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Canada-Dominican Republic - Free Trade Discussions Consultations on possible Trade Negotiations with the Dominican Republic

Notice published in the Canada Gazette, November 2nd, 2002

The Government of Canada is seeking the views of Canadians on the scope of a possible free trade agreement between Canada and the Dominican Republic.

Background

In March 2002, the President of the Dominican Republic and Prime Minister Chrétien agreed to consider bilateral free trade negotiations and decided that the two countries would initiate exploratory discussions on enhancing our trade relationship. As part of these discussions, the Government of Canada will undertake extensive domestic consultations with business, citizen-based organizations and individual Canadians, as well as with the provincial and territorial governments, to obtain advice and views on priorities, objectives and concerns to help define the possible scope of this initiative.

The Dominican Republic is Canada's fourth largest export destination for goods in the Caribbean region (after Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica), and an important destination for tourism, investment, and services. Two-way merchandise trade between Canada and the Dominican Republic is moderate but increasing, amounting to \$189 million in 2001; this figure does not capture many goods transshipped through the United States. Canadian investment is over \$290 million and is principally in mining, banking, communications and tourism. In 2001, Canada exported \$93.95 million of goods to the Dominican Republic, which consisted mainly of newsprint, fish, cereals, mechanical and electrical machinery, and motor vehicles. Canada imported \$95.46 million of goods, mostly comprised of electrical machinery, knit and woven apparel, textiles, fruit, nuts, cocoa, medical and scientific instruments, vegetables and precious stones.

A free trade agreement with the Dominican Republic would strengthen our trade and political ties with the country. In addition, such an initiative could serve to advance Canada's foreign policy interests in the region, in particular in strengthening peace and democracy, promoting macro-economic stability, growth and poverty alleviation, and contribute to the shared goal of furthering development through economic integration within the Western Hemisphere, as well as providing added impetus for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

General Relations

In 1999, Canada and the Dominican Republic increased their level of

reciprocal representation. Canada upgraded its diplomatic representation in the Dominican Republic from *chargé d'affaires* to ambassador level and, after an absence of several years, the Dominican Republic opened an embassy in Ottawa. Internationally, our cooperation extends across a range of fora, from the United Nations and the World Trade Organization (WTO), to the Organization of American States, the Summit of the Americas process and the FTAA negotiations.

Canada-Dominican Republic trade and investment relations are governed by the WTO agreements and a Double Taxation Agreement that came into force in 1977. Negotiations have been initiated with the goal of signing a Foreign Investment Protection Agreement. In 1996, the Dominican Republic enacted a new Investment Law that allows greater repatriation of capital and profits.

While Canada does not have a formal bilateral aid program with the Dominican Republic, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) does fund projects in the country.

Additional information on the Dominican Republic and Canada's relationship with the region can be found at:

- ✎ [Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade](#)
- ✎ [Canadian International Development Agency](#)
- ✎ [Inter-American Development Bank](#)

Submissions by Interested Parties

The Government of Canada seeks the views of all interested Canadians on priorities, objectives and concerns with regard to a possible free trade agreement with the Dominican Republic. In particular, we are seeking views with respect to the following:

- ✎ Opinions on areas of export interest, including products for which the Dominican Republic should eliminate barriers. The Government is also seeking views on products for which there may be concerns if access to the Canadian market for the exports from the Dominican Republic were to be improved, including opinions on the staging of any concessions.
- ✎ Views on general rules of origin issues and/or advice on appropriate rules of origin or procedures for specific products or sectors.
- ✎ Suggestions on "trade facilitation" issues, e.g. significant impediments related to import procedures.
- ✎ Advice, views and experiences with customs-related/immigration issues for both business travellers and commercial goods entering and/or leaving the region.
- ✎ Advice and views on general investment issues to be included in the scope of the investment negotiations, the types of problems faced by Canadian investors in the Dominican Republic and the type of investment rules that would provide better access, treatment, protection and predictability for investments.
- ✎ Advice and views on general cross-border trade in services issues to

be included in the scope of negotiations, services sectors in the Dominican Republic that could be of interest for further liberalization, and opinions on measures affecting access, including regulatory measures that may restrict cross-border trade in services.

- ⚡ Advice and views on the possible inclusion of competition policy within the scope of the negotiations.
- ⚡ Views on ways to reflect the interests and values of Canadians in the area of environmental protection.
- ⚡ Views on ways to reflect the interests and values of Canadians in the areas of labour rights.
- ⚡ Views on ways to reflect the interests and values of Canadians in the areas of human rights, culture and other social concerns, as they relate to a possible free trade agreement with the Dominican Republic.
- ⚡ Views on the development implications of any of the foregoing for the Dominican Republic, including but not limited to Canadian concessions or complementary measures that could particularly favour sustainable development in the region, and areas or sectors whose particular social or economic vulnerability warrants special consideration in any negotiation.
- ⚡ Views on any other related issues.

All interested parties are invited to submit their views by December 20, 2002. Please be advised that any information we receive as a result of this consultation will be considered as public information, unless explicitly stated otherwise. Submissions should include:

1. the contributor's name and address, and, if applicable, his/her organization, institution or business.
2. the specific issues being addressed.
3. precise information on the rationale for the positions taken, including, for example, anticipated effects on employment and production in Canada, on import and export interests, on social and environmental interests or on any other economic interest in Canada.

Contributions can be sent by e-mail, fax or mail to:

E-mail:

consultations@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Fax:


(613) 944-0757

Address:

Trade Negotiations Consultations (Dominican Republic)
Trade Policy Planning Division (EAI)
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Lester B. Pearson Building
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0G2

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