

Administration of Barack Obama, 2011

Remarks at an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit Working Session in Kapolei, Hawaii

November 13, 2011

Good morning, everybody. It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you, officially, to the APEC leaders meeting. This is the first time in nearly 20 years that the United States has hosted this forum, and it comes at a time when America is very focused on how we can work together in a cooperative, effective way in the transpacific region.

And obviously, I'm particularly pleased that we're meeting in my home State of Hawaii, which reflects the deep connections between the peoples of our region. And I hope everybody had a wonderful evening last night. I've heard that some of you wanted to join in the hula dancing. [*Laughter*] I'm sorry we did not give you that opportunity.

Now it's time to get down to work, and we have much to do. Our 21 economies, our nearly 3 billion citizens, are looking to us to bring our economies closer, to increase exports, to expand trade and opportunity that creates jobs and economic growth. That's why we're here.

I'm confident that we can make significant progress. We've done it before. Since APEC started, we've slashed tariffs and barriers to trade and investment. Commerce in the region has soared, creating new jobs, new markets, and raising living standards across the region.

And I want to emphasize that the Asia-Pacific region is absolutely critical to America's economic growth. We consider it a top priority. And we consider it a top priority because we're not going to be able to put our folks back to work and grow our economy and expand opportunity unless the Asia-Pacific region is also successful.

This region includes many of our top trading partners. This is where we do most of our trade and where we sell most of our exports. It's also the fastest growing region in the world. And as a consequence, the Asia-Pacific region is key to achieving my goal of doubling U.S. exports and creating new jobs.

Today we've got an opportunity to make progress towards our ultimate goal, which is a seamless regional economy. We're going to be focusing on three specific areas: increasing trade and investment, promoting green jobs, and streamlining and coordinating regulations so that we encourage trade and job creation. And more broadly, we'll be discussing how we can work together to spur on quicker economic growth and more sturdy and sustainable economic growth. The economies of this region have a critical role to play in addressing the imbalances and making sure that growth is balanced and sustainable in the future.

So I want to thank my fellow leaders for being here. I'm confident that we can continue to make significant progress during the course of this day.

Before we begin discussing this morning's topic, I want to congratulate Japan on the superb job it did in hosting APEC in 2010. Prime Minister Noda of Japan set a high bar for us, so we are going to try to follow your footsteps.

I also want to recognize the outstanding work that's been done by our officials and ministers during the course of this year to move forward an ambitious set of initiatives.

The focus of our host year was to make progress towards a seamless regional economy, and we have made progress in the three themes that we set out: regional economic integration, green growth, and regulatory reform. We have agreed to address a set of next-generation trade issues, including removing frictions in the global supply chains, helping small and medium-size enterprises grow and better plug into the global trading system, and adopting smart, market-oriented innovation policies. Innovation is especially critical to all of us, and we all want to take appropriate steps to encourage it, because without it we can't grow, become more productive, or create enough jobs.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 a.m. at the JW Marriott Ihilani Ko Olina Resort & Spa.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit :: Working session in Kapolei, HI.

Locations: Kapolei, HI.

Names: Noda, Yoshihiko.

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