

## Harper Government's Free Trade Agenda Creates Jobs and Economic Growth

*Government announces launch of the Canada-Japan Joint Study toward an Economic Partnership Agreement*

**(No. 77 - February 23, 2011 - 1:30 p.m. ET)** The Honourable Peter Van Loan, Minister of International Trade, today announced the launch of a Joint Study to examine the potential for an Economic Partnership Agreement with Japan. The Minister was joined for the announcement by the Honourable Stockwell Day, President of the Treasury Board and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway.

"The economy remains our government's number one priority," said Minister Van Loan. "Our government sees engagement and increased trade with Asia as important drivers of Canada's long-term prosperity and growth."

Japan is the world's third-largest economy and Canada's largest source of job-creating investment from Asia. It is also Canada's fourth-largest merchandise export market, with exports totalling almost \$9.2 billion in 2010—an increase of more than 10 percent over 2009.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Harper, our government's low-tax plan and free trade agenda is helping to create jobs and growth for Canadian families," said Minister Day. "As our government continues to focus on economic recovery, we are opening new markets for Canadian workers and businesses, including in the Asia-Pacific region."

The study will examine the economic impact of an Economic Partnership Agreement and consider its benefits for workers and exporters in both countries.

"With today's announcement, Japan is taking an important step toward opening markets for the mutual benefit of both our countries," added Minister Van Loan. "The Japanese recognize the significant economic advantages of increasing trade."

In less than five years, the Harper government has launched an ambitious trade agenda, opening doors to Canadian business by concluding new free trade agreements with Colombia, Jordan, Panama, Peru and the member states of the European Free Trade Association.

Canadian businesses and workers can compete with the best in the world, confident that the Harper government will continue to pursue an ambitious free trade agenda and entrench economic recovery through freer trade and open markets.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

Monika Bujalska  
Press Secretary  
Office of the Honourable Peter Van Loan  
Minister of International Trade  
613-992-9304  
[monika.bujalska@international.gc.ca](mailto:monika.bujalska@international.gc.ca)

Trade Media Relations Office  
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

613-996-2000