

United States and Ecuador Sign New Protocol on Trade Rules and Transparency

The United States Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer, and Ecuador Minister of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment, and Fisheries, Iván Ontaneda, are pleased to announce the successful conclusion of a Protocol on Trade Rules and Transparency. This agreement is the latest concrete result of the close relationship between Ecuador and the United States under the leadership of President Trump and President Moreno.

Following the meeting of the two leaders at the White House in February, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and Ecuadorian officials accelerated engagement under the Ecuador-U.S. Trade and Investment Council Agreement (TIC).

Today's agreement, signed in Quito, Ecuador, updates the TIC with new annexes in four areas: Trade Facilitation and Customs Administration, Good Regulatory Practices, Anti-Corruption, and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). The agreement advances the high standards established by Ecuador and the United States in their recent trade negotiations, and demonstrates a shared commitment to the fundamentals of fair and efficient trade: establishing transparent and efficient processes at the border, giving stakeholders an opportunity to provide input on regulations, and vigilance against corruption.

On trade facilitation, the agreement includes key provisions on advance rulings, penalties, single window, authorized economic operator, and automation, which go well beyond the baseline of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. On good regulatory practices, it reflects the high-standard GRP framework established in the United States - Mexico - Canada Agreement (USMCA). On anti-corruption, the agreement further expands both countries' frameworks to include provisions addressing money laundering, the recovery of proceeds of corruption, and additional protections for whistleblowers. Finally, recognizing the importance of small businesses, including micro-sized businesses, to the economies of both countries, the agreement includes provisions promoting cooperation to increase trade and investment opportunities for SMEs.

This new agreement sets the stage for future discussions to deepen and broaden work under the TIC. The two countries will also seek to identify priority sectors to further reduce barriers to trade and strengthen the bilateral economic and commercial relationship, topics that will be discussed in the next meeting in 2021 in Ecuador.