

PM announces coming into force of Free Trade Agreement with Colombia

Opening markets for Canadian businesses to create new jobs and economic growth

10 August 2011

Bogotá, Colombia

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced that the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will come into force on August 15, 2011. The announcement was made jointly with the President of the Republic of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, during Prime Minister Harper's official visit to Colombia. The Prime Minister also announced increased Canadian assistance to strengthen human rights in Colombia.

"Our Government has been hard at work opening new markets abroad for Canadian businesses, which creates jobs for Canadians," said Prime Minister Harper. "Colombia has a burgeoning economy with incredible potential for commercial linkages with Canadian entrepreneurs. Improving trade and expanding market opportunities also helps to build a better future for the next generation. Our Government continues to support efforts to safeguard and promote human rights that make a real difference for children, youth, families and communities."

Fostering trade liberalization and expanding commercial ties in the Americas supports job creation and economic growth in Canada and for our trading partners. The Canada-Colombia FTA will help Canadian businesses improve access to an emerging market of 45.5 million people and an economy with a high growth potential. The FTA will benefit Canada's producers and exporters, reduce or eliminate tariffs on nearly all current Canadian exports, and provide a more predictable, transparent and rules-based trading environment for Canadian investors.

Canada and Colombia enjoy a healthy trade relationship with two-way merchandise trade in 2010 reaching \$1.4 billion, an increase of 32 per cent from 2005. In the Caribbean and Latin America region (excluding Mexico), Colombia is Canada's fifth largest merchandise trading partner and our second largest merchandise export destination.

The Government is also committed to ensuring people from all walks of life in Colombia have better, safer lives. Through the Canadian International Development Agency, Canada is working with UNICEF Canada to increase access to education, and strengthen protections for children from sexual exploitation and abuse. We also support the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor, advocate and report on human rights, enhancing

the capacity of the Colombian government to protect citizens' rights, prevent abuse and investigate violations.