

## **APEC Trade Ministers acknowledge status of DDA, push for stronger multilateral trading system**

Issued by APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade

*Big Sky, Montana, 19 May 2011* – Committed to increasing trade and opening markets in the Asia-Pacific, trade ministers explored productive steps APEC can take to sustain the overall strength of the multilateral trading system and address the path forward.

To support economic growth and job creation in the region, APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade met here today to focus on strengthening regional economic integration, promoting green growth, and advancing regulatory convergence and cooperation – the three priorities for APEC which is hosted by the United States this year.

US Trade Representative, [Ambassador Ron Kirk](#), said the discussion would contribute to achieving concrete results in these areas, which are key to strengthening economic growth and development in the Asia-Pacific.

“Whether they are manufacturers, ranchers, or farmers, many benefit from the outcomes APEC generates and it is vital that we keep that in mind today and tomorrow to ensure that we provide the necessary direction to APEC officials so by November when APEC Leaders meet, we have a set of strong outcomes that will move us towards the goal of a seamless regional economy,” said Ambassador Kirk who chaired the meeting.

The Doha Round was a topic of discussion. Ministers acknowledged the challenges facing the current round of world trade negotiations.

“In my view, without abandoning our commitment to the success of the Round, we need to begin a hard-nosed discussion of what can be done. We need to explore what ‘next steps’ we can take to find a more productive path – and, if we find that path, to take it as quickly as possible,” Ambassador Kirk explained.

“Wherever we go next, I think it’s critical to emphasize one point – the WTO is strong, as it has shown itself to be in the past three years. We have confidence in it.”

World Trade Organization Director-General Pascal Lamy also briefed Ministers this morning on the status of the Doha Round and discussed possible next steps.

“I will be holding a Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) meeting on 31 May to take stock of my consultations and chart a path forward,” said Lamy. “There is little time available and this is why I believe we should use the TNC on 31 May to move the discussions from process into substance.”

“The signals from this meeting and from the upcoming Ministerial meeting hosted by Australia in the margins of the OECD are key inputs into that process,” he concluded.

APEC Trade Ministers are expected to release a statement at the end of their meeting on May 20, followed by a press conference. They will also meet jointly with Small and Medium Enterprise Ministers in the afternoon. SME Ministers will convene on May 21 to address barriers and challenges that are facing companies from throughout the region take advantage of global trade.

Separately, APEC Senior Officials from APEC’s 21 member economies have concluded their meeting on the issues and work to be undertaken to address the three priorities for this year