

**Media release – 22 February 2008
(www.nzibf.co.nz)**

FREE TRADE WITH KOREA MAKES SENSE, SAYS BUSINESS FORUM

The New Zealand International Business Forum today welcomed news that an independent study had predicted substantial benefits for both Korea and New Zealand from a future free trade agreement between the two countries.

“A free trade agreement with Korea would make sense on every level”, Executive Director, Stephen Jacobi said today.

“Korea is already a major market for New Zealand with exports including wood, beef, cheese and fresh fruit. Two way trade is balanced and complementary, scientific cooperation and investment ties are expanding, and there are strong connections through education and tourism.”

Mr Jacobi said Korea was emerging as a leader for trade liberalisation in the Asia Pacific region, having recently signed a significant deal with the United States which is awaiting ratification.

“New Zealand must make sure we are not left behind as regional trade agreements proliferate. Korea already has several FTAs including one with Chile and has completed a negotiation with the United States. An FTA with New Zealand would help ensure a level playing field in the Korean market and complement our other agreements especially with China and the P4 group (Brunei, Chile, Singapore and New Zealand)”.

The International Business Forum, which brings together some of the country’s largest exporters and the major business organisations, considers that New Zealand should aim to position Korea alongside Australia, the United States, Japan, China and the European Union as key economic partners for New Zealand.

“We congratulate the Korean and New Zealand governments for commissioning this study. We look forward to the early commencement of free trade negotiations”.

For further information:

Stephen Jacobi, Executive Director 029 472 5502

About the NZ International Business Forum

The Forum is a business organisation which aims to generate wealth for New Zealanders by helping ensure that New Zealand enterprises are fully integrated and engaged in the global economy and New Zealand's global competitive position is maximised. To enable New Zealand business to exploit new opportunities in international markets, the Forum provides leadership, works with companies and other business organisations to implement key projects and articulates New Zealand's international business priorities to both the New Zealand Government and stakeholders.