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U.S. TRADE MISSION TO NIGERIA TO SHOWCASE TRADE OPPORTUNITIES *U.S. Commerce Department Trade Mission to facilitate business networking*

WASHINGTON -- Suresh Kumar, Assistant Secretary for Trade Promotion and Director General of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service will lead a U.S. Department of Commerce trade mission of 19 U.S. companies to Nigeria, March 8-10. The mission will match U.S. firms with prospective Nigerian business partners in Lagos and Abuja, the commercial center and political capital of Nigeria.

“This trade mission demonstrates the strong U.S. business interest in expanding commercial ties with Nigeria, the fastest growing export market in sub-Saharan Africa,” Kumar said. “Nigeria is a place of great business potential and opportunity, and we look forward to meeting with Nigerian companies and generating new business that will contribute to mutual prosperity and job growth for both our countries.”

The mission includes a range of small, medium-sized, and large U.S. companies in sectors such as energy and power generation, health care, information technology, transportation and construction. Several mission participants are American small business owners of Nigerian birth who are looking to further trade ties with their native country.

Nigeria’s population of over 155 million people is the largest in Africa and 8th largest in the world, and represents a thriving consumer market. The country’s population is expected to grow to 289 million by the year 2050, presenting excellent opportunities for expanded trade.

In January 2010, President Obama launched the National Export Initiative which aims to double overall U.S. exports by 2015. The trade mission is an outcome of the NEI, and Nigeria represents a key market for U.S. companies that can assist in diversifying Nigeria’s economy through trade, technologies, and services. Last year, U.S.-Nigerian trade totaled \$34.5 billion.

U.S. mission participants will gain first-hand market information, access to government decision makers, and one-on-one meetings with business contacts, including potential agents, distributors and partners. In addition, Nigeria is often considered a strong gateway into other West African markets. During the mission, Nigerian companies will benefit from learning more about U.S. products and services and face-to-face introductions to U.S. companies highly motivated to do business in Nigeria. The U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Consulate in Lagos has arranged approximately 285 business matchmaking meetings across two cities between U.S. companies and prospective Nigerian buyers.

With offices across the United States and U.S. Embassies and Consulates in nearly 80 countries, the U.S. Commercial Service connects U.S. companies with international buyers through trade counseling, business matchmaking, trade events, advocacy and other services. Companies in the United States can locate the nearest U.S. Commercial Service office at www.trade.gov/cs. In Nigeria, U.S. and Nigerian companies are encouraged to visit the U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Consulate in Lagos at www.buyusua.gov/Nigeria.

International Trade Administration

The International Trade Administration (ITA) is the premier resource for American companies competing in the global marketplace. ITA has 2,100 employees assisting U.S. exporters in more than 100 U.S. cities and 77 countries worldwide. For more information on ITA visit www.trade.gov.

