Embassy of the United States Beijing, China

STATE DEPARTMENT PROCESSES ONE MILLIONTH VISA IN CHINA FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

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MEDIA NOTE

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Consular Officers at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and our four consulates general in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Shenyang have processed more than one million visa applications to date in fiscal year 2012 while reducing the wait time for a visa interview appointment to approximately one week.

This extraordinary accomplishment represents visa processing growth of almost 43% over the same period last fiscal year, when we had processed just over 675,000 visa applications in China.

To achieve this, we increased staff, improved workflow, implemented a new pilot program waiving the in-person interview requirement in certain instances, and undertook other changes to our procedures – without compromising border security. We are implementing permanent solutions to keep us ahead of the growing visa demand for years to come. During a June trip to China, the Department's top consular official, Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Janice Jacobs, cut the ribbon on a reopened annex to our Embassy in Beijing, greatly increasing visa interview capacity.

China is not the only place where the State Department has achieved great success in meeting dramatic increases in visa demand. In Brazil, we have processed almost 44% more visa applications so far in FY 2012 than we did during the same period last year. In Mexico, we have processed 36% more visa applications. China and Mexico are the only two U.S. Missions that process more than one million visa applications each year, although Brazil is on track to become the third.

The accomplishments announced today reflect the Obama Administration's commitment towards increasing U.S. jobs by encouraging more people to visit our country. For more information on the Obama Administration's recent efforts to increase travel and tourism, please see http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/05/10/obama-administration-continues-efforts-increase-travel-and-tourism-unite.

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