



October 2004

Canada-Mexico Partnership (CMP)

This year, Mexico and Canada celebrate the 10th anniversary of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the 30th anniversary of the successful Seasonal Agricultural Workers' Program (SAWP) and commemorate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

Over the past decade, Canada and Mexico have become important trading partners and we will continue to seek opportunities to build and make the most of the NAFTA, further enhancing North American competitiveness.

Our ties, however, go beyond trade and geography to bonds of friendship, confidence, and shared values between our governments and among our citizens. We share the objectives of peace, order, good government, social and sustainable development, trade and investment liberalization, economic growth, and common prosperity. We have found these goals to be a rich basis for dialogue and cooperation.

The *Partnership* which we launch today provides the opportunity to chart a way forward and enhance the strategic relationship between our two countries. It allows us to further our cooperation, establishing priorities on bilateral trade, investment, public-private sector partnerships, business to business links, exchanges on Smart Borders and enhanced security, good governance practices, education, institutional reforms, and citizen-focussed government.

The *Partnership* will be a high-level public-private forum which will strengthen bilateral economic and policy cooperation and promote private and public sector dialogue at senior levels. This initiative will serve as a mechanism for identifying policy areas in which we can facilitate cooperation and enhance opportunities for economic development and investment. Bringing together business leaders, key economic actors, and senior policy makers in this way will foster strategic networks and partnerships. It will enable both our business communities and governments to be more agile in their responses to the challenge of sustaining our prosperity and improving our competitiveness as North American economies, while enhancing our security and improving the quality of life of our citizens.

The *Partnership* will build on existing networks and strategic partnerships, in accordance with the following objectives:

- ⇒ To reinforce and build on existing commercial, political, and social links while fostering high-level relations among leaders in the public and private sectors of both countries;
- ⇒ To create opportunities for our respective small and medium-sized business communities;
- ⇒ To increase prosperity for both countries through the promotion of further trade and investment through a network of high-level business representatives;
- ⇒ To identify obstacles that are detrimental to trade and investment flows and make recommendations for their removal;
- ⇒ To enhance and increase bilateral cooperation between Canadian and Mexican institutions and agencies by focusing on tangible results;
- ⇒ To promote people-to-people links among cultural, research and academic groups;
- ⇒ To contribute to greater development in Mexico and Canada using private-public sector partnerships; and
- ⇒ To address, in a North American context, the challenge of global competitiveness.

The *Partnership* will be an association involving the Canadian and Mexican governments, along with our respective private sectors and policy and academic communities. As such it is of key importance that the Canadian and Mexican business, policy and academic communities be consulted and engaged as co-leaders, inviting them to join this extraordinary effort and to build on existing linkages and potential areas for increased cooperation.

To initiate the process, a bi-national working group involving key stakeholders will be created, starting discussions before the end of 2004 and developing an action plan for the Partnership by February 2005. The bi-national working group will report its findings and recommended action plan to leaders by June 2005.