instrument which is being manufactured in the United States.

Frank W. Creel,

Director, Statutory Import Programs Staff.

[FR Doc. 99–30381 Filed 11–19–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–DS–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

International Trade Administration

Applications for Duty-Free Entry of Scientific Instruments

Pursuant to Section 6(c) of the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Materials Importation Act of 1966 (Pub. L. 89–651; 80 Stat. 897; 15 CFR part 301), we invite comments on the question of whether instruments of equivalent scientific value, for the purposes for which the instruments shown below are intended to be used, are being manufactured in the United States.

Comments must comply with 15 CFR 301.5(a)(3) and (4) of the regulations and be filed within 20 days with the Statutory Import Programs Staff, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20230. Applications may be examined between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. in Room 4211, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.

Docket Number: 99–025. *Applicant:* University of North Carolina, School of Pharmacy, CB #7360, Beard Hall, S. Colombia Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27599. *Instrument:* Nose Only Inhalation System. *Manufacturer:* ADG Developments Ltd., United Kingdom. *Intended Use:* The instrument is intended to be used to evaluate novel therapies for the treatment of tuberculosis in animal models by delivering aerosols of drug by nose only exposure to Mycobacterium infected guinea pigs. *Application accepted by Commissioner of Customs:* October 28, 1999.

Docket Number: 99–026. *Applicant:* Boston University, Department of Biology, 44 Cummington Street, Boston, MA 02215. *Instrument:* Electron Microscope, Model JEM–2010. *Manufacturer:* JEOL Ltd., Japan. *Intended Use:* The instrument is intended to be used in the study of the ultrastructure of biological specimens, especially neurons in the brain during experiments conducted to determine whether the structure of neurons is altered under a variety of experimental conditions, such as different levels of activity or molecular signaling. In addition, the instrument will be used to investigate the development and maturation of brain neurons and their synapses to determine how structure and ultrastructure change with growth and maturation of the organism. *Application accepted by Commissioner of Customs:* October 28, 1999.

Docket Number: 99–027. *Applicant:* University of Hawaii, School of Ocean, Earth Science and Technology, Department of Oceanography, 1000 Pope Road, MSB 610, Honolulu, HI 96822. *Instrument:* Low-Level Beta Counter, Model GM–25–5. *Manufacturer:* Riso National Laboratory, Denmark. *Intended Use:* The instrument is intended to be used for the measurement of naturally occurring radionuclides in seawater. Various marine regimes will be sampled at a variety of oceanic depths in order to estimate the spatial and temporal distribution of radioactive elements. The instrument will be used during the graduate level course Ocean 633, Chemical Oceanography Lab Methods to teach oceanographic laboratory and field analytical techniques. Application accepted by Commissioner of Customs: November 4, 1999.

Frank W. Creel,

Director, Statutory Import Programs Staff.

[FR Doc. 99–30382 Filed 11–19–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–DS–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

International Trade Administration

Business Development Mission to Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile

AGENCY: International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of business development mission to Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile.

SUMMARY: This notice serves to inform the public of a Secretarial Business Development Mission to Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile, February 13–21, 2000, and of the opportunity to apply for participation in the mission; sets forth objectives, procedures and participation criteria for the mission; and requests applications.

DATES: Applications should be submitted to Lucie Naphin by December 27, 1999, in order to ensure sufficient time to obtain in-country appointments for applicants selected to participate in the mission. Applications received after that date will be considered only if space and scheduling constraints permit. Recruitment and selection of private sector participants will be conducted according to the Statement of Policy Governing Department of Commerce Overseas Trade Missions announced by Secretary Daley on March 3, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Request for and submission of applications—Applications are available from Lucie Naphin, Director, Office of Business Liaison, at (202) 482–1360 or via facsimile at (202) 482–4054. Numbers listed in this notice are not toll-free. An original and two copies of the required application materials should be sent to Ms. Naphin. Applications sent by facsimile must be immediately followed by submission of the original application to Ms. Naphin at the following address: Office of Business Liaison, Room 5062, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lucie Naphin, Director of the Office of Business Liaison, or Jennifer Andberg at (202) 482–1360. Information is also available via the International Trade Administration's (ITA) website at: http://www.ita.doc.gov/doctm.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Description of the Mission

Secretary of Commerce William M. Daley will travel to Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile as head of a senior-level business development mission focused on three key growth sectors—information and communications technology, environment and energy. Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, together with Paraguay, form Mercosur, the acronym in Spanish for the Southern Common Market, the world's fourth largest economic area, a customs union with a population in excess of 200 million people and a combined GDP of approximately $1 trillion. Chile, along with Bolivia, is an associate member of Mercosur.

The mission will visit Brasilia, Sao Paulo, Montevideo, Buenos Aires and Santiago. The overall focus of the trip will be commercial opportunities for U.S. companies, including joint ventures, presented by the continuing market liberalization and privatizations within Mercosur. In each country, briefings and matchmaking business appointments will be arranged for members of the business delegation in order that they may take full advantage of the commercial opportunities available to firms in these key South American markets. Individual country briefings will include local public and private sector officials to discuss developments in the country that affect the commercial environment.

Commercial Setting for the Mission

Participants in the mission will be drawn from, but not limited to, the following sectors:

• *Information and Communications Technology:* Brazil is Latin America's most important telecommunications market for U.S. companies. U.S. companies' telecommunications exports to Argentina totaled $461.4 million in 1997—nearly doubling the 1996 total of $238 million. Chile is the most advanced telecommunications market in Latin America. A 20–25 percent annual growth rate is predicted within Chile for the next five years, with investments projected at $700 million annually.

• *Environment:* Brazil is the largest environmental technologies market in South America, totaling an estimated $3.65 billion for 1997, with growth projections for equipment sales ranging from 8–10 percent per year over the next five years. Argentina is the second largest environmental technologies market in South America, totaling an estimated $885 million for 1998. Over the last five years, investment in the environmental sector has doubled. The Chilean environmental market totaled approximately $460 million in 1997 and is expected to grow by between 8 and 10 percent through 2000.

• *Energy:* Brazil is expected to make annual investments of $8 billion over the next five years to meet its rapidly increasing energy demand. Argentine electricity planners expect consumption to continue to grow 5 percent annually for the next decade with investment opportunities in natural gas combined cycle power generation plants, transmission and distribution networks. Chile's electricity demand—over 29,000 GWh in 1998—is averaging 7 percent annual growth. Natural gas, coal-fired and hydro power plants totaling 3,500 MW of generating capacity are currently under construction or planned and offer potential investment and trade opportunities.

Mercosur

Mercosur encompasses 50 percent of Latin America's Gross Domestic Product, 43 percent of its population, 59 percent of its total landmass, 50 percent of its industrial production and intra-regional trade and 33 percent of total Latin American foreign trade. Its nations' per capita income is 30 percent higher than that of Latin America as a whole.

Reforms implemented by the individual countries have produced impressive growth rates. The strong GDP growth recorded by the region in the 1990s has been underpinned by a surge in foreign trade and direct investment. Since 1990, U.S. export sales to the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean have increased 150 percent, and by almost 250 percent to the countries of Mercosur, reaching $22.4 billion in 1998.

U.S. investments within the Mercosur region have increased dramatically during the 1990s, reaching a total of $40 billion by 1998. U.S. companies have invested in a broad range of sectors from transportation infrastructure and national utilities, to mining and industry, to services and agriculture. In Brazil, U.S. investment now exceeds $38 billion, to the point where the United States is Brazil's largest investor, accounting for one-third of total foreign investment. In fact, Brazil is home to more U.S. direct investment than Mexico.

However, even before the global financial crisis hit Brazil and led to its January 1999 devaluation, a general slowdown in Brazil and the other Mercosur economics was causing U.S. exports to slump. U.S. exports to Mercosur declined by 3.4 percent, falling by almost $800 million in 1998, compared to 1997. Even so, our trade is still substantial. U.S. exports to Mercosur last year exceeded $22.4 billion, ranking the region as our 6th largest export market.

The slowdown is clearly visible in U.S. trade performance. Excluding Mexico, 1998 marked the first time since 1986 that our total trade with Latin America declined, with our exports to the region flat and imports falling. For the year, U.S. exports to Brazil declined 5 percent; to Chile by 9 percent; and virtually all other countries within the region showed a reversal from recent double-digit export growth. Our balance-of-trade has decreased dramatically during the first 9 months of 1999 when compared with the same period last year.

Fortunately, recent reports indicate that the Latin downturn may be short lived, with growth returning to many of the countries in the year 2000.

Already Brazil has evidenced signs of a more rapid than expected recovery following its January devaluation. The government of Brazil is forecasting an overall trade surplus in 1999. Interest rates remain high, but they are far lower than the levels seen last fall and winter. Brazil has been lowering rates steadily since March. Most observers predict that positive growth will resume by the end of the year. Several important sectors, such as transportation, telecommunications and agriculture, have continued to grow even during the recession.

Positive Brazilian growth should have a salutary effect, both on overall regional economic prospects and for a rebound in U.S. exports and investment. Brazil, after all, is the largest economy in Latin America, the 9th largest in the world and our largest South American trading partner. Its gross national product is nearly equal to that of the rest of South America combined. It is also a key market for Latin nations, particularly within the southern cone. Indeed, Argentina, the second largest economy in South America, sends roughly 30 percent of its exports to Brazil and has been severely affected by the Brazilian recession.

The continuing recovery in Asia should provide an impetus for growth in other Latin countries. Chile is but one example. Mired in a recession for much of the past year caused by declining world prices for its primary export commodity—copper—and the contraction of Asian markets which account for almost 30 percent of Chilean exports, Chile has nonetheless appeared to weather the worst of its economic storm. Business confidence is returning and the longer term outlook for Chile's economy is positive. Export commodity prices are recovering, and after a year of very low or zero growth in 1999, the government of Chile expects a rebound to 5.5 percent growth in 2000.

Goals for the Mission

The mission will further both U.S. commercial policy objectives and advance specific business interests. It is aimed at:

• Introducing American companies to Mercosur and promoting expanded commercial opportunities in Mercosur;

• Advocating on behalf of U.S. firms already active in Mercosur;

• Resolving market access issues for U.S. companies in Mercosur, particularly in light of Mercosur's integration efforts, both internally and with other markets; and

• Advancing U.S. economic/ commercial policy objectives in the FTAA negotiations, particularly as it will allow the Secretary to engage Argentine officials in a timely discussion of their FTAA goals, as they will have the Chairmanship of the FTAA process. The Secretary and participating U.S. companies will be among the first high-level U.S. officials to interact with the newly elected governments in Argentina, Uruguay and Chile.

Scenario for the Mission

Briefings and matchmaking business appointments will be made for members of the business delegation in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile. In Mercosur, the business of the mission will consist of:

- Embassy briefings on the economic/commercial climates;
- Meetings with Ministers and other senior level government officials with responsibilities for the mission's focus sectors;
- Meetings with potential buyers, agents/distributors and partners.
- Meetings with the U.S. business community.

The Commerce Department's U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service will provide logistical support for these activities at each stop.

The trip itinerary will be as follows:

February 13 (Sun): Brasilia
February 14 (Mon): Brasilia—Depart Brasilia for Sao Paulo; Arrive Sao Paulo
February 15 (Tue): Sao Paulo
February 16 (Wed): Depart Sao Paulo for Montevideo; Arrive Montevideo
February 17 (Thu): Depart Montevideo for Buenos Aires; Arrive Buenos Aires
February 18 (Fri): Buenos Aires
February 19 (Sat): Buenos Aires
February 20 (Sun): Depart Buenos Aires for Santiago—Arrive Santiago
February 21 (Mon): Santiago—Depart Santiago for Washington, D.C.
February 22 (Tues): Arrive Washington, D.C.

Criteria for Participation of Companies

The recruitment and selection of private sector participants in the mission will be conducted according to the Statement of Policy governing Department of Commerce-led trade missions announced by Secretary Daley on March 3, 1997. Companies will be selected according to the criteria set out below. Approximately 12–15 companies will be selected.

Eligibility

Participating companies must be incorporated in the United States. A company is eligible to participate only if the products and/or services that it will promote on the mission (a) are manufactured or produced in the United States; or (b) if manufactured or produced outside the United States, are marketed under the name of a U.S. firm and have U.S. content representing at least 51 percent of the value of the finished good or service. (At the discretion of the Department, which will generally be exercised on a sector-by-sector basis, the 51 percent U.S. content requirement may be modified or waived.)

Selection Criteria

Company participation will be determined on the basis of:

- Level of seniority of designated company representatives and its appropriateness to the mission objectives;
- Consistency of company's goals with the scope and desired outcome of the mission as described herein;
- Relevance of a company's business line to the plan for the mission;
- Past, present and prospective business activity in Latin America, and particularly Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile, as applicable; and
- Diversity of company size, type, location, demographics and traditional under-representation in business.

In addition, the Department may consider whether the companies' overall business objectives, including those of any U.S. or overseas affiliates, are fully consistent with the missions' foreign and commercial policy objectives.

An applicant's partisan political activities (including political contributions) are irrelevant to the selection process.

Time Frame for Applications

Applications for the trade mission to Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile will be made available beginning on or about Monday, November 22. The fees to participate in the mission have not yet been determined. The fees will not cover travel or lodging expenses. For additional information on the trade missions or to obtain an application, business persons should be referred to Lucie Naphin, Director of the Office of Business Liaison, or Jennifer Andberg at 202–482–1360. Applications should be submitted to Lucie Naphin by December 27, 1999, in order to ensure sufficient time to obtain in-country appointments for applicants selected to participate in the mission. Applications received after that date will be considered only if space and scheduling constraints permit.

Authority: 15 U.S.C. 1512.

Dated: November 17, 1999.

Walter M. Bastian,

Director, Office of Latin America and the Caribbean, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

[FR Doc. 99–30380 Filed 11–19–99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Estuarine Research Reserve System

AGENCY: Estuarine Reserves Division, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of approval and availability of the final revised Management Plan for the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, 1998–2003.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Estuarine Reserves Division (ERD), Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, has approved the revised Management Plan for the Narragansett Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NBNERR). The NBNERR was designated in 1980 and has been operating under a Management Plan approved in 1983. Pursuant to Section 315 of the Coastal Zone Management Act, 16 U.S.C. 1461, and Section 921.33(c) of the implementing regulations, a state must revise its management plan at least every five years, or more often if necessary.

The revisions to the NBNERR Management Plan include:

Information about the Reserve's boundary expansion that increased from 2626 acres to 4259 acres. The land area is 2478 acres including the privately owned Prudence Conservancy, all state owned properties on Prudence Island, all of Hope and most of Patience islands. The aquatic areas of the Reserve are delineated by all waters out to a depth of 18 feet and is 1781 acres in extent.

Addition of dedicated positions for the NBNERR Manager and Research Coordinator.

Under a NOAA matching grant, the NBNERR renovated an existing building to create a new 2,500 square-foot multi-purpose facility to support research, education, and office space. The newly renovated building provides educational exhibit space, a research lab, meeting rooms, the NBNERR office. Other construction improvements include the repair and upgrading of the caretaker's and visitors' cottages.

The revised management plan demonstrates continued strong support from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and NOAA for research, monitoring and education programs. A long-term research plan focuses on understanding the structure and function of key habitats, such as the Reserve's five major marsh systems. A comparative ecology approach provides the basis for research project design and priority setting. Collaborative studies with Federal, state, and institutional researchers are encouraged. An associated long-term monitoring