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Statement by U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab on WTO Members' Approval of Ukraine's Terms of Accession to the World Trade Organization

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab today welcomed WTO Members' approval of Ukraine's accession to the World Trade Organization with the following statement:

“The United States is very pleased by today's action in Geneva. We look forward to the timely completion of the domestic ratification procedures and to Ukraine's taking its seat at the WTO. The presence of President Yushchenko, who signed Ukraine's Protocol of Accession, underlined the importance of this WTO action.

“The terms of accession are substantial, forward-looking, and demonstrate Ukraine's commitment to global trade based on market forces, transparency, and rule of law. Since its initiation over a decade ago, Ukraine's economic reform program under a series of governments has included a strong commitment to WTO provisions. Ukraine commitment throughout the negotiations to secure effective implementation of its WTO commitments is commendable.

“The accession package approved today clearly reflects Ukraine's intentions to pursue liberalized trade, deregulation and expanded transparency. For the United States, the inclusion in the WTO of such a large, fast-growing economy will benefit U.S. businesses, workers, farmers, ranchers, and consumers. We look forward to building a broader, deeper trade and investment relationship with Ukraine. We also welcome the stability and efficiency that will accrue following the Supreme Rada's acceptance and ratification of the accession. Today we celebrate Ukraine's WTO accession and this new chapter in our trade relations.”

Background

Ukraine has been negotiating its terms of accession to the WTO since December 1993. To complete its accession bid, Ukraine had to complete bilateral market access negotiations as well as multilateral negotiations on a Working Party Report and Protocol of Accession with nearly 50 WTO Members. As part of these accession commitments, the United States and Ukraine signed a bilateral market access agreement on March 6, 2006. Ukraine has negotiated a comprehensive accession agreement that it has largely already implemented. It will implement most of the rest of its WTO commitments immediately upon accession, with only a few transitions in market access commitments. Just last year, Ukraine passed more than 40 laws and additional regulations to implement WTO agreements, including conforming changes to its regime on import licensing, export taxation, intellectual property rights protection, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, standards, subsidies, and customs procedures. Ukraine will join 151 other economies as a WTO Member 30 days after the Supreme Rada, its parliament, accepts the agreement that WTO Members approved today. Further details of the accession will be available on the USTR website from February 6.

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