TRADE AND INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic ("Lao PDR") (individually a "Party" and collectively the "Parties"):

Desiring to enhance the bonds of friendship and spirit of cooperation, to expand trade, and to strengthen economic relations between the Parties;

Recognizing the importance of fostering an open and predictable environment for international trade and investment;

Recognizing the benefits the Parties can derive from increased international trade and investment, and that trade-distorting investment measures and protectionist trade barriers can reduce these benefits;

Seeking to promote transparency and to eliminate bribery and corruption in international trade and investment;

Recognizing the essential role of investment, both domestic and foreign, in furthering economic growth and development, creating jobs, expanding trade, encouraging technological advances, and enhancing living standards;

Recognizing the increased importance of trade in services between their economies;

Taking into account the desirability of improving market access and reducing non-tariff trade barriers in order to facilitate increased trade among the Parties;

Recognizing the importance of providing adequate and effective protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights as a means of encouraging innovation, creativity, and investment, of membership in and adherence to intellectual property rights conventions, and the benefits of identifying opportunities for intellectual-property-rights capacity building;

Recognizing the importance of respecting, promoting and realizing within each Party's laws and practices the fundamental labor rights as enumerated in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-Up (1998); and of ensuring the effective enforcement by the Parties of their respective labor laws;

Recognizing the importance of protecting and preserving the environment in accordance with each Party's environmental laws, and of ensuring the effective enforcement by the Parties of their respective environmental laws; and desiring to ensure that trade and environmental policies are mutually supportive in the furtherance of sustainable development;

Recognizing that enhancing opportunities for women, including women workers, entrepreneurs, and business-owners, to participate in the domestic and global economy contributes to economic development, and the importance of ensuring that women do not face gender-specific impediments to participating in the domestic and global economy;

Desiring to encourage and facilitate contacts between enterprises and other private sector groups in each other's territories;

Acknowledging the desirability of resolving trade and investment problems between them as expeditiously as possible;

Desiring to reinforce the multilateral trading system by entering into further reciprocal and mutually advantageous arrangements under the auspices of the World Trade Organization ("WTO");

Noting that the Parties are Members of the WTO and affirming that this Agreement is without prejudice to the rights and obligations of these Parties under the agreements, understandings, and other instruments related to or concluded under the auspices of the WTO;

Noting the Agreement between the United States of America and the Lao People's Democratic Republic on Trade Relations ("Bilateral Trade Agreement"), signed on September 18, 2003, and affirming that this Agreement is without prejudice to the rights and obligations of the Parties under the Bilateral Trade Agreement; and

Seeking to create a mechanism for further dialogue on initiatives for expanding their trade and investment through

enhanced cooperation and more comprehensive agreements;

HAVE AGREED as follows:

Article ONE.

The Parties affirm their desire to promote an attractive investment climate and to expand and diversify trade in products and services between the Parties.

Article TWO.

1. The Parties hereby establish a United States-Lao PDR Joint Trade and Investment Committee ("JTIC"), comprising representatives of each Party. The Lao PDR side shall be chaired by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce; and the United States side shall be chaired by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative ("USTR"). Both sides may be assisted by officials of their governments as circumstances require.

2. The JTIC shall meet at such times, in such places, and through such means as the Parties may agree. The Parties shall endeavor to meet no less than once a year.

Article THREE.

The JTIC shall:

1. review trade and investment relations between the Parties;

2. identify opportunities for expanding trade and investment;

3. consider specific trade and investment matters of interest to the Parties;

4. identify and work to remove impediments to trade and investment between the Parties;

5. identify relevant issues, such as those related to strengthening the rule oflaw and promoting transparent and corruption-free public institutions, the protection of intellectual property rights, worker rights, and the environment, the improvement of market access, the promotion of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and cooperation on science and technology, and cooperation to prouiote institutional capacity building, that may be appropriate for negotiation in an appropriate forum; and

6. seek the advice of the private sector and civil society, where appropriate, on matters related to the JTIC's work.

Article FOUR.

A Party may refer a specific trade or investment matter to the JTI<:; by delivering a written request to the other Party that includes a description of the matter concerned. The JTIC shall take up the matter promptly after the request is delivered unless the requesting Party agrees to postpone discussion of the matter. Each Party shall endeavor to provide an opportunity for the JTIC to consider a matter before taking actions that could adversely affect trade or investment interests of the other Party.

Article FIVE.

This Agreement shall be without prejudice to the law of either Party or to the rights and obligations of either Party under any other agreement.

Article SIX.

This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature.

Article SEVEN.

Either Party may terminate this Agreement by providing written notice of termination to the other Party. The termination

shall take effect on a date the Parties agree in writing or, if the Parties cannot agree, 180 days after the date of the notice of termination.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized, have signed this Agreement.

DONE in the English language in duplicate in San Francisco, California on February 17, 2016.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC: