively affects commerce globally and undermines trust in the fairness of the trading system.

Over the past six years, many countries around the world have recognized the need to address forced labor imports and prevent and eliminate forced labor in supply chains. Numerous economies have adopted, or committed to adopt, measures intended to stop the importation or placement on their market of products produced with forced labor. We call on all countries to ramp up efforts to work together toward eradicating forced labor from global supply chains.

We commend sustained efforts that governments and workers' and employers' organizations have undertaken in their own countries, and through multilateral institutions, toward the prevention and elimination of all forms of forced labor.

We encourage World Trade Organization (WTO) Members to use relevant WTO bodies, including the Council for Trade in Goods and its subsidiary bodies, to discuss the impact of forced labor on global trade, exchange information about particular imports and supply chains that are at risk of involving forced labor, and share details about actions taken to eradicate forced labor.

As major economies, we recognize our opportunity and responsibility to work together to eliminate goods produced with forced labor from supply chains and international trade, including by adopting or maintaining and effectively enforcing measures that prohibit the importation or sale of goods produced wholly or in part with forced labor.

We support the exchange of information on traded goods produced with forced labor and best practices related to implementing and enforcing measures to prevent forced labor in supply chains, including forced labor import prohibitions or market bans. We will cooperate on this moving forward.