

Democratic Republic of Congo.
 Republic of the Congo (Congo).
 Republic of Cote d'Ivoire (Cote d'Ivoire).
 Republic of Djibouti (Djibouti).
 Republic of Equatorial Guinea (Equatorial Guinea).
 State of Eritrea (Eritrea).
 Ethiopia.
 Gabonese Republic (Gabon).
 Republic of the Gambia (Gambia).
 Republic of Ghana (Ghana).
 Republic of Guinea (Guinea).
 Republic of Guinea-Bissau (Guinea-Bissau).
 Republic of Kenya (Kenya).
 Kingdom of Lesotho (Lesotho).
 Republic of Liberia (Liberia).
 Republic of Madagascar (Madagascar).
 Republic of Malawi (Malawi).
 Republic of Mali (Mali).
 Islamic Republic of Mauritania (Mauritania).
 Republic of Mauritius (Mauritius).
 Republic of Mozambique (Mozambique).
 Republic of Namibia (Namibia).
 Republic of Niger (Niger).
 Federal Republic of Nigeria (Nigeria).
 Republic of Rwanda (Rwanda).
 Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe (Sao Tome and Principe).
 Republic of Senegal (Senegal).
 Republic of Seychelles (Seychelles).
 Republic of Sierra Leone (Sierra Leone).
 Somalia.
 Republic of South Africa (South Africa).
 Republic of Sudan (Sudan).
 Kingdom of Swaziland (Swaziland).
 United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania).
 Republic of Togo (Togo).
 Republic of Uganda (Uganda).
 Republic of Zambia (Zambia).
 Republic Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe).

Submitting Written Comments

Interested parties are invited to submit comments regarding the eligibility of countries noted above for designation as beneficiary sub-Saharan African Countries. All submissions must include an original and twenty (20) copies in English. All submissions should clearly identify on the cover page of the submission the country of countries and eligibility criterion or criteria discussed within the submission. All pages should be clearly numbered and include the name of the person and/or organization submitting the written comments. Persons submitting written comments should provide the original and twenty (20) copies no later than noon on July 14, 2000, to Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, Office of the United States Trade Representative, Room 122, 600 17th Street N.W., Washington D.C. 20508. Public versions of all documents relating to this review will be available for inspection by appointment in the USTR public reading room. Appointments may be made from 10 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. by calling (202) 395-6186.

Submissions that are granted "business confidential" status and other information submitted in confidence will not be available for public inspection. Business confidential information will be subject to the requirements of 15 CFR 2003.6. A justification as to why the information contained in the submission should be treated confidentially must be included in the submission. If a document contains such business confidential information, an original and twenty (20) copies of the business confidential versions of the document along with an original and twenty (20) copies of a non-confidential version must be submitted. The document that contains business confidential information should be clearly marked "business confidential" at the top and bottom of each page. The version that does not contain business confidential information (the public version) should also be clearly marked at the top and bottom of every page (either "public version" or "nonconfidential").

Rosa M. Whitaker,

Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa.

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Generalized System of Preferences (GSP); Worker Rights; Deadline for Submitting Public Comment on Limitations on Duty-Free Treatment of Certain Bangladeshi Products

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).

ACTION: Notice of request for public comment.

SUMMARY: This notice informs the public that because Bangladesh has not taken sufficient steps to provide internationally recognized worker rights, the U.S. government is preparing to withdraw, in whole or in part, duty-free treatment accorded to imports from Bangladesh under the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences and sets forth the deadline for submitting public comments. All GSP eligible products imported from Bangladesh could be affected.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: GSP Subcommittee, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, NW, Room 518, Washington, DC 20508 (Tel. 202/395-6971). Public versions of all documents relating to this review may be seen by appointment

in the USTR public Reading Room between 9:30-12 a.m. and 1-4p.m. (Tel. 202/395-6186).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The GSP program is authorized pursuant to Title V of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended ("the Trade Act") (19 U.S.C. 2461 et seq.) The GSP program grants duty-free treatment to designated eligible articles that are imported from designated beneficiary developing countries. Once granted, GSP benefits may be withdrawn, suspended or limited by the President with respect to any article or with respect to any country. In making this determination, the President must consider several factors, one of which is whether or not such country has taken or is taking steps to afford to workers in that country (including any designated zone in that country) internationally recognized worker rights (19 U.S.C. 2462(c)(7)). Bangladesh is a beneficiary of the GSP program. In 1999, almost \$30 million of Bangladeshi imports benefitted from GSP.

In 1991 Bangladesh committed to restore freedom of association to the nation's export processing zone (EPZ) by 1997, and a GSP worker rights review was terminated. However, the national labor law still has not been extended to export processing zones (there now are more than one).

The AFL filed a petition in June 1999 calling for the revocation of GSP benefits. The U.S. Government has held several discussions with Bangladeshi authorities in an effort to successfully resolve this issue. However, freedom of association for workers in the EPZs remains elusive.

As a result, the Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) is seeking public comment on the impact of suspending duty-free treatment for articles imported from Bangladesh. After receiving public comments, a decision will be made on the articles that will lose GSP benefits. Complete suspension from GSP will be considered.

Opportunities for Public Comment and Inspection Of Comments

The GSP Subcommittee on the TPSC invites comments in support of, or in opposition to, limitations of duty-free treatment on imports from Bangladesh under the GSP program. The deadline for submissions is 5 PM on Tuesday, August 15, 2000.

Comments must be submitted in 15 copies, in English, to the Chairman of the GSP Subcommittee, Trade Policy Staff Committee, 600 17th Street, N.W., Room 513, Washington, D.C. 20508. Information and comments will be subject to public inspection by appointment with the staff of the USTR

Public Reading Room, except for information granted "business confidential" status pursuant to 15 CFR 2003.6 and 2007.7. If the document contains business confidential information, 15 copies of a nonconfidential version of the submission along with 15 copies of the confidential version must be submitted. The business confidential version of the submission should be clearly marked "Submitted in Confidence" at the top and bottom of each and every page of the document. A nonconfidential summary of the business confidential information must be included with the business confidential submission, along with a written explanation of why the business confidential material should be protected. The version which does not contain business confidential information (the public version) should also be clearly marked at the top and bottom of each and every page (either "public version" or "non-confidential"). Submissions should comply with 15 CFR Part 2007, including sections 2007.0, and 2007.1.

Jon Rosenbaum,

Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Trade and Development.

[FR Doc. 00-15410 Filed 6-1-00; 8:45 am]

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Trade Benefits for Caribbean Basin Countries: Notice of Request for Public Comment Regarding Eligibility Criteria for Beneficiaries of the United States- Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA)

AGENCY: Office of the United States
Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice and solicitation of public
comment.

SUMMARY: The Caribbean/Central America Subcommittee of the Trade Policy Staff Committee is requesting public comment on the eligibility of Caribbean Basin countries to receive the benefits of the recently-enacted United States-Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA). This notice addresses the eligibility criteria that must be considered under the CBTPA, the countries considered to be Caribbean Basin countries under the CBTPA, and the deadline for written comments, and explains how written comments are to be made on the eligibility criteria elaborated in the CBTPA. Comments received will be considered by the Caribbean/Central America Subcommittee of the Trade

Policy Staff Committee, chaired by USTR, in developing recommendations on country eligibility for the President.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For procedural questions, contact: Gloria Blue, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, NW., Room 122, Washington, DC 20508. The telephone number is (202) 395-3475. For substantive questions, contact Bennett Harman, Office of the Western Hemisphere, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 600 17th Street, NW., Room 523, Washington, DC 20508. The telephone number is (202) 395-5190.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Signed into law on May 18, 2000, the Trade and Development Act of 2000 contains, in Title II, provisions for enhanced trade benefits for Caribbean Basin countries. Titled the "United States-Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act" (CBTPA), the CBTPA amends the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA), also known as the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) (19 U.S.C. 2701 *et seq.*), to provide preferential tariff treatment for certain products presently excluded from such treatment, including duty-free and quota-free treatment for certain textile and apparel articles.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility for the enhanced trade benefits under the CBTPA is limited to countries that the President designates as "CBTPA Beneficiary Countries." The criteria that the President must take into account in designating countries as CBTPA Beneficiary Countries include the existing criteria in Section 212(b) and (c) of the CBERA, 19 USC 2702(b)-(c), as well as several new criteria added by the CBTPA. The new criteria, which are set out in section 211(a) of the CBTPA, include the following:

"(i) Whether the beneficiary country has demonstrated a commitment to—

"(I) Undertake its obligations under the WTO, including those agreements listed in section 101(d) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act, on or ahead of schedule; and

"(II) Participate in negotiations toward the completion of the FTAA or another free trade agreement.

"(ii) The extent to which the country provides protection of intellectual property rights consistent with or greater than the protection afforded under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights described in section 101(d)(15) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act.

"(iii) The extent to which the country provides internationally recognized worker rights, including—

"(I) The right of association;

"(II) The right to organize and bargain collectively;

"(III) A prohibition on the use of any form of forced or compulsory labor;

"(IV) A minimum age for the employment of children; and

"(V) Acceptable conditions of work with respect to minimum wages, hours or work, and occupational safety and health;

"(iv) Whether the country has implemented its commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, as defined in section 507(6) of the Trade Act of 1974.

"(v) The extent to which the country has met the counter-narcotics certification criteria set forth in section 490 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291j) for eligibility for United States assistance.

"(vi) The extent to which the country has taken steps to become a party to and implements the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption.

"(vii) The extent to which the country—

"(I) Applies transparent, nondiscriminatory, and competitive procedures in government procurement equivalent to those contained in the Agreement in Government Procurement described in section 101(d)(17) of the Uruguay Round Agreements Act; and

"(II) contributes to efforts in international fora to develop and implement international rules in transparency in government procurement."

Countries Considered To Be Caribbean Basin Countries

The following countries are considered to be Caribbean Basin countries under the CBTPA:

Antigua and Barbuda
Aruba
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Costa Rica
Dominica
Dominican Republic
El Salvador
Grenada
Guatemala
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Jamaica
Montserrat
Netherlands Antilles
Nicaragua
Panama
St. Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Trinidad and Tobago
British Virgin Islands

Submitting Written Comments

Interested parties are invited to submit comments regarding the eligibility of countries noted above for designation as CBTPA beneficiary countries. All submissions must include an original and twenty (20) copies in