AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ESTABLISHING A TRADE AND INVESTMENT COOPERATION FORUM

The Government of the Swiss Confederation and the Government of the United States of America (the "Parties"):

Considering the strong bonds of friendship and close ties between the two countries, and the importance of their economic relationship;

Taking note that the Parties have explored the possible initiation of comprehensive trade agreement negotiations, and may resume such discussions as circumstances warrant;

Building on the Joint Statement of January 28, 2006, announcing the Switzerland-United States Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum (the "Forum");

Intending to use the Forum to pursue initiatives on specific trade and investment matters, with a view to concluding agreements or other arrangements that offer enhanced opportunities for bilateral trade and investment;

Desiring to facilitate investment and trade in goods and services between their territories;

Recognizing that eliminating barriers to bilateral trade and investment will enhance economic growth and encourage increased productivity in each Party's territory;

Desiring to increase the involvement of their private sectors in bilateral trade and investment issues;

Recognizing the importance of increased cooperation between their respective regulatory authorities;

Committed to promoting transparency and eliminating bribery and corruption in international trade and investment;

And desiring that initiatives under the Forum will assist in strengthening the multilateral trading system;

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE ONE: ESTABLISHMENT

1. The Parties hereby establish the Switzerland-United States Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum, comprising representatives of each Party.

ARTICLE TWO: OBJECTIVES

1. The Forum shall seek to enhance bilateral trade and investment by:

   (a) pursuing initiatives on specific trade and investment matters, with a view to concluding agreements or other arrangements that will facilitate bilateral trade and investment;

   (b) identifying trade and investment matters that may be appropriate for negotiation or joint action in plurilateral and multilateral fora;

   (c) promoting cooperation between the Parties on trade and investment matters;

   (d) examining any specific trade and investment matter that a Party may raise;

   (e) considering other initiatives that may serve to reduce barriers to trade and investment between their territories; and

   (f) considering the resumption of exploratory discussions on the possible initiation of free-trade agreement negotiations.

ARTICLE THREE: ORGANIZATION

1. The Forum shall be co-chaired by a representative of the Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs and a representative of the Office of the United States Trade Representative.

2. Representatives of other governmental entities and of the private sector of a Party may participate in the Forum as appropriate.

ARTICLE FOUR: PROCEDURES

1. The Forum shall meet at such times that the Parties agree, and at least once a year unless the Parties agree otherwise.

2. The Forum shall adopt a work program with the goal of achieving the objectives of this Agreement, and shall organize its activities in the manner best suited to achieving those objectives.

3. The Forum shall review regularly its progress in achieving the objectives of this Agreement.

4. The Forum may convene working groups of officials from appropriate governmental entities to address particular trade and investment matters.

5. Each Party shall endeavor to provide for an opportunity for consultations before taking actions that could affect adversely the trade and investment interests of the other Party.

ARTICLE FIVE: PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE

1. As appropriate, the Parties shall seek advice from representatives of their private sectors on matters related to the Forum's activities.

2. The Parties shall encourage their private sectors to participate in activities under the Forum to promote trade and investment.

ARTICLE SIX: FINAL CLAUSES

1. This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature and shall remain in force unless terminated by either Party on six months written notice to the other Party.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized by their respective governments, have signed this Agreement.

DONE At Washington, D.C. this 25th day of May 2006.

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION:

JOSEPH DEISS
FEDERAL COUNCILLOR
HEAD OF THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

ROB PORTMAN
UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE