

DIRECTORS FROM U.S. DEPARTMENTS OF STATE, COMMERCE & AGRICULTURE SPEAK AT CONSULAR CORPS LUNCHEON

Nearly 250 International dignitaries, trade commissioners and regional business leaders recently convened at the Northern California World Trade Center's 13th Annual Consular Corps Luncheon event, held at UC Davis. With a backdrop made up of dozens of international flags, symbolic of the nearly 40 countries and region represented in the crowd, participants heard from an impressive speaker lineup which included **Suresh Kumar**, Assistant Secretary, Trade Promotion and Director General, U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, **Val Dolcini**, State Executive Director, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency and **Alma Candelaria**, Director, International Visitor Leadership Program Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs U.S. Department of State.

Suresh Kumar, who helps U.S. firms and workers navigate the often complex world of foreign trade so that sales abroad help support U.S. jobs, discussed President Obama's National Export Initiative (NEI). The NEI directs the government to continue its efforts to remove barriers preventing American companies from getting open and fair access to foreign markets, including combating unfair tariff and non-tariff barriers and addressing practices that blatantly harm U.S. companies. The Obama administration will work towards trade agreements that are balanced, ambitious and improve market access for U.S. workers, firms, farmers and ranchers. This effort will also improve access to credit to small and medium sized businesses who want to export and will enable US companies to have free and fair access to other countries by removing barriers that hamper US Companies in foreign markets. For more information on the NEI, please click [here](#).

Val Dolcini, a native Davis resident who is responsible for the management of 30 USDA Service Centers from the Oregon border south to Mexico, outlined the incredible resource and asset that is California's agriculture. In 2008, California's 81,000 farms and ranches generated over \$36 billion in total cash receipts, which is \$12 billion more than the next closest state, Iowa. California produces over 400 different commodities and is the sole producer of a large number of specialty crops. While the most important market for California agricultural production is the US domestic market, fully 30% of California's farm cash receipts are generated through the export market. In 2008, the value of California's agricultural exports reached an all time high of \$12.9 billion, a 16% increase over the previous year.

Mr. Dolcini explained that in Washington, the US Department of Ag is focused on promoting increased exports of US agricultural products to help American farmers, ranchers, and workers succeed. Every billion dollars in agricultural exports supports over 9,000 jobs and generates an additional \$1.4 billion in economic activity. The United States exported \$96 billion in agricultural goods in 2009 for a trade surplus of \$22.5 billion. Agricultural trade surplus is the highest of all American exports. Even with the sharp global economic downturn, we expect agricultural exports in 2010 to reach \$100 billion, the second highest level ever. Furthermore, the robust export numbers we are seeing today are due in part to the sustained efforts to reopen markets through trade negotiations, the unparalleled productivity and ingenuity of the U.S. agricultural sector, and the effective global marketing efforts of our producer groups. For Mr. Dolcini's full comments, please click [here](#).

Alma Candelaria oversees the US Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), which brings approximately 5,000 foreign nationals to the United States each year. Ms. Candelaria gave a comprehensive overview of the IVLP why it's important to not only our region, but the entire county. IVLP visitors, who are selected by American Foreign Service Officers overseas, are current or emerging leaders in government, politics, the media, education, the arts, business and various other fields. Since its inception in 1940, thousands of distinguished individuals have participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program, including more than 290 current and former Chiefs of State and Heads of Government, thousands of cabinet-level ministers, and many other distinguished leaders from the public and private sectors.

Ms. Candelaria praised the work of the NorCalWTC which helps support the Department of State's mission to promote mutual understanding among countries through the IVLP. The IVLP is a public, private partnership as it partners citizen diplomacy and cultural opportunities with professional meetings and networking. By connecting international leaders with leaders in the US and more specifically, the Sacramento region, the IVLP helps spread global connections and partnerships. This function serves as a foreign policy tool as the IVLP strengthens the bond of mutual understanding between cultures and other countries. Social, cultural and professional exchanges, as facilitated by the US Department of State and the NorCalWTC, not only creates global partnerships, as well as business, professional, educational and technical informational exchanges, but can break down cultural walls revealing a common humanity. For more information on the IVLP, please click [here](#).