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Proclamation 7004 - World Trade Week, 1997.

May 19, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Two statistics sum up both the challenge and the promise of today's dynamic global economy: 95 percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States, and U.S. exports generated more than $830 billion in sales in 1996. The theme of this year's World Trade Week, "Make Locally, Sell Globally," exhorts American businesses to take advantage of the enormous commercial potential of the international marketplace, and we are poised to do so.

Over the past 4 years, trade has spurred more than a quarter of our overall domestic economic growth. During this period, theUnited States under the leadership of the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative signed more than 200 new trade agreements and is once again the world's leading exporter. In recent months, we have concluded historic agreements in the World Trade Organization that opened up the world telecommunications services market to U.S. firms. We also have negotiated a pact that will eliminate tariffs on information technology products by the year 2000. Together, these agreements offer American business better access to markets representing more than $1 trillion in goods and services and are models for further market-opening initiatives.

The North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has not only increased trade with our member partners to a level of $425 billion annually, but also has provided greater stability to the global economy. We are committed to building on this success by achieving a Free Trade Area of the Americas, and we look toward a comprehensive trade agreement with Chile as the next concrete step in this direction.

Selling globally also requires vigorous trade enforcement efforts, such as those we initiated recently by improving the protection of intellectual property rights in China and some 20 other countries around the world. Our ongoing efforts to eliminate trade barriers in Asia have already paid dividends - for example, U.S. exports to Japan have grown by more than 40 percent since 1993. We will also continue to strictly enforce existing trade laws to ensure that imported goods in U.S. markets do not enjoy an unfair advantage over those produced by U.S. companies and workers.

We are committed to helping all U.S. businesses continue to succeed - not only by opening markets, but also by assisting U.S. exporters. My Administration, through the efforts of the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee, has developed a National Export Strategy to help small- and medium-size companies sell globally to realize their export potential. Our nationwide network of U.S. Export Assistance Centers combines under one roof the services of the Department of Commerce, the Small Business Administration, the U.S. Export-Import Bank, and other agencies to improve business access to trade information and financing. Over the past 4 years, this network has more than doubled the amount of export sales it facilitates. Our finance agencies, the U.S. Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the Trade and Development Agency, also help American businesses compete on a level playing field in this increasingly competitive world economy.

We can be proud of this record of achievement, but we must build on it. Fair trade and open markets create stable economies in which democracy can take root and flourish. The United States alone has the legacy, the resources, and the responsibility to lead the world in this endeavor, and we must continue to do so.

As we observe World Trade Week, 1997, I am confident that, working together, we can sustain America's leadership in the global economy, generate millions of new jobs, and improve the quality of life for all our people.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 18 through May 24, 1997, as World Trade Week. I invite the people of the United States to observe this week with ceremonies, activities, and programs that celebrate the potential of international trade.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this nineteenth day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 20, and it was published in the Federal Register on May 22.