

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

March 27, 2012

The Honorable Deanna Tanner Okun
Chairman
U.S. International Trade Commission
500 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20436

DOCKET NUMBER 2890
Office of the Secretary Int'l Trade Commission

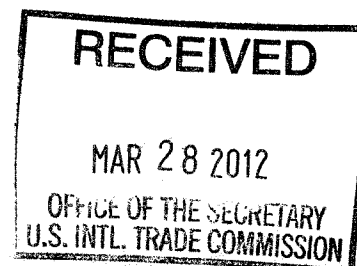
Dear Chairman Okun:

The United States has long striven to promote greater trade and investment between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa through preference programs like the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Trade and Investment Framework Agreements, Bilateral Investment Treaties, and trade capacity building assistance. Recently, the United States and the East African Community (EAC) began preliminary discussions on a potential new trade and investment partnership that aims to support regional integration and greater U.S.-EAC trade and investment. I believe that one of the initial steps under this initiative which could have the most immediate benefit to U.S.-EAC, regional, and multilateral trade would be engagement with the EAC on customs clearance and other practices at the border (i.e., trade facilitation).

Pursuant to authority delegated by the President to the United States Trade Representative under Section 332(g) of the Tariff Act of 1930, I request that the Commission prepare a summary of recent developments relating to trade facilitation in the EAC. I also request a description of the potential benefits of trade facilitation to the EAC countries, based on empirical studies and the experiences of other developing countries. For the purposes of this report, trade facilitation means the simplification of customs procedures affecting the movement of goods across borders, as well as improvements to transport infrastructure.

The information in the report should be based principally on a review of the literature. The report should include, to the extent the literature permits:

- a description of the present conditions and recent developments relating to the movement of goods to and from the countries of the EAC, including policies enforced at the border and procedures for their enforcement, as well as transport infrastructure. To the extent feasible, the report should address elements referenced in U.S. trade facilitation agreements, such as those between the United States and the Philippines, the United States and Uruguay, and trade facilitation chapters in U.S. free trade agreements. The description should focus on conditions in individual EAC countries as well as the EAC region as a whole;



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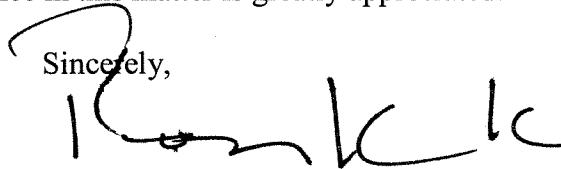
- a summary of findings from the empirical literature on the benefits of overall trade facilitation improvements, such as effects on import and export volumes, export diversification, and economic development, including highlights of any notable findings specific to the EAC countries; and
- relevant sectoral case studies (particularly for industries where EAC countries have significant AGOA exports) from developing countries within and outside sub-Saharan Africa that illustrate the benefits of trade facilitation.

The Commission is requested to deliver the report no later than July 2, 2012.

I anticipate that the Commission's report will be made available to the public in its entirety. Therefore, the report should not contain any confidential business information.

The Commission's assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Kirk". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a distinct "K".

Ambassador Ron Kirk