

## Canada Concludes Third Round of Free Trade Negotiations with Morocco

*Deepening Canada's trading relationships in fast-growing markets is the best way to create jobs, growth and long-term prosperity, says Minister Fast*

**June 22, 2012** - The Honourable Ed Fast, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, today announced the conclusion of the third round of negotiations toward a free trade agreement with Morocco. Negotiations took place in Ottawa from June 18 to 22, 2012.

"A free trade agreement with Morocco would be Canada's first with an African country, and would serve as a gateway to a deeper Canadian commercial presence in North Africa and the Mediterranean region," said Minister Fast. "Our government understands the importance of trade to Canada's economy. Greater access to new markets means more opportunities, jobs and long-term prosperity for Canadian workers and businesses."

Morocco is an important market for Canada, and its growing economy offers Canadian workers and businesses great potential for expanded trade and investment opportunities. The Moroccan economy is expected to grow by 3.7 percent this year and 4.3 percent in 2013. In 2011, bilateral merchandise trade between Canada and Morocco totalled nearly \$420 million and Canadian merchandise exports were valued at \$300 million.

The fourth round of negotiations is scheduled for early fall 2012. A trade agreement with Morocco would give Canadian exporters and investors preferred access to the high-growth Moroccan market.

"Our government has embarked on the most ambitious pro-trade plan in the history of our country," said Minister Fast. "We've begun deepening trade and investment ties with the largest, most dynamic and fastest-growing markets in the world, including Brazil, China, India, Japan and the European Union. Thanks to these actions and our government's free trade leadership, Canadian workers and businesses now have preferred access and a real competitive edge in more markets around the world than at any other time in our history."

Since 2006, the Harper government has concluded free trade agreements with nine countries: Colombia, Jordan, Panama, Peru, the European Free Trade Association (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) and Honduras.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

Rudy Husny  
Press Secretary  
Office of the Honourable Ed Fast  
Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway  
613-992-7332

Trade Media Relations Office  
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada  
613-996-2000  
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