



[View this email in your browser](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2023

CONTACT: media@ustr.eop.gov

**Remarks by Ambassador Katherine Tai at the National Council of Textile
Organizations' 19th Annual Meeting**

WASHINGTON – United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai today delivered pre-recorded remarks during the National Council of Textile Organizations' 19th Annual Meeting.

In her remarks, Ambassador Tai underscored how the U.S. textile industry's resilience and innovative spirit are driving our nation's competitiveness. Ambassador Tai also emphasized the Biden Administration's commitment to writing a new story on trade to promote inclusive economic growth, especially for rural and disadvantaged communities across America.

Ambassador Tai's remarks as delivered are below:

Hello, everyone!

I'm Katherine Tai, the U.S. Trade Representative. Thank you, Kim, for your kind invitation. I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak again with NCTO members.

I've been fortunate to visit several textile research and manufacturing facilities in the United States in these last two years.

I went to Aurora Specialty Textiles in Illinois, Milliken & Company in South Carolina, and American & Efird in North Carolina. And most recently, I visited North Carolina State University's Wilson College of Textiles.

The resilience and innovative spirit that I witnessed at these facilities were truly inspiring.

I saw first-hand some of the cutting-edge technologies used to make specialized gear for first responders and the military, develop smart textiles with health care applications, and implement green production processes to shrink the industry's carbon footprint.

I also learned about how NCTO members heroically leapt to the fore during the COVID pandemic to rally resources and know-how to help our nation meet the dire need for personal protective equipment. Companies that would normally be competing with each other worked together to deliver for our country.

But I also know the challenges this sector has weathered over the last few decades, when we saw so much production leave the United States, in part

because of our trade policies.

Plants shuttered, and many of your companies and workers suffered through hard times.

These closures had devastating effects for communities. We know that your facilities support jobs not just on site, but in the many small businesses that are part of the fabric of cities and towns across this country. When people lose their jobs, or can't earn a living wage, the effects ripple out far and wide.

And that's why President Biden and our administration have been working hard to write a new story on trade and economic policy. One that puts working families first. One that pursues fairness and equity.

And the President's plan is working.

Unemployment is at its lowest rate in over 50 years. Wages are rising for lower- and middle-income workers. We have seen more jobs created in two years than any other administration has seen in four.

Manufacturing is rebounding faster than it has in almost 40 years. And a record 10.5 million small businesses were created in the last two years.

Trade plays an integral part in this new story.

We're incentivizing U.S.- and regionally-based production and reducing our reliance on products and inputs from distant shores, a vulnerability that the pandemic so clearly brought to light.

We're factoring in the impact of trade on rural and disadvantaged communities, including those in which many of you operate.

And through Vice President Harris' Call to Action initiative, we're challenging companies to invest in the textile sectors in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

We've already seen over a \$1 billion in new commitments to invest or source from the region, which will help to bolster the North American supply chain and address increased migration pressures from Central America.

A lack of economic opportunity is clearly one of the pressures behind migration, and we know that the textile and apparel sectors present significant opportunities for expanded employment, especially for women. And as part of our commitment to ending the race to the bottom, we want those jobs to be in safe facilities, where basic worker rights are upheld.

Not only will these investments and sourcing commitments help increase economic opportunities in those countries, they will also promote greater near-shoring and support American jobs that provide the yarns and fabrics that go into Central American apparel production.

Make no mistake—we know how important the yarn-forward rules of origin are for the success of our trade partnership with the region. Those rules provide the certainty that companies need to invest in and expand operations, which also creates good-paying jobs both in the United States and in Central America.

I also want to touch on the topic of China, because I know the challenges that

unfair trade practices have posed to the textile industry.

We've thus far extended the Section 301 duties on China for a wide range of products, including most textile and apparel products.

We're also in the middle of a comprehensive review of these tariffs. I know that many of you have submitted comments. I want to thank you. We value your input. We will continue to work with you in the months ahead as we address the challenges from our trade with China.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge your efforts to help end forced labor, especially with respect to cotton harvesting and processing.

Members of my staff recently visited the Carolinas, where they saw an entire supply chain that lets Made-in-USA manufacturer American Giant trace its supply chain right back to the American farm where the cotton was grown. That's the sort of transparency and accountability that we would like to see for the textile and apparel products imported from other countries.

I know many small and family-owned businesses in this sector see sustainability as a comparative advantage, and our Administration remains committed to working with you to help you compete and succeed.

Thank you again for inviting me. I look forward to continuing to work with you as we craft a trade policy that works for all Americans.

###

U.S. Trade Representative Press Office



This email was sent to kellis@ncto.org

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

USTR Press Office · 600 17th St NW · Washington, DC 20508-0001 · USA