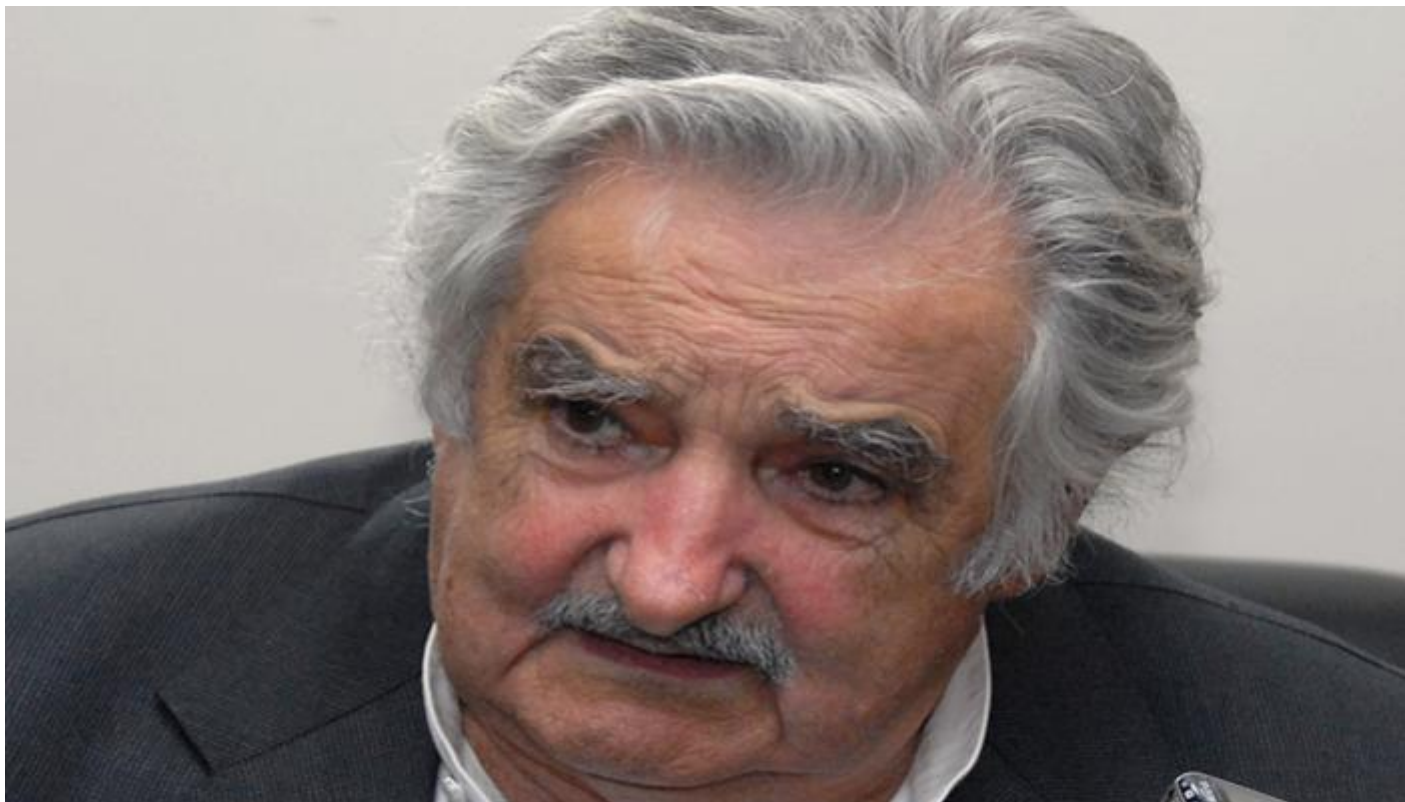


Uruguayan President Dismisses Free Trade Deal with U.S.



Montevideo, April 22 (RHC-XINHUA) -- Uruguay's President Jose Mujica dismissed Monday the possibility of negotiating a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States.

It is not the time now to pursue a deal with the United States, as the Southern Common Market (Mercosur), a trade bloc to which Uruguay belongs, was "on the threshold" of a trade deal with the European Union, Mujica, who is set to meet with U.S. President Barack Obama in May, told reporters at an official event. Trade deals should be entered into carefully, Mujica said, adding that the entry into the U.S. market of Uruguayan citrus fruits, allowed just a few weeks ago, "took 18 years."

Mujica's comments followed a suggestion by conservative opposition Colorado Party leader Pedro Bordaberry that the president propose a FTA with the U.S. during his upcoming meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama on May 12th.

Uruguay and the United States signed the TIFA in 2007, after the then president Tabare Vazquez, the first head of state from the leftist Broad Front (FA) coalition, rejected Washington's proposal for a FTA.

Jose Mujica will conclude his presidential term, the second for the FA, in March 2015.

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