

Joint Declaration By The United Mexican States and The Republic of Singapore on the Mexico-Singapore Free Trade Agreement, 13 November 2000

In September 1999, we, President Ernesto Zedillo of the United Mexican States and Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of the Republic of Singapore, agreed to negotiate a Free Trade Agreement between Mexico and Singapore. Our officials commenced negotiations on the Mexico-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (MSFTA) in July 2000 and have since conducted four rounds of negotiations. In this context, we:

Conscious of the longstanding friendship between Mexico and Singapore;

Mindful of the growing economic and trade ties between our countries;

Recognising that liberalisation in the trade of goods and services will assist in the expansion of trade and investment flows;

Aware of the growing importance of trade and investment for the economies of the Asia-Pacific region;

Desiring to establish a framework of mutually advantageous principles and rules that will facilitate the movement of goods, the supply of services and the flow of investments between our countries;

Confirming the commitment to achieving the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation ('APEC') goals of free and open trade and investment;

Affirming the rights and obligations under the World Trade Organisation ('WTO'), and other multilateral, regional and bilateral agreements and arrangements;

Noting that negotiations for the MSFTA have commenced and encouraged by the progress made in four rounds of negotiations since then;

Wishing to reiterate the commitment towards concluding the MSFTA;

Hereby declare as follows:

SCOPE

The MSFTA shall be comprehensive and shall cover trade in goods, trade in services, investment, government procurement, intellectual property, a dispute settlement mechanism and any other topic that Mexico and Singapore may wish to include in future.

STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS**Agreed Texts**

1. The negotiations have resulted in provisionally agreed texts for the following topics:

- (a) Subsidies and Countervailing Measures
- (b) Technical Barriers to Trade
- (c) Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
- (d) Dispute Settlement Mechanism

Officials have initialed the four above-mentioned agreed texts.

Ongoing Work

1. Progress has been made in the negotiations of the remaining topics of the MSFTA and there have been positive developments in finding suitable compromises to accommodate the concerns of our countries.

The following progress has been made:

- a. Trade in Goods

Mexico and Singapore engaged productively on the various issues relating to trade in goods. There was an understanding of the sensitivity of this topic. Mexico and Singapore recognise the importance of assuring sufficient consensus from the Mexican and the Singapore business communities in working towards the elimination of substantially all tariffs and non-tariff barriers in the goods sector.

b. Trade in Services

Extensive discussions have been held on whether the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) or the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) approach should be used as the framework. Mexico and Singapore are exploring a compromise, which would consist of a GATS framework incorporating a suitably modified standstill provision that would be consistent with the need for substantial sectoral coverage.

c. Investment

Progress has been made towards a working text relating to a possible Investor to State dispute settlement mechanism. Good progress has also been made on the substantive provisions relating to the promotion and protection of investments.

d. Government Procurement

Apart from differences relating to the coverage of this topic, substantial progress has been made on the general disciplines.

As the MSFTA shall be comprehensive, it will be extremely important to build consensus on these issues.

FUTURE WORK AND TIME FRAME

Negotiations shall be completed for the remaining topics of the MSFTA for which no agreement has yet been reached as soon as possible.

SIGNED in duplicate in the English and Spanish languages in Singapore on the 13th of November 2000.

**GOH CHOK TONG
PRIME MINISTER
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE**

**ERNESTO ZEDILLO PONCE DE LEON
CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT
OF THE
UNITED MEXICAN STATES**