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**Press Information Bureau  
Government of India  
Ministry of Commerce & Industry**

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**India and United States Joint Statement on the Trade Policy Forum**

Minister of Commerce and Industry of India Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman and U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Mr. Michael Froman met in New Delhi on November 25, 2014 for the eighth ministerial-level meeting of the India-United States Trade Policy Forum (TPF). The two governments signaled their readiness to enhance bilateral trade and investment ties in a manner that promotes economic growth and job creation in both India and the United States.

### **Work Sessions**

Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman discussed and exchanged views on a range of trade and investment issues, in particular, (i) Agriculture, (ii) Services, (iii) Promoting Investment in Manufacturing, and (iv) Intellectual Property. The co-chairs of the respective Work Sessions briefed Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman on the outcomes of their discussions and presented agreed upon work plans for continued engagement in these areas in 2015. Both countries noted the importance attached to the Trade Policy Forum by Prime Minister Modi and President Obama to further stimulate bilateral trade and investment.

### **Agriculture**

Both countries recognized the important role of agricultural and food trade in feeding their populations, providing consumer choice and supporting the livelihood of their farmers. India and the United States agreed to establish a new technical dialogue that will promote cooperation on plant health, animal health, and food safety issues in a manner that facilitates the movement of agricultural goods between the two countries. They agreed to work towards facilitating agricultural trade between the two countries by engaging with each other closely with the intent of establishing science- and risk-based regulations and procedures that conform to international standards and guidelines set by CODEX Alimentarius, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), to the extent possible. Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman also acknowledged the benefits that could accrue to Indian and U.S. farmers and agri-businesses from these engagements.

Both countries noted each others' requests and agreed to follow up on exploring the possibility of enhanced market access on identified agricultural products. They also noted the potential reconciliation of the definition of wholesale pack between Departments, forthcoming rules to allow stickering of maximum retail price at the port, and timely implementation efforts concerning these issues.

### **Services and Investment**

Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman highlighted the important role of the services sector in India and the United States, and the significant potential for increasing bilateral services trade and investment. To advance this goal, India and the United States agreed to increase engagement on services and investment issues. The United States took note of India's interest in engaging on social security totalization, and agreed to review any information provided by India about developments in its social security regime. They decided to continue their engagement on visa issues, and the United States took note of India's interest in ensuring easier access for Indian professionals in the United States.

Minister Sitharaman highlighted India's efforts to promote foreign participation in key services sectors, including those of interest to the United States, and urged U.S. investors to take advantage of these opportunities. Minister Sitharaman and

Ambassador Froman recognized the benefits that can accrue from services liberalization in the information and communications technology sector.

### **Promoting Investment in Manufacturing**

Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman discussed efforts that each country is undertaking to promote a business friendly environment for attracting investment in manufacturing, moving forward on a commitment made by Prime Minister Modi and President Obama in September 2014 to address this issue that is critical to each others' economy.

Affirming their shared goal of using trade and investment as a vehicle for stimulating economic growth and job creation, Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman agreed to deepen bilateral engagement aimed at promoting bilateral investment across sectors. Both countries stressed the importance of providing a transparent and predictable policy environment to help attract investments in manufacturing. In this regard, Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman agreed to exchange information on stakeholder participation in the framing of trade and investment policies and procedures, and to discuss best practices. Further, they highlighted their efforts to increase supply chain connectivity and implement "single window" clearance systems that will benefit all manufacturing activities in both countries. Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman also agreed to exchange information on international standards and systems of acceptance of conformity assessment procedures with specific focus on understanding each governments' procedures for testing, packaging, and labeling requirements.

Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman discussed the "Make in India" campaign launched by Prime Minister Modi to promote India as a manufacturing destination, highlighting the pro-investment domestic reforms envisioned to facilitate the ease of doing business and create a climate that will attract investment.

### **Intellectual Property and related issues**

Recognizing the shared interest of our creative industries, India and the United States agreed to deepen cooperation to build capacity and generate awareness in the field of copyright.

Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman also acknowledged the paramount goal of ensuring the poorest populations in India and the United States have access to quality healthcare, and committed to identifying ways in which trade and innovation policies can enhance access to quality health and affordable medicines.

India highlighted the benefits of traditional Indian medicine in view of its potential to enhance access to affordable healthcare; and the importance of traditional knowledge in contributing to cultural, economic, and social development. The United States agreed to facilitate further engagement in this field between the experts of both countries.

Minister Sitharaman highlighted India's work on a new intellectual property rights (IPR) policy which would stimulate innovation across sectors in the country. The United States agreed to share information on this subject to support India's ongoing efforts.

Both countries recognize the importance of providing a transparent and predictable policy environment for fostering innovation.

India and the United States recognize the importance of trade secrets protection to attracting investment and agree to exchange information on best legal practices in this area.

### **World Trade Organization**

Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman expressed satisfaction at the recent understanding between India and the United States on the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes and the Trade Facilitation Agreement as a follow-up to the discussions between Prime Minister Modi and President Obama. They committed to working with other WTO Members to ensure that the WTO General Council takes this understanding forward towards a satisfactory outcome.

### **Private Sector Advisory Group**

Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman encouraged the continued work of the United States-India Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG), which had been created under the TPF to provide strategic advice. Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman expect that the work of TPF will benefit from the depth, breadth, and diversity of expertise of the PSAG in trade and international affairs in advance of the 2015 TPF meeting to be held in Washington, DC.

In conclusion, Minister Sitharaman and Ambassador Froman expressed satisfaction with the discussions held during the eighth round of the TPF and reiterated their mutual commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation in trade and investment. Ambassador Froman thanked Minister Sitharaman for hosting the eighth round of the TPF in New Delhi. They agreed to convene the ninth round of the TPF in the United States in 2015.

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**MJPS**