

Minister Freeland Statement – NAFTA

August 16, 2017

I would like to start by showing you a set of photos. These photos are of two groups of firefighters, one from Mexico and one from the U.S., on their way to British Columbia, Canada, to help those affected by the forest fires ravaging our Pacific province.

These photos are just one of so many great examples, large and small, that illustrate the kind of deep relationship our three countries share: neighbourly and collegial.

Over the course of these negotiations, I will be keeping these images, and the spirit that they represent, front of mind.

Señoras y señores, estoy muy contenta de estar aquí presente con mis homólogos, Bob Lighthizer y Ildefonso Guajardo. Quiero reconocer la importancia de estas negociaciones del Trato de Libre Comercio de América del Norte. Canada acoge con beneplácito la modernización del NAFTA para reflejar nuevas realidades - y para integrar enfoques progresivos, libres y justos al comercio y la inversión, incluso con respecto a las protecciones ambientales y laborales.

Canada is, and has always been, a trading nation. Our approach stems from one essential insight. We pursue trade, free and fair, knowing it's not a zero-sum-game.

This brings me to the North American Free Trade Agreement and the historic project on which we are embarking, with our neighbours, to modernize this landmark pact for the 21st century.

The North American Free Trade area is the biggest economic zone in the world. Canada, the U.S. and Mexico together account for a quarter of the world's GDP, with seven percent of its population. According to Canadian economists, Canada's economy is 2.5 percent larger every year than it otherwise would be, thanks to NAFTA.

In the case of the U.S., the Peterson Institute of International Economics estimates that NAFTA has made the U.S. an "extra" \$127 billion each year since the agreement was signed.

Canada does not view trade surpluses or deficits as a primary measure of whether a trading relationship works.

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that our trade with the U.S. is balanced and mutually beneficial.

In 2016, Canada and the United States traded US\$635.1 billion in goods and services. That exchange was almost perfectly reciprocal. In fact, the United States ran a slight surplus with us of US\$8.1 billion.

And it is worth pointing out that Canada buys more from the U.S. than China, the UK, and Japan combined.

Trade is about people. It's about creating the best possible conditions for growth, for jobs, and for prosperity.

This is why we will all work hard in the coming weeks and months to modernize NAFTA.

This is why we are seized of this opportunity to make what is already a good agreement, even better.

Canada's objectives are clear: protect NAFTA's record as an engine of job creation and economic growth; modernize NAFTA to bring it up to date; take advantage of this opportunity to cut red tape for business and to harmonize regulations; make NAFTA more progressive particularly with regard to labour, the environment, gender and Indigenous rights; and uphold the existing elements in NAFTA that are key to our national interest.

Le Canada est - et a toujours été - un pays de commerçants.

Notre démarche découle d'une connaissance essentielle. Nous exerçons des activités commerciales, librement et équitablement, sachant qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un jeu à somme nulle.

Voilà qui m'amène à l'ALENA et du projet historique que nous lançons, en collaboration avec nos voisins, afin de moderniser cet accord historique en fonction du XXI^e siècle.

La zone de libre-échange nord-américaine est la plus grande zone économique au monde. Le Canada, les États-Unis et le Mexique représentent conjointement le quart du PIB mondial, alors qu'ils abritent sept % de la population mondiale. Depuis 1994, le commerce entre les partenaires de l'ALENA a grossièrement triplé; ce marché régional vaut maintenant dix-neuf billions de dollars et englobe quatre cent soixante-dix millions de consommateurs.

Grâce à l'ALENA, l'économie du Canada est deux virgule cinq % plus importante qu'elle ne serait autrement.

Les objectifs du Canada sont clairs: protéger l'ALÉNA comme créateur d'emplois et de croissance économique; moderniser l'ALÉNA pour la mettre à jour; utiliser cet opportunité pour couper la paperasse pour les entreprises et harmoniser nos règles; rendre l'ALÉNA plus progressiste, particulièrement en ce qui a trait aux normes du travail, à l'environnement, à l'égalité des sexes et aux autochtones; et maintenir les éléments de l'ALÉNA qui sont dans notre intérêt national.

Les relations économiques entre le Canada, les États-Unis et le Mexique sont les plus importantes, les plus efficaces et les plus mutuellement avantageuses du monde entier.

De bonnes bases entraînent de bons résultats, et c'est ce que nous obtiendrons.

Canada, the United States, and Mexico have a powerful shared interest in reaching a mutually beneficial agreement. Strong economic fundamentals are a compelling argument for bolstering what works, and improving what can be made better.

Good fundamentals lead to good results - and that is what we will achieve.