

Joint Statement by North American Leaders



21ST CENTURY NORTH AMERICA: BUILDING THE MOST COMPETITIVE AND DYNAMIC REGION IN THE WORLD

We, the Leaders of North America, met today in Toluca, Mexico, to recognize the strength of our relationship and open a new chapter in our partnership. We are determined to promote inclusive broad-based economic growth for the well-being of our citizens, so that 21st century North America sets new global standards for trade, education, sustainable growth, and innovation. Our region is among the most competitive and dynamic in the world. We have a shared vision for its future, and a strong political, legal, and institutional framework to build upon.

Our countries are established democracies and share values and aspirations. Countless contacts among our societies bring us together. We generate close to 30 per cent of global goods and services. Our trade is at least 265 per cent larger than twenty years ago, when the North American Free Trade Agreement came into force, and is now worth more than one trillion dollars per year, while investment within the region has been multiplied by six. Our three economies benefit from each other's stability and complementarities, and a shared commitment to creating good jobs and opportunities for all of our citizens. Private investment is increasingly directed towards North America, in recognition of the competitive advantage of our integrated production and supply chains, and our highly skilled workforce.

Shared and Inclusive Prosperity

Our engagement as a region with the rest of the world has a direct impact on the competitiveness of our economies and the prosperity of our societies. We will continue to work closely on matters related to international trade, so that our integrated supply chains are deepened and strengthened. We will jointly promote trade and investment in those sectors in which the integration of our production chains serves as a distinct global advantage, and work together to highlight those advantages.

Our governments are committed to developing a North American Competitiveness work plan, focused on investment, innovation and increased private sector engagement. We seek to set new standards for global trade through the prompt conclusion of a high standard, ambitious, and comprehensive Trans-Pacific Partnership, as we promote further trade liberalization in the Asia-Pacific region.

We will develop a North American Transportation Plan, beginning with a regional freight plan and building on existing initiatives. We will also streamline procedures and harmonize customs data requirements for traders and visitors. We will facilitate the movement of people through the establishment in 2014 of a North American Trusted Traveller Program, starting with the mutual recognition of the NEXUS, Global Entry, SENTRI and Viajero Confiable programs.

Our governments will leverage the existing bilateral border mechanisms to enhance the secure movement of goods across North America, and promote trilateral exchanges on logistics corridors and regional development. Our governments will designate observers to attend meetings of the border management executive committees already in place. This approach will also be followed within the existing bilateral processes on regulatory cooperation. We will continue to protect and enforce intellectual property rights.

New Areas of Opportunity

The future success and competitiveness of our region depends on our ability to foster innovation, provide our citizens access to high quality educational opportunities and to technology, and promote a workforce with the skills necessary for success in the 21st century global economy. To help guide these efforts, our governments will engage stakeholders and academics to better assess and plan for the needs of North America's future workforce. We will promote joint research in national laboratories and universities, building connections between North American businesses, particularly entrepreneurs, and technology accelerators. We will first focus on entrepreneurship and innovation exchanges, and actions to advance the economic empowerment of women. Authorities responsible for these efforts will meet in an informal working group to seek greater coordination and collaboration among them.

Academic exchange and educational mobility have long contributed to the mutual understanding of our societies and of the promise of North America. We commit to increase the number of student exchanges from within the region in our respective higher education systems, in line with the United States' 100,000 Strong in the Americas Initiative, Mexico's Proyecta 100,000, and Canada's International Education Strategy. We will explore opportunities for further cooperation in this area.

Energy is a trilateral priority. Developing and securing affordable, clean and reliable energy supplies can drive economic growth and support sustainable development, as we shift towards a low carbon energy future. To build on recent progress in this area, our Energy Ministers will meet later in 2014 to discuss opportunities to promote common strategies on

energy efficiency, infrastructure, innovation, renewable energy, unconventional energy sources, energy trade, and responsible resource development, including the development of relevant technical studies.

Our countries will continue to work together to address climate change in pursuit of an ambitious and inclusive global agreement within the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, while also collaborating through complementary mechanisms like the Major Economies Forum, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas. In addition, we will intensify our efforts to promote an amendment to the Montreal Protocol to phase-down production and consumption of climate-damaging hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

We will continue to collaborate in the protection of our region's biodiversity and to address other environmental challenges, such as wildlife trafficking and ecosystems at risk. Our governments will establish a working group to ensure the conservation of the Monarch butterfly, a species that symbolizes our association.

Citizen security and global issues

We reaffirm our commitment to the principles of shared responsibility, mutual trust, and respect, in support of our domestic priorities, as we face together the challenges posed by transnational organized crime and other threats to the security of our citizens. As increasingly integrated neighbors, we recognize the need to collaborate effectively to counter global threats, such as international terrorism, and to protect our shared critical infrastructure.

The effective exchange of information and coordination among law-enforcement authorities will remain essential. We will continue to coordinate and pursue new areas of cooperation to counter drug trafficking, arms trafficking and other illicit trade, consistent with our laws and constitutions. To more effectively counter money laundering and illicit financial flows while ensuring the efficient interconnection of our systems, our authorities will enhance their dialogue on financial sector regulation and supervision. Our governments share a commitment to combating human trafficking in all its forms and will work toward improving services for the victims of this crime.

To strengthen regional security, we will continue to cooperate with our partners in Central America and the Caribbean, and with other countries in the hemisphere to promote development, economic growth and citizen security. We will provide capacity building support, and seek closer collaboration on financial inclusion and social safety nets, among other areas. We will broaden the scope of our efforts by including actions on disaster risk prevention and insurance, wildfire management, and access to affordable and clean energy, and will promote sustainable social development.

North America's response to the H1N1 pandemic in 2009 remains an example of timely and effective cooperation. We will build upon the North American Plan for Animal and Pandemic Influenza (NAPAPI) to strengthen our preparedness and response to future public health events.

North America will continue to develop collective solutions to global challenges. Our three countries will increase our already robust cooperation across the United Nations and other multilateral bodies. We will engage in the definition of the post-2015 development agenda with an inclusive approach that addresses inequalities and seeks to ensure that global objectives are pursued according to national standards of accountability. We support the Open Government Partnership, and we are committed to transparency and open government across the world. We will also continue to promote democracy, human rights and the respect of international law throughout the world and in the Americas, consistent with the values enumerated in the Inter American Democratic Charter.

Delivering on our agenda

The success of this vision will hinge on its follow up. Our governments will carry out periodic consultations on the implementation of our agreements, reporting to leaders on the progress of our efforts before each upcoming North American Leaders' Summit. Our countries will also develop a new outreach mechanism in 2014, through which experts and stakeholders will be able to share their perspectives on our agenda and propose new lines of action.

The collaboration between our governments, civil societies, academics, entrepreneurs, and other actors, has a direct and positive impact in the lives and wellbeing of our peoples. The future of North America is even more brilliant than its past and together we can make it the most competitive and dynamic region in the world.

President Obama and President Peña Nieto welcome Prime Minister Harper's offer for Canada to host the next North American Leaders' Summit in 2015.

Source: The White House,
Office of the Press Secretary <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/02/19/joint-statement-north-american-leaders-21st-century-north-america-build>