

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

## Press Center



## Remarks by U.S. Treasury Secretary Lew at Meeting with Argentine Finance Minister Prat-Gay

9/26/2016

**BUENOS AIRES** – I would like to thank President Macri and my friend and colleague Minister Prat-Gay for hosting me today.

As you know, this is the first visit by a U.S. Treasury Secretary to Argentina since 2002, and I am grateful for the Finance Minister's invitation to join him in Buenos Aires to continue our discussions regarding this important period of change in Argentina, as well as our shared objectives for the future of the U.S.-Argentina economic relationship, the G-20, and the global economy.

My team and I have been working closely with Minister Prat-Gay and his staff since the beginning of the Macri administration and the Finance Minister and I have gotten to know one another well over several meetings this year. In January, we announced the change in U.S. voting policy for multilateral development bank projects for Argentina, and we've since met in Shanghai, Chengdu, and Hangzhou to further advance U.S.-Argentine economic cooperation.

A prosperous Argentina that is fully participating in the global economy is not only in the interest of the Argentine people, but also the region, the United States, and the international community. In its early months, the Macri administration has made a lot of progress.

We recognize that policies to prepare the Argentine economy for more balanced and sustainable economic growth may be difficult. Rebuilding institutions, reestablishing credibility, improving governance, and implementing structural reforms will not happen overnight. It is important for the government to stay the course, thereby creating opportunities for the private sector to further unlock the creativity and dynamism of the Argentine people.

As a central piece of discussions here today, Minister Prat-Gay and I will carry forward our work to negotiate a comprehensive Bilateral Tax Treaty, including provisions that allow for the exchange of tax information. To accelerate the process of sharing tax data on Argentine residents in the United States, Treasury and Argentina's tax agency (AFIP) will immediately begin assessing Argentina's preparedness to receive such information and to explore steps to expedite the process. I have invited Argentina's representatives to visit Treasury next week for consultations, and I have instructed Treasury's senior tax negotiators to visit Buenos Aires in the near future.

We also plan to discuss enhancing our collective efforts to combat money laundering and illicit finance. In particular, I want to emphasize the importance of the recent re-establishment of information sharing between our financial intelligence units – the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN for short) in the United States, and the UIF in Argentina. The appropriate sharing of financial intelligence via secure channels for use by our respective law enforcement communities is critical in the fight against terrorism, money laundering and other illicit activity. The recently strengthened and growing relationship between FinCEN and the UIF will benefit both our countries. Treasury will also support Argentina's efforts to combat money laundering through technical assistance to the UIF.

I also look forward to discussing the role Treasury can play with the government of Argentina on efforts to promote the private financing of infrastructure, and how we can help the central bank promote financial inclusion.

We welcome Argentina's decision to improve the conditions for private investment by working toward meeting the OECD's standards and codes. We strongly support Argentina's desire to work more closely with the OECD, and the United States will work with the OECD and with the government of Argentina to make progress towards adopting OECD instruments and recommendations.

Our two countries are in a new era of our long bilateral relationship, and through this trip and the many other areas of U.S. engagement, I hope that the enduring friendship between Argentina and the United States is translated into concrete cooperation at many levels.

Thank you.

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