

Telephone: (202) 401-9810. FAX: (202) 401-9809.

Review Process

The Bureau will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the State Department's Office for U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia (EUR/ACE) and Public Diplomacy section at the U.S. embassy overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of Bureau officers for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. *Quality of the program idea:*

Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. *Program planning:* Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.

3. *Ability to achieve program objectives:* Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the organization will meet the program's objectives and plan. Strategies should utilize and reinforce exchange activities creatively to ensure an efficient use of program resources.

4. *Multiplier effect/impact:* Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages. Proposals should include creative ways to involve students in their U.S. communities.

5. *Support of diversity:* Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (selection of participants, host families, schools, program venue and program

evaluation) and program content (orientations, program meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).

6. *Organization's record/institutional capacity:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting and J-1 Visa requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by Bureau Grant Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

7. *Project evaluation:* Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. Submission of a sample FLEX-specific draft survey questionnaire, or other technique, plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives are highly recommended. The final project evaluation should provide qualitative and quantitative data about the project's influence on the participants as well as their surrounding communities. Successful applicants will be expected to submit quarterly reports, which should be included as an inherent component of the work plan.

8. *Cost-effectiveness/cost sharing:* The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

Authority

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Pub. L. 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries * * *; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations * * * and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for

the program above is provided through legislation pertaining to the Department of State and FREEDOM Support Act appropriations.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures.

Dated: November 7, 2002.

Patricia S. Harrison,

Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 02-29198 Filed 11-14-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-05-P

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Request for Comments and Notice of Public Hearing Concerning Proposed Free Trade Agreement Negotiations With Southern Africa

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice of intent to initiate negotiations, request for public comments, and notice of public hearing on negotiation of a free trade agreement between the United States and five southern African countries.

SUMMARY: The United States intends to initiate negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA) with Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, which collectively comprise the Southern African Customs Union. The interagency Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) will convene a public hearing and seeks public comments to assist the United States Trade Representative (USTR) in amplifying and clarifying negotiating objectives for the proposed FTA and to provide advice on how specific goods and services and other matters should be treated under the proposed agreement.

DATES: Persons wishing to testify orally at the hearing must provide written notification of their intention, as well as their testimony, by December 6, 2002. A hearing will be held in Washington, DC, beginning on December 16, 2002, and continuing as necessary on subsequent days. Written comments are due by noon on December 20, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Submissions by electronic mail:

FR0046@ustr.gov (notice of intent to testify and written testimony);

FR0047@ustr.gov (written comments).

Submissions by facsimile: Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, at (202) 395-6143.

The public is strongly encouraged to submit documents electronically rather than by facsimile. (See requirements for submissions below.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For procedural questions concerning public comments, contact Gloria Blue, at (202) 395-3475. All other questions should be directed to Chris Moore, Director for African Affairs, Office of the United States Trade Representative, at (202) 395-9514.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background

On February 16, 2002, the USTR met with Trade Ministers and other officials from Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland in Pretoria, South Africa, to discuss the possibility of a free trade agreement. Subsequent discussions with these countries have demonstrated their readiness, individually and collectively, to be free trade partners.

Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland constitute the largest U.S. export market in sub-Saharan Africa, with sales valued at \$3.1 billion in 2001. Each is a member of the World Trade Organization, and is pursuing regional free trade through the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Namibia and Swaziland are also members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). South Africa signed a free trade agreement with the European Union in 1999, in which it agreed to eliminate duties on 86 percent of imports from the EU by 2012.

Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland are beneficiaries of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Section 116 of the AGOA calls for the negotiation of free trade agreements with interested countries in sub-Saharan Africa, in order to serve as the catalyst for increasing trade between the United States and the region and

increasing private sector investment in sub-Saharan Africa.

Under section 2104 of the Trade Act of 2002 (19 U.S.C. 3804), for agreements that will be approved and implemented through Trade Promotion Authority procedures, the President must provide the Congress with at least 90 days' written notice of his intent to enter into negotiations and must identify specific objectives for the negotiations. Before and after the submission of this notice, the President must consult with appropriate Congressional committees and the Congressional Oversight Group regarding the negotiations. Under the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, the President must (a) afford interested persons an opportunity to present their views regarding any matter relevant to any proposed agreement, (b) designate an agency or inter-agency committee to hold a public hearing regarding any proposed agreement, and (c) seek the advice of the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) regarding the probable economic effects on U.S. industries and consumers of the removal of tariffs and non-tariff barriers on imports pursuant to any proposed agreement.

On November 4, 2002, after consulting with relevant Congressional committees and the Congressional Oversight Group, the USTR notified the Congress that the President intends to initiate negotiations on an FTA with southern Africa and identified specific objectives for the negotiations. In addition, the USTR has requested the ITC's probable economic effects advice. The ITC intends to provide this advice within five months. This notice solicits views from the public on the proposed FTA and provides information on a hearing which will be conducted pursuant to the requirements of the Trade Act of 1974.

2. Public Comments and Testimony

To assist the Administration as it continues to develop its negotiating objectives for the proposed FTA, the Chairman of the TPSC invites written comments and/or oral testimony of interested parties at a public hearing. Comments and testimony may address the reduction or elimination of tariffs or non-tariff barriers on any article provided for in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS) that is a product of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa or Swaziland, any concession which should be sought by the United States, or any other matter relevant to the proposed FTA. The TPSC invites comments and testimony on all of these matters, and in particular, seeks comments and testimony addressed to:

(a) General and commodity-specific negotiating objectives for the proposed FTA.

(b) Economic benefits and costs to U.S. producers and consumers of the removal of tariffs and non-tariff barriers on trade between the United States and southern Africa.

(c) Treatment of specific goods (described by HTS numbers) under the proposed FTA, including comments on (1) product-specific import and export interests or barriers, (2) experience with particular measures that should be addressed in the negotiations, and (3) in the case of articles for which immediate elimination of tariffs is not appropriate, the recommended staging schedule for such elimination.

(d) Adequacy of existing customs measures to ensure Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa or Swaziland origin of imported goods, and appropriate rules of origin for goods entering the United States under the proposed FTA.

(e) Existing sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical barriers to trade in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa or Swaziland.

(f) Existing barriers to trade in services between the United States and the southern African countries that should be addressed in the negotiations.

(g) Relevant trade-related intellectual property rights issues that should be addressed in the negotiations.

(h) Relevant investment issues that should be addressed in the negotiations.

(i) Relevant government procurement issues that should be addressed in the negotiations.

(j) Relevant environmental and labor issues that should be addressed in the negotiations.

Comments identifying as present or potential trade barriers laws or regulations that are not primarily trade-related should address the economic, political or social objectives of such laws or regulations and the degree to which they discriminate against producers of the other country.

At a later date, the USTR, through the TPSC, will publish notice of reviews regarding (a) the possible environmental effects of the proposed agreement and the scope of the U.S. environmental review of the proposed agreement, and (b) the impact of the proposed agreement on U.S. employment and labor markets.

A hearing will be held on December 16, 2002, in Rooms 1 and 2, 1724 F Street, NW., Washington, DC 20508. If necessary, the hearing will continue on subsequent days.

Persons wishing to testify at the hearing must provide written

notification of their intention by December 6, 2002. The notification should include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the person presenting the testimony; and (2) a short (one or two paragraph) summary of the presentation, including the subject matter and, as applicable, the product(s) (with HTS number(s)), service sector(s), or other subjects (such as investment, intellectual property and/or government procurement) to be discussed. A copy of the testimony must accompany the notification. Remarks at the hearing should be limited to no more than five minutes to allow for possible questions from the TPSC. Persons with mobility impairments who will need special assistance in gaining access to the hearing should contact Gloria Blue at the number given above.

Interested persons, including persons who participate in the hearing, may submit written comments by noon, December 20, 2002. Written comments may include rebuttal points demonstrating errors of fact or analysis not pointed out at the hearing. All written comments must state clearly the position taken, describe with particularity the supporting rationale, and be in English. The first page of the written comments must specify the subject matter including, as applicable, the product(s) (with HTS number(s)), service sector(s), or other subjects (such as investment, intellectual property and/or government procurement).

3. Requirements for Submissions

To facilitate prompt processing of submissions, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative strongly urges and prefers electronic (e-mail) submissions in response to this notice. In the event that an e-mail submission is impossible, submissions should be made by facsimile.

Persons making submissions by e-mail should use the following subject line: "Free Trade Agreement with Southern Africa" followed by (as appropriate) "Notice of Intent to Testify," "Testimony," or "Written Comments." Documents should be submitted as either WordPerfect, MSWord, or text (.TXT) files. Supporting documentation submitted as spreadsheets are acceptable as Quattro Pro or Excel. For any document containing business confidential information submitted electronically, the file name of the business confidential version should begin with the characters "BC-", and the file name of the public version should begin with the characters "P-". The "P-" or "BC-" should be followed by the name of the submitter. Persons who make

submissions by e-mail should not provide separate cover letters; information that might appear in a cover letter should be included in the submission itself. To the extent possible, any attachments to the submission should be included in the same file as the submission itself, and not as separate files.

Written comments, notice of testimony, and testimony will be placed in a file open to public inspection pursuant to 15 CFR 2003.5, except confidential business information exempt from public inspection in accordance with 15 CFR 2003.6. Business confidential information submitted in accordance with 15 CFR 2006.6 must be clearly marked "BUSINESS CONFIDENTIAL" at the top of each page, including any cover letter or cover page, and must be accompanied by a nonconfidential summary of the confidential information. All public documents and nonconfidential summaries shall be available for public inspection in the Reading Room at the Office of the United States Trade Representative. The Reading Room is open to the public, by appointment only, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. An appointment to review the file may be made by calling (202) 395-6186. Appointments must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance.

General information concerning the Office of the United States Trade Representative may be obtained by accessing its Web site (<http://www.ustr.gov>).

Carmen Suro-Bredie,

Chairman, Trade Policy Staff Committee.

[FR Doc. 02-29095 Filed 11-12-02; 3:33 pm]

BILLING CODE 3190-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Office of the Secretary

Review Under 49 U.S.C. 41720 of Delta/Northwest/Continental Agreements

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice of access on restricted basis to unredacted agreements.

SUMMARY: Delta Air Lines, Northwest Airlines, and Continental Airlines have submitted code-sharing and frequent-flyer program reciprocity agreements to the Department for review under 49 U.S.C. 41720. That statute requires such agreements between major U.S. passenger airlines to be submitted to the Department at least 30 days before the agreements' proposed effective date.

The Department is providing outside parties access on a restricted basis to unredacted copies of the agreements. Comments by interested persons reflecting their review of the unredacted copies may assist the Department in determining whether to extend the waiting period or take other action on the agreements.

ADDRESSES: Comments must be filed with Randall Bennett, Director, Office of Aviation Analysis, Room 6401, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 7th St. SW., Washington, DC 20590. To facilitate consideration of comments, each commenter should file three copies of its comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Thomas Ray, Office of the General Counsel, 400 Seventh St. SW., Washington, DC 20590, (202) 366-4731.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 23, Delta, Northwest, and Continental submitted code-sharing and frequent-flyer program reciprocity agreements to us for review under 49 U.S.C. 41720. That statute requires such joint venture agreements among major U.S. passenger airlines to be submitted to us at least thirty days before they can be implemented. We may extend the waiting period by 150 days with respect to a code-sharing agreement and by 60 days for other types of agreements. At the end of the waiting period (either the 30 day period or any extended period established by us), the parties are free to implement their agreement, unless we have issued an order under 49 U.S.C. 41712 (formerly section 411 of the Federal Aviation Act) in a formal enforcement proceeding determining that the agreement's implementation would be an unfair or deceptive practice or unfair method of competition that would violate that section.

As required by 49 U.S.C. 47120, Delta, Continental, and Northwest provided us with unredacted copies of their agreements and asked that we give the agreements confidential treatment under 49 CFR 7.13 and rule 12 of the Department's rules of practice for airline industry economic regulatory proceedings, 14 CFR 302.12. Rule 12 sets forth the procedures for objections to the public disclosure of information submitted pursuant to a statutory requirement.

We have been reviewing the agreements submitted by Delta, Continental, and Northwest under 49 U.S.C. 41720 on an informal basis. In our review we are focusing on whether the agreements may constitute unfair methods of competition that would violate 49 U.S.C. 41712. Airline practices that violate the antitrust laws