



[For immediate release](#)

Contact: Svetlana Minjack
Director of Communications and External Affairs
U.S.-Russia Business Council
+1 202-739-9182
sminjack@usrbc.org

Georgia Governor Perdue Welcomes RF Senator and USRBC President to Georgia *Possible Visit to Russia by State Officials Discussed*

Atlanta, Georgia (April 21) —Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue welcomed RF Senator Mikhail Margelov and U.S.-Russia Business Council President Eugene Lawson to Georgia's State Capitol on Monday to discuss the value of increased commercial relations between the United States and Russia. Noting the marked growth in Russia's economy — now the world's eighth largest — and Georgia's increasing focus on world markets and interest in attracting foreign investment, Governor Perdue suggested that Georgia can and should take advantage of the economic opportunities that increased commercial ties engender. Margelov and Lawson were in Atlanta to highlight the remarkable growth and diversification Russia's \$1 trillion economy has experienced in recent years.

Georgia's exports to Russia have increased dramatically — nearly 300 percent from 2003 to 2007. The variety of industries in Georgia benefiting from this increased trade range from the processed foods sector to transportation equipment and chemicals. Georgia's exports of some agricultural goods to Russia have witnessed dramatic growth even more recently, jumping from \$900,000 in value in 2005 to more than \$15 million in 2007.

In an earlier meeting with Georgia's Economic Development Commissioner Kenneth Stewart, the delegation learned that Georgia has been working to identify sectors in which the state has strong competitive advantages and hopes to leverage these assets for increased economic cooperation globally. These sectors include advanced communications, advanced manufacturing, logistics, and agro-forestry. Commissioner Stewart expressed a keen interest in exploring opportunities with entities in Russia in these areas.

Earlier, Margelov and Lawson addressed a gathering at an Atlanta Metro Chamber of Commerce luncheon sponsored by The Coca-Cola Company. Coca-Cola has been active in Russia for decades, and now indirectly employs almost 80,000 people there. Now the world's 9th largest retail economy, Russia is a key market for the company, and Coca-Cola plans to invest an additional \$1.5 billion there over the next three years.

[About the U.S.-Russia Business Council \(USRBC\)](#)

The **U.S.-Russia Business Council (USRBC)** represents the interests of its 300 U.S. and Russian member companies, providing business development and government relations support in both Moscow and Washington. The USRBC contributes to the stability and development of a free market in Russia and supports Russia's integration into the global economy. It also serves as the Secretariat for the Coalition for U.S.-Russia Trade (www.usrussiaintrade.org). For more information, visit the USRBC online at: www.usrbc.org.