

## Transcript of a Speech by the Honourable Robert Zoellick United States Trade Representative

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

First, I very much appreciate the opportunity to be here and to be with all of you. And I want to thank you because I think it is vital for us if we are going to broaden our base of understanding and, hopefully, support for issues of free trade, to be able to draw on the ideas of you and people like you.

In my view, the cornerstone of any effort in moving forward with trade will have two elements: transparency and dialogue. Within the United States' system, as many of you know, we have some formal mechanisms for this. As a guidance to our negotiator, we have advisory groups that now incorporate representatives of environment and labour.

And indeed, one of the first steps of the Bush administration, involving Secretary Evans of the Commerce Department, Secretary Veneman of the Agriculture Department and myself, was to expand that contribution to include some very technical-level groups where we wanted to broaden the base of our support.

Transparency, as Minister Pettigrew mentioned, is also going to be the hallmark of this FTAA negotiation, in part, because of something I have never seen before in dealing with international issues for well on 20 years, and that is the release of the draft negotiating text.

Here I want to pay a particular compliment to my colleague from Canada because I know that even before I was on the scene, Minister Pettigrew was one of the strongest voices of this, and I know that he was one of the leaders, even moving us to this when we were in Buenos Aires.

We also think there are other ways that we draw input, in part, after you have seen the text and you start to get your own ideas and suggestions on where this should go. One that we believe is important is to use environmental reviews, and the United States has already launched an environmental review process for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and just this week we announced that, perhaps in a voice of hopefulness, about the WTO round, that we would also have a launch of an environmental review on the built-in agenda for the WTO. That is the services and the agricultural issue and I hope, once the round is launched, we will be able to move beyond that.

And frankly, we urge others to join with us. We urge other governments to do such reviews and we urge you, academic institutions and others, to complement our work because, frankly, from the free spirit of debate we will draw the best ideas on this.