



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

For Immediate Release

Friday, May 23, 2003

Grassley Urges State Department to Help With Trade Ministerial

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, along with Sen. Max Baucus, ranking member, today asked Secretary of State Colin Powell to contribute to the Administration's efforts to make the next Free Trade Area of the Americas ministerial a success.

The text of the senators' letter follows.

May 23, 2003

The Honorable Colin L. Powell
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Powell:

As you know, the United States is hosting the next Free Trade Area of the Americas ministerial in November 2003, in Miami, Florida. The Free Trade Area of the Americas is an extremely ambitious undertaking. Once concluded, the FTAA will be the world's largest free trade agreement, covering nearly 800 million people and more than \$11 trillion in goods and services.

Because of the importance of the FTAA negotiations to the U.S. economy, the General Accounting Office (GAO) was commissioned to provide periodic reports to the Finance Committee on the status of the negotiations. Most recently, it was requested that the GAO report to the Finance and Ways and Means Committees on the readiness of the United States to host the November 2003 ministerial. The GAO noted that preparations for the FTAA ministerial were underway, but that USTR, as the lead agency, must intensify preparations for the ministerial if it is to be successful.

GAO also noted that the Department of State was providing only limited assistance to the USTR as it prepares for the ministerial. At this point we are just six months away from the ministerial. While we fully understand that USTR is the lead agency responsible for preparations, the Department of State is one of the few agencies with the expertise and resources required to organize and

coordinate a multinational meeting of this magnitude.

We sincerely hope that the United States Department of State will do everything it can over the next several months to work with USTR and provide the resources necessary to help ensure that the FTAA ministerial is a success.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley

Max Baucus

cc: The Honorable Al Larson
The Honorable Peter F. Allgeier