

**JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF THE UNITED STATES
- COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL
COOPERATION COMMISSION OF THE UNITED STATES - COLOMBIA
ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT**

**Washington, DC
December 19, 2013**

On December 18, 2013, the United States and Colombia held the first meeting of the Environmental Affairs Council (Council) under the United States - Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) and the first meeting of the Environmental Cooperation Commission (Commission) under the United States - Colombia Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA).

The Council meeting was co-chaired by Jennifer Prescott, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Environment and Natural Resources, Office of the United States Trade Representative, and Dr. Kerri-Ann Jones, Assistant Secretary for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State, for the United States, and Pablo Vieira Samper, Vice Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, and Luis Felipe Quintero, Director of Trade Relations, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism, for Colombia.

The Council reviewed implementation of the Environment Chapter of the TPA, including actions taken by the United States and Colombia to increase levels of environmental protection, ensure effective enforcement of environmental laws, and provide opportunities for public participation in environmental governance and the trade policy-setting processes. The Council also discussed the designation of a secretariat to receive and consider submissions on matters regarding enforcement of environmental laws per Article 18.8 of the TPA, and agreed on next steps for further progress. Colombia also gave a presentation about palm-oil biodiesel production and treatment, as a key component of environmental and agricultural policy in Colombia, and highlighted the importance of continuing discussions about this issue.

The Commission meeting was co-chaired by Assistant Secretary Jones and Vice Minister Vieira.

The Commission reviewed ongoing environmental cooperation activities and approved and signed the first environmental cooperation Work Program under the ECA, which provides a robust framework for advancing environmental cooperation in the coming years. In particular, the U.S. – Colombia Work Program for Environmental Cooperation for 2014-2017 identifies priorities for cooperative activities that the two countries intend to pursue, including strengthening implementation and enforcement of our environmental laws and regulations; promoting sustainable management of environmental resources, including biodiversity, protected wild areas, including key marine protected areas and other important ecosystems; encouraging low emissions development and the adoption of sound environmental practices and technologies; and promoting environmental education, transparency, and public participation in environmental decision-making and enforcement. The Governments intend to establish

a more detailed list of cooperation activities within 6 months of the approval of the Work Program. The Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) presented on ongoing cooperative activities in several of these priority areas.

The Council and Commission also held a public session on December 19, 2013, pursuant to the TPA Environment Chapter and ECA. The public session included participation from a variety of stakeholders, and included an opportunity for the public to participate in a discussion with government officials about implementation of the TPA Environment Chapter, and existing environmental cooperation programs and plans for further cooperation. Both countries committed to maintain an open and participatory process.

Finally, the United States and Colombia reaffirmed their commitment to continue working together to preserve and protect the environment, and to advance sustainable economic development, through the TPA Environment Chapter and ECA.

The U.S. delegation included officials from the Department of State, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Justice, NOAA, and USAID. The Colombia delegation included Ambassador Luis Carlos Villegas and officials from the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism, the Trade Office and the Colombian Embassy in Washington, D.C.