

**Joint Statement from Trans-Pacific Partnership Ministers
Meeting on Margins of APEC in Big Sky, Montana**

Big Sky, MT – Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) ministers met today on the margins of the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade meeting to take stock of progress made so far and to consider the path forward as they seek to conclude a high-standard, regional trade agreement. Joining the meeting were Australian Minister for Trade Craig Emerson, Bruneian Second Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Pehin Lim Jock Seng, Chilean Vice Minister of Trade Jorge Bunster, Malaysian Secretary General for International Trade and Industry Rebecca Fatima Sta. Maria, New Zealand Minister of Trade Tim Groser, Peruvian Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism Eduardo Ferreyros Koppers, Singaporean Permanent Secretary for Trade and Industry Ow Foong Pheng, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, and Vietnamese Minister of Planning and Investment Vo Hong Phuc.

The ministers discussed the progress so far after six rounds of negotiations and were pleased with the steady and solid progress to date in this highly complex negotiation, which shows great promise as a possible pathway to development of the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific. The more than 20 negotiating teams already have consolidated texts reflecting different countries' positions in virtually all areas to be covered by the agreement. They are now well into negotiations on each of these texts and are working to try to finalize agreement on specific legal commitments across the spectrum of their trade and investment relationships. At the same time, the negotiating teams have made good progress in negotiations over access to each others' markets for industrial goods, agriculture, textiles, services, investment and government procurement.

The ministers discussed new cross-cutting issues to be included in the TPP and welcomed the work done so far to consider ways to address issues faced by their businesses and workers in the 21st century. They agreed that by incorporating new provisions that address these issues, this agreement can support the creation and retention of jobs in their countries as well as contribute meaningfully to their economic growth and development. The ministers welcomed the creative approaches developed so far to promote cooperation on regulatory issues, develop new approaches to facilitate business and strengthen the development of supply and production chains among members, promote the participation of small- and medium-sized enterprises in trade with TPP countries, and support development. They also encouraged the negotiating groups to refine and supplement the proposals already under discussion to ensure that the agreement is as beneficial as possible to all current and future TPP members.

The TPP ministers exchanged views on the challenges ahead and how best to achieve continued progress. With three negotiating rounds ahead before the APEC Leaders' meeting in Honolulu, the ministers expressed their goal of reaching the broad outlines of an agreement by November. They agreed that negotiators should intensify their consultations on issues of particular sensitivity and to make achieving an ambitious outcome in these negotiations a top priority.

Many APEC economies continue to express interest in joining the negotiations and the TPP ministers exchanged information on the bilateral discussions they have held over the last several months. They agreed to continue to work bilaterally with interested countries and to consider the membership of any APEC members if and when they are ready to meet the high standards of the agreement.