

Media Release – 15 December 2009

US TPP Notification Good News for New Zealand

News that United States Trade Representative, Ron Kirk, has formally notified Congress that President Obama intends to negotiate to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was “welcome news for New Zealand and the wider Asia Pacific region” said NZUS Council Executive Director, Stephen Jacobi, today.

In letters sent today to Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, and Senate President Pro Tempore, Robert Byrd, Ambassador Kirk said the US objective would be to shape a “high-standard, broad-based regional pact” which would “create a potential platform for economic integration across the Asia-Pacific region”.

Ambassador Kirk said USTR would now “intensify consultations with Congress and American stakeholders” to develop objectives for the negotiations. The negotiations, which are scheduled to begin in March, will also involve existing parties - Chile, Singapore, New Zealand and Brunei – and other aspiring members, Australia and Peru. Viet Nam will observe the first three rounds of negotiations.

“Today’s news is a very welcome development”, said Mr Jacobi. “Formal notification to Congress confirms that the US is serious about negotiating to join the TPP. Other negotiating parties can now move into the next stage of the process with certainty about the Administration’s intentions.”

Ambassador Kirk’s notification follows an announcement made by President Obama in November that the US would engage with the Trans Pacific Partnership countries to shape a regional agreement for the Asia Pacific.

For further information please contact:

Stephen Jacobi, Executive Director, 0294 725 502
Gabrielle Rush, Associate Director 021 377 686

About the NZUS Council – www.nzuscouncil.com

The NZ US Council is a non-partisan body funded by both business and the Government to promote New Zealand’s broader relationship with the US. Two-way trade with the US is valued at over \$8 billion and the US is a leading source of investment, innovation and business ideas. The NZ US Council worked with its Washington-based counterpart to organize the recent US NZ Partnership Forum held in Washington DC from 6 – 8 October 2009.