

Statement of Barbara Weisel
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United States-Malaysia FTA Negotiations
Conference Call
Penang, Malaysia
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Ms. Weisel: We just concluded the first round of U.S.-Malaysia FTA negotiations. We've had a good and productive week. We went to Penang hoping to get the negotiation off to a good start and I am pleased to report that we have achieved that goal.

Both sides came to the negotiating table well prepared and ready to listen to each other's views. We are approaching the negotiation as partners. We are both seeking a robust agreement and one that achieves a balance of interests that will bring real and tangible benefits to both sides.

During the week, the negotiating groups met and exchanged information, data and FTA texts. We reviewed the texts, discussed each other's respective laws, regulations and approaches to the issues under discussion. We also identified our goals and priorities and noted potential sensitivities for which we will have to work together to find creative solutions.

We will meet for our next round in Washington in mid-July. In the interim, the two teams have agreed to continue to exchange views and information and to do further work on the text, so that we can be fully prepared to make solid progress at the July round.

In addition to our bilateral work on the FTA, Malaysia has been an active and constructive partner with the United States in the WTO and we also are looking forward to continued cooperation with Malaysia on the DDA.

So to sum up, we are pleased with the results this week in our negotiations. Both teams have much homework to do for the next round, but I believe the progress made this week has laid a strong foundation and positioned us well to conclude this negotiation by the end of the year.

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