



## **Doing Business with Peru, Colombia, and Panama: *New World Bank Report Shows Significant Improvement***

The just-released 2008 World Bank “Doing Business” annual report reveals that America’s potential free trade agreement partners in Latin America are greatly improving their domestic business climate and promoting economic development through common-sense legal reforms. **Free trade agreements with these countries will help to lock in and encourage further reforms. By approving these agreements, we will send a strong signal that Americans stand firmly on the side of democratic leaders committed to bettering the lives of their citizens. Moreover, U.S. firms will benefit from improved business environments and new commercial opportunities provided by the reforms and the agreements.**

### **Peru**

The Government of Peru has helped make Peru the 7<sup>th</sup> best place to “do business” out of the 31 countries in the hemisphere. Peru ranks second in the hemisphere in **Protecting Investors** and ranks third in the hemisphere in **Registering Property**. **It costs less to secure property rights in Peru than in the average OECD country** (3.3 percent versus 4.6 percent) while taking virtually the same number of steps (5 to 4.9) and only slightly more time (33 days to 28 days).

### **Colombia**

Colombia had the **largest overall improvement of any country in the hemisphere, and was the sixth best reformer globally**. Colombia is now the 12<sup>th</sup> best place to “do business” out of the 31 countries in the hemisphere. It ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the hemisphere in **Protecting Investors**. According to the report, Colombia, the region’s top reformer, **made great strides in easing trade**. The Government extended port operating hours and adopted more selective customs inspections, which reduced the time for port and terminal handling activities by ten days. Additionally, Colombia **strengthened investor protections** by increasing disclosure requirements for related-party transactions, **and cut the average time burden of tax compliance** by 41 percent.

### **Panama**

Panama is ranked as the 11<sup>th</sup> best place to “do business” out of the 31 countries in the hemisphere. **Panama ranks first in the hemisphere in two areas – Getting Credit and Trading Across Borders** (ease of importing and exporting goods). By changing a credit history law, Panama made credit more available for its 300,000 small and medium-sized business – which employ 68 percent of the country’s workforce – and more than 40 percent of Panamanian adults. Now these businesses and individuals do not have to rely on pawnshops and street lenders for capital.

More information about this report can be found at <http://www.doingbusiness.org>.  
For more information about Peru, Colombia, and Panama, visit the State Department’s FTA webpage at <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/tpp/c22883.htm>

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