

*United States Senate Committee on Finance*  
*Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa, Chairman*

For Immediate Release/Friday, Dec. 16, 2005/Contact: Jill Gerber, press secretary for Chairman Grassley, [jill\\_gerber@finance-rep.senate.gov](mailto:jill_gerber@finance-rep.senate.gov), Hong Kong cell phone 6779-2533

Grassley: If Doha Round Fails, U.S. Congress Will Look Elsewhere

HONG KONG -- Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, the Senate committee with legislative and oversight jurisdiction over international trade, today made the following statement on the status of progress at the World Trade Organization Ministerial. Under the U.S. system, the President negotiates trade agreements but the Congress must pass legislation implementing those trade agreements, so approval by the Congress is necessary for the United States to implement trade agreements such as a Doha Round agreement. The Congress also is responsible for legislation granting Trade Promotion Authority to the President. Trade Promotion Authority significantly expedites the United States' ability to negotiate and implement trade agreements. A longtime outspoken advocate for American agriculture and free trade, Grassley farms corn and soybeans with his son in Butler County, Iowa.

"We're halfway through the Hong Kong Ministerial, and it's clear that not much progress is being made. The European Union continues to block movement. While claiming to be a friend of the poorer countries, the EU is refusing to provide better market access for agricultural products, including those of developing countries. What kind of friend is that?"

"Another problem is the unrealistic positions of some developing countries. I understand the views of West African cotton-growing countries. My views on the U.S. cotton program are well-known. At the same time, we have to deal with the possible in the Doha Round negotiations. If these talks move forward, it'll be possible to address the concerns of West African cotton growers. They might not get all that they want, but that's the nature of negotiations. But if the talks collapse, those West African countries risk seeing no improvement in the cotton situation.

"I'm very concerned about the deadlock in Hong Kong. As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I'd like to point out again that WTO negotiators face a de facto deadline due to the expiration of Trade Promotion Authority in 2007. If Doha Round negotiations aren't finalized by the end of 2006, the TPA window for U.S. participation in the talks will close.

"If that's the case, the United States will move forward with its ambitious agenda for trade expansion. But we'll do so only with those countries that share our ambition.

"The United States is committed to working with other countries interested in comprehensive trade expansion. Just this week, the U.S. Senate passed implementing legislation for a free trade agreement with Bahrain. Besides Bahrain, the Congress since 2003 has passed implementing bills for FTAs with ten other countries -- Singapore, Chile, Australia, Morocco, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the Dominican Republic. The United States also has concluded FTA negotiations with Oman and Peru. The vast majority of these trading partners are developing countries, which shows the commitment of the United States to providing market access to those developing countries committed to trade liberalization.

"Congress has amply demonstrated its willingness to provide greater access to the U.S. market for those countries that share our ambitious trade agenda. But those countries that aren't interested in ambition, those that are blocking the Hong Kong talks, can expect to be left on the sidelines as the United States moves forward with trade expansion."