

July 17, 2014

TO TRADE MINISTERS FOR GROUP OF 20 (G20) MEMBER COUNTRIES:

The historic Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), completed in Bali at the Ninth World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial in December 2013, will cut red tape at our borders, increase transparency and decrease transaction costs for consumers, companies and governments. Fulfilling the commitments outlined in the TFA will spur investment around the world and bolster global job growth. With these quantifiable benefits of trade facilitation, the world cannot afford to delay implementing this agreement.

We strongly urge you to work swiftly toward implementation, in accordance with the timeline agreed upon in Bali. An important deadline for the first phase of implementation is approaching on July 31, with the deadline for the WTO's General Council to accept notifications of "Category A" commitments, adopt the Protocol of Amendment, and open the Protocol for acceptance. Unfortunately, a meeting of the WTO Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation adjourned last week without consensus on a Protocol of Amendment.

Despite the broad support for the TFA, a handful of countries have proposed postponing entry into force and implementation until other Doha Development Agenda negotiations are complete. Pursuing these worthwhile goals can go forward in parallel with entry into force and implementation of the TFA, and a delay in implementation would only sap momentum for other WTO objectives.

Members of the G20 must lead by example, as you jointly represent approximately 65 percent of the world's population, 85 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP) and more than 75 percent of global trade. The world's largest advanced and emerging economies should recognize that the full implementation of this agreement will have widespread economic benefits, as global supply chains cross all borders and reach a diverse consumer base. In a trade facilitation indicators report released earlier this year, the OECD estimated that full implementation of the agreement could reduce trade costs for low income countries by more than 14 percent while reducing costs for middle income countries by 12.9-15.1 percent.

We understand this agreement will require coordination, communication and assistance from donor countries, international financial institutions, multilateral institutions and the global private sector. Multilateral organizations such as the World Bank— as well as national governments and non-governmental organizations — have committed to mobilizing the technical assistance and capacity-building resources needed to fully implement the agreement.

Collectively, it our responsibility to ensure this agreement provides meaningful benefits to all stakeholders. Trade facilitation will lead to significant increases in GDP worldwide and it is in our shared best interest to implement the agreement in a timely and efficient way. We look forward to engaging further with the U.S. government and with your countries to ensure our

resources and capabilities are used to best serve those who are endeavoring to fulfill the commitments agreed to in Bali.

The business community stands willing to work with you in the rapid implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Sincerely,

Airforwarders Association
American Association of Exporters and Importers
Emergency Committee for American Trade
Express Association of America
National Association of Manufacturers
National Foreign Trade Council
National Retail Federation
TechAmerica, powered by CompTIA
U.S. Council for International Business