



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

## **PRESS OFFICE**

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## ***SBA ADMINISTRATOR ALVAREZ BACKS PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS FOR CHINA IN MEETINGS WITH SMALL BUSINESS EXPORTERS***

**DENVER** - Administrator Aida Alvarez of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today wholeheartedly backed President Clinton's effort to grant China Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status.

Administrator Alvarez discussed the President's agenda for China during an International Trade roundtable in Denver focusing on how small firms can reach the relatively untapped Chinese marketplace. The sessions included small business owners whose companies are presently doing business in China.

"Permanent Normal Trade Relations status is a win-win situation for American small businesses," Administrator Alvarez said. "China can enter the World Trade Organization (WTO) without our consent, but if we're going to realize the market-opening benefits of the recent WTO agreements, then we need to have permanent normal trade relations with China.

Even though more than 10,000 U.S. small businesses have been trailblazers and are successfully exporting to China, Administrator Alvarez cited continuing reports of difficulties in gaining market access and a lack of predictability in many trade issues.

"We feel that WTO entry and PNTR are the best long-term ways to help small businesses do more business in China," Administrator Alvarez said. "We want U.S. small business to be able to compete in all export markets. If the rules aren't uniform, it puts our small businesses at a disadvantage in China. Sure, there are problems, but we think WTO rules and institutions are the best long-term ways to provide U.S. small businesses the structure, transparency, and predictability they need to enter unfamiliar markets like China," she said.

China was the tenth largest export market for small businesses in the U.S. in 1997. In fact, over 80 percent of all U.S. firms that exported to China in 1977 were small or medium-sized. During the period between 1992 and 1997, the overall number of firms exporting to China increased by 141 percent.

SBA has a number of programs - including financing and technical assistance - to help small businesses expand their sales by exporting to China and other countries. In fact, in FY 1999, the SBA assisted firms with over 1,000 export-related loans worth more than \$390 million.

For more information on these and other SBA programs, visit the SBA Web site at [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov) or call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-U-ASK-SBA. In addition, the SBA's Office of International Trade can be reached at (202) 205-6720.