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# China, Canada begin exploratory talks on free trade agreement

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OTTAWA — Premier Li Keqiang said on Sept 22 that China and Canada have embarked on exploratory talks for a potential free trade agreement.

Premier Li made the remarks when meeting with journalists together with his Canadian counterpart Justin Trudeau after the two leaders attended the signing ceremony of a series of bilateral cooperation documents.

"We have reached many new consensuses in economic and trade area," said the Premier, adding that China is willing to import frozen beef from Canada and the two sides have reached an agreement on Canada's canola exports to China.

He also said that the two sides discussed cooperation in finance, tourism, law enforcement, as well as between their local governments.

"The exchange of visits within one month showed that China-Canada relations are entering a new stage," said the Premier who referred to Trudeau's recent official visit to China, adding that "it's rare in the bilateral ties, and conforms to the interests of both countries as well as the expectations of the international community."

Premier Li arrived in Ottawa on Sept 21. His visit to Canada is the first by a Chinese premier in 13 years.

The Premier said the two sides agreed that China and Canada have broad common interests and sound cooperation. The development of the bilateral ties is in the interests of both Chinese and Canadian peoples as well as the world's peace and stability.

"We have decided to strengthen exchanges in all levels and in multiple mechanisms. We have agreed to establish high-level financial dialogue mechanism, and annual meeting mechanism between the two foreign ministers," Premier Li said.

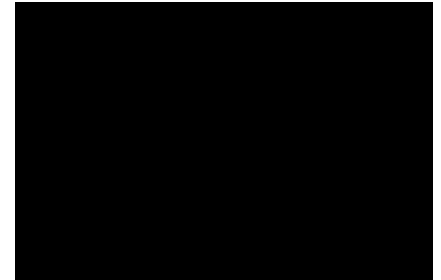
The Premier also noted that they have discussed their differences, saying that it is normal for China and Canada, two countries with different national conditions and in different development stages, to differ.

He added that what's more important is to manage their differences, knowing that their common interests far outweigh differences.

"We are very pleased about the nature and the stability we have been able to bring to the Canada-China relationship," said Trudeau at the joint news conference.

Trudeau said the two sides agreed to double the bilateral trade volume by 2025, and the economic relations between the two countries have huge potential that can create decent salaries and jobs.

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Trudeau added that maintaining stable relations with China is in the interests of both countries. He is looking forward to bringing more opportunities for Canadians through relations with China.

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