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The Government of Canada is focused on creating jobs and opportunities for Canadians in every region of the country. That is why our Government launched the most ambitious trade agenda in Canadian history. Since 2006, Canada has concluded free trade agreement negotiations with 39 countries and is negotiating with many more.

To this end, on July 21, 2015, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that Canada and Israel have successfully concluded negotiations toward an expanded and modernized Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA).

Canada values its longstanding relationship with Israel, which is based on shared values, common interests and strong political, economic, cultural and social ties. An expanded and modernized agreement will further enhance Canada's visibility and terms of access in the Israeli market, while supporting the close bilateral relationship more generally.

The CIFTA is the cornerstone of Canada's commercial relationship with Israel. The Agreement, which came into force in 1997, eliminated tariffs on all industrial products, and on some agricultural and fisheries products. Further tariff concessions were implemented in 2003 on additional agricultural and fisheries products. Since the original 1997 CIFTA, Canada's two-way merchandise trade with Israel has tripled to \$1.6 billion in 2014.

The modernized CIFTA will provide expanded market access opportunities for Canadian agricultural, fish and seafood products through the elimination of tariffs on products such as cranberries, dog and cat food, various baked goods, processed seafood and certain fish. The Agreement will also provide Canadian exporters with new or expanded duty-free access under tariff rate quotas for certain products, including chickpeas, frozen vegetables, frozen French fries, apples, wine and shrimp.

Canada excluded from any tariff elimination all over-quota tariffs for supply-managed products (dairy, poultry and eggs). As well, no tariff rate quotas for supply-managed goods were increased.

Canada and Israel will now undertake a legal review of the Agreement text to ensure clarity, accuracy and consistency. This is also referred to as the "legal scrub". The text

will then be translated into French and Hebrew. The legal scrub and translation process for the modernized CIFTA will be done on a priority basis, but will nevertheless take a number of months to complete.

Once these steps are completed, the final agreed-upon text will be prepared for official signature. After official signing, Canada and Israel will be in a position to commence their respective domestic processes to ratify and implement an amending agreement to modernize the CIFTA.

For Canada, this involves a full Parliamentary process of legislative review and scrutiny, including the drafting and introduction of a bill. A bill must go through the usual stages in the House of Commons and the Senate before it becomes law.

Once both parties have completed their domestic processes, Canada and Israel will exchange diplomatic notes confirming the completion of their respective processes and identifying the date for the entry into force of the Agreement.

Canadians have access to an abundance of consistently high-quality food products, including cherries, potatoes, apples, cranberries and chickpeas. Canada's agricultural and agri-food sector is one of the most dynamic in the world and will benefit from this expanded agreement.

Canada is also known for its world-class fish and seafood exports. Surrounded by the Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific oceans and home to the Great Lakes, Canada has one of the world's most valuable commercial fishing industries. Canadian fish and seafood products will benefit from new opportunities in the Israeli market in the years to come.

As a priority market under Canada's *Global Markets Action Plan*, Israel provides a wide range of opportunities in the areas of merchandise exports, investment, science and technology, and innovation. A modernized CIFTA will enable Canadian companies to take greater advantage of these opportunities and create jobs, growth and prosperity for Canadians in every region of the country.