

Canada Pursuing Free Trade Agreement with Honduras

Harper government committed to opening new markets in the Americas and creating jobs for Canadians

(No. 63 - February 11, 2011 - 4:45 p.m. ET) The Honourable Peter Van Loan, Minister of International Trade, today emphasized the government's commitment to pursuing free trade negotiations with Honduras.

"The economy remains the government's number one priority," said Minister Van Loan. "Honduras offers promising opportunities for Canadian businesses and workers. In fact, during the first 11 months of 2010, Canadian merchandise exports were up almost 20 percent over the previous year."

Canada is carving out a free trade leadership role in the Americas. Canada currently has agreements with seven countries in the Americas and is negotiating with many more.

"Canadian and Honduran officials are meeting in Tegucigalpa beginning February 14 to advance discussions," added Minister Van Loan. "Next week's meeting follows a productive round of negotiations in Ottawa in December, where both sides set an ambitious schedule."

Canada and Honduras agreed to pursue bilateral negotiations toward a free trade agreement in October 2010, following almost nine years of talks between Canada and the Central American Four Countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Since taking office in 2006, the Harper government has pursued an ambitious free trade agenda. In just five years, Canada has concluded free trade agreements with eight countries: Colombia, Peru, Jordan, Panama and the European Free Trade Association states of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland, and is now in negotiations with close to 50 countries.