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Armenian National Committee of America  
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

May 5, 2015

The Honorable Michael Froman  
United States Trade Representative  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street, N.W.  
Washington , D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Froman:

I am writing to encourage a signing ceremony, during President Serj Sargsyan's upcoming visit to Washington, DC, for the U.S.-Armenia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), a long-awaited bilateral economic accord that has, by all accounts, been successfully negotiated but which has not yet been formally signed by the United States and Armenia.

As we have underscored to successive Administrations, the establishment of such an agreement would build meaningfully upon our current economic dialogue with Armenia. This discourse takes place today, in large measure, within the context of the U.S.-Armenia Joint Economic Task Force. A TIFA would provide a much needed, broader and more consistent platform for our government to meet and consult on a regular basis with Armenian government officials regarding broadening our economic cooperation and expanding opportunities for trade and investment.

As you know, Armenia, having received Permanent Normal Trade Relations status, is a member in good standing of the World Trade Organization. Armenia's considerable progress in establishing a modern, market-oriented economy, in the face of illegal blockades by both Turkey and Azerbaijan, has been consistently praised by the Wall Street Journal/Heritage Foundation Index of Economic Freedom, which rates Armenia as among the freest economies among the states of the former Soviet Union.

Armenia is a partner with the United States in seeking regional peace, including through its full engagement in ongoing talks, mediated by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to bring lasting peace to Nagorno Karabagh. The Armenian government sent troops to Iraq as part of our Coalition operations, deployed forces to Kosovo as part of the NATO peacekeeping efforts, and deployed a contingent of Armenian forces to Afghanistan in support of our military mission in that nation.

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President Barack Obama, during his campaign for office, pledged that his Administration would "help foster Armenia's growth and development through expanded trade and targeted aid, and by strengthening the commercial, political, military, developmental, and cultural relationships between the U.S. and Armenian governments." The establishment of a TIFA would represent a concrete expression of the President's commitment and a meaningful contribution to the trade and investment relationship between two friendly nations. The practical benefits of such an accord would include:

- Improving the investment climate, identifying priority growth areas and building trade capacity
- Addressing regional trade issues, including the special hardships faced by Armenia due to the blockades imposed on its borders by Turkey and Azerbaijan
- Streamlining customs systems, and increasing the transparency of governmental processes related to imports and exports
- Discussing the effectiveness of current programs in Armenia of the U.S. Export-Import Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and U.S. Trade and Development Agency
- Expanding agricultural trade and investment
- Growing the level of trade in services, including banking, insurance, and tourism
- Promoting Diasporan trade and investment, with a special focus on expanding Armenian American trade and investment partnerships with Armenia
- Improving Armenia's use of U.S. Generalized System of Preferences benefits
- Addressing any outstanding problems in the area of intellectual property rights
- Exploring ways to deepen future U.S.-Armenia trade and investment

The American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia has been joined by a number of U.S. firms operating in Armenia, including FedEx, Marriott, and NASDAQ, in voicing support for a U.S.-Armenia TIFA. Members of Congress, as well, have expressed their interest in such an agreement. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and for all your efforts to broaden the U.S.-Armenia partnership and strengthen the enduring bonds between the American and Armenian peoples.

Sincerely,



Kenneth V. Hachikian  
Chairman

CC: Armenian American media, Armenian American organizations