

Trilateral Statement on the Conclusion of the Third Round of NAFTA Negotiations

Ottawa, Canada – Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland, Mexican Secretary of the Economy Ildefonso Guajardo, and United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer today successfully concluded the third round of the renegotiation and modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The round took place in Ottawa, Canada from September 23 to 27, 2017. Negotiators made significant progress in several areas through the consolidation of text proposals, narrowing gaps and agreeing to elements of the negotiating text. Negotiators are now working from consolidated texts in most areas, demonstrating a commitment from all parties to advance discussions in the near term. In particular, meaningful advancements were made in the areas of telecommunications, competition policy, digital trade, good regulatory practices, and customs and trade facilitation. Parties also exchanged initial offers in the area of market access for government procurement.

Importantly, discussions were substantively completed in the area of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), effectively concluding negotiations on that chapter pending specific outcomes in related discussions. The inclusion of a chapter on SMEs in a modernized NAFTA recognizes the contribution that SMEs make to our economies. The chapter will serve to support the growth and development of SMEs by enhancing their ability to participate in and benefit from the opportunities created by this Agreement, including through cooperative activities, information sharing, and the establishment of a NAFTA Trilateral SME Dialogue, involving the private sector, non-government organizations, and other stakeholders. In addition to a specific chapter on SMEs, negotiators are also working on modernizing other aspects of the agreement that would benefit SMEs, including customs and trade facilitation, digital trade, and good regulatory practices. Discussions also touched upon energy trade, gender and Indigenous peoples.

We also advanced substantively in the competition chapter and expect to conclude the negotiation on this chapter prior to the next round.

NAFTA partners continue to be guided by a shared desire to create jobs, economic growth and opportunity for the people of our countries. Canada, the United States and Mexico remain committed to an accelerated timeline for negotiations. Ministers from all three countries have reiterated the mandate to the Chief Negotiators to continue on an accelerated path. Negotiators will continue their work and consult with their respective stakeholders in preparation for the fourth round of talks in Washington, D.C., from October 11 to 15, 2017.