

## FPT Ministerial Report

**Date:** October 13, 2020

**Title:** FPT Ministers Responsible for International Trade Roundtable, via videoconference

**Departments:** Economic Development and Transportation

**Minister Responsible for Trade, David Akeeagok** represented by:

- Bernie Maclsaac, Deputy Minister. Supported by
  - Jonathan Alomoto, International and Internal Trade Officer

### Background

International Trade ministerial meetings are held on an ad-hoc basis, usually at the request of and hosted by the federal government.

The federal government has the mandate to negotiate international trade agreements. However, as these agreements affect the economies of provinces and territories and sometimes cover topics of provincial and territorial regulatory authority, pan-Canadian participation in the negotiation process is paramount. Technical and working-level consultations are ongoing at the officials'-level covering all ongoing international trade agreement negotiations and emerging issues.

The October 13 International Trade ministerial videoconference was hosted by the federal Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion, and International Trade, the Honourable Mary Ng.

The purpose of this ministerial videoconference was to introduce the new federal Minister to her provincial and territorial counterparts, and to identify opportunities to support Provinces and Territories in their international trade priorities following the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 1. Opening Remarks by Honourable Minister Ng

The federal Minister introduced herself to her PT counterparts and made remarks about the emerging challenges related to international trade that have resulted from the pandemic. These include the growing trend of protectionist measures by other countries and the importance the work of the Ottawa Group on World Trade Organization (WTO) Reform, alongside the need to maintain strong dispute

settlement procedures at the WTO. The host noted that Canada would be raising these issues at the upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) leaders' summit and the G20, as limiting global protectionism is vital for the maintenance of stable supply chains that Canada's economy is reliant on. Also noted was the impact of business and student travel, and the economic harm to the international education sector caused by the pandemic. The host also stressed the importance of maintaining a "team Canada" approach to international trade and noted that strengthening the federal-provincial-territorial partnership will be critical to ensure that Canada's economy recovers and continues to prosper. The host went on to note key successes, such as the successfully negotiation of trade agreements with all other G7 member states, and two-thirds of the global economy. Furthermore, the federal Minister highlighted several public and private sector initiatives that span her portfolio responsibilities. This included the growth of Canada's technology sector, including through international partnerships led by Provincial governments and the attraction of foreign talent to Canada.

## 2. Roundtable Discussion and Questions for Provinces and Territories

Minister Ng posed the following Questions to Provinces and Territories, who engaged in open discussion:

### *1. Federal resources supporting current exporters and Canadian companies to scale up to international markets*

- *What are your key international trade priorities following the COVID-19 pandemic? How can we best adapt our services and support to assist a broader range of exporters?*

### *2. Opportunities for F/P/T collaboration in support of business growth for Canadian companies of all sizes, including businesses owned by women, Indigenous people, and other underrepresented groups*

- *Accelerating digital capabilities is one way in which governments could help more companies adapt their business. What other new forms of exporting, business models, and global opportunities are you seeing?*
- *How can we better collaborate to adapt to the strategic imperatives of a post-COVID 19 world and to advance our collective international trade promotion, investment attraction and innovation interests?*

### *3. Sectors to pursue in international markets for recovery and growth*

- *In the current context, which markets and sectors in your province/territory are offering the best international potential?*

- *Are you seeing new sectors emerging and changes in traditional industries?*

Nunavut welcomed further support from the federal government in developing small businesses in Nunavut and supporting territorial economic growth, while highlighting the successes of the federal government's leadership in negotiating provisions regarding indigenous peoples into international trade agreements. Nunavut highlighted the export success of its fisheries sector and identified opportunities for federal collaboration to support market-diversification within Asia. Concerns were raised regarding impacts to Nunavut's tourism and cruise ship sector resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of international bans on fur and seal products on local community economies. Concerns were also raised regarding the reliance of Nunavut fisheries on Greenlandic ports, and noted that these must remain open to ships from Nunavut throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Nunavut welcomed an enhanced federal focus on accelerating digital capabilities, and noted that limited digital connectivity continues to hinder Nunavut's economic development.

New Brunswick noted the successes of transitioning to online environment, including the transition to virtual workplaces and education services, such as through one-on-one training and webinars. Concerns were noted regarding the impact of the pandemic and US protectionism on the forestry sector, blueberries, and lobster.

Newfoundland and Labrador noted the support that had been provided by the federal Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) and Export Development Canada (EDC). However, concern was noted regarding harm to international supply chains as a result of Brexit, indicating that without a transitional agreement in place between Canada and the UK, domestic fisheries would suffer. Concerns were raised regarding difficulties faced by the offshore oil sector.

Manitoba noted their protein strategy, including plant and animal exports to the US, China and Japan, but noted that federal support would be needed to develop EU market share. Furthermore, Manitoba highlighted its fast-growing technology sector, including the hiring of tech workers from Argentina to fill the capacity gap. The role of international students both in filling graduate gaps and in local economies was identified.

Ontario noted successes in recovering from the pandemic, including the recent creation of 175,000 new jobs, many in the manufacturing sector. Overall, noting that out of the 1 million jobs initially lost, the province has regained 840,000. Concerns were noted regarding US protectionism, including the Buy America strategy, the ongoing softwood lumber dispute, and resurfacing concerns regarding aluminium, steel and berries. Ontario's Premier would be meeting with US Governors in February 2021, and will intend to negotiate side agreements. Ontario noted

enhanced opportunities for its auto parts sector in the recently negotiated Canada-US-Mexico Agreement.

The Northwest Territories noted the importance of the US-Canada critical minerals strategy, and the positive socioeconomic impact of its diamond sector. Concerns were raised regarding the high cost of production, and the need to enter into partnerships with other provinces capable of supporting processing. Freshwater fish was also raised, but indicated federal support would be needed to further develop the sector.

Quebec reiterated Ontario's comments, noting that the strength of the provincial economic ecosystem is recovering. However, Quebec noted issues regarding exports, and the difficulty of developing new markets without the ability to engage in business travel, trade promotion, and business development activities. Quebec also raised concerns regarding global protectionism, indicating that they are not just seeing Buy America, but "buy everybody". Successes were noted in the aerospace and life sciences sectors.

Yukon noted that their economic rebound was positive, and that their resource sector is doing well, but welcomes further pan-federal/territorial collaboration on minerals files, including through supports with exporting via Alaskan ports. International students from India had contributed to local economic growth, and many had made Yukon their home.

British Columbia noted that they were in interregnum, but flagged BC high value-added products, and the importance of small businesses to the BC economy.

Nova Scotia noted the importance of digitization and ecommerce, and that they will be focusing on agriculture, agri-food, and the tech sector. Concerns were raised surrounding international political stability, including Canada-China-US relations. The Province noted successes in working towards 95% broadband connectivity, including rural areas, by 2021. Nova Scotia also highlighted the importance of internal trade in Canada's economic recovery.

Saskatchewan noted that they were in interregnum.

## **Related FPT Activity**

FPT meetings in which EDT is involved:

- FPT Committee on Trade (C-Trade) meetings, (International and Internal Trade Officer as C-Trade Representative, quarterly face-to-face meetings, regular teleconferences, FPT consultations, and emails). C-Trade is officials'-level working group by which Provinces and Territories are engaged supporting negotiation of Canada's international trade agreements and monitors emerging trade issues. Multiple working-level technical consultations.

## **Next Steps**

Honourable Minister Ng did not propose another meeting, but indicated interest in ongoing collaboration with Provinces and Territories.

## **Attachments**

Agenda  
Press Release

**FPT Ministers Responsible for International Trade Roundtable**  
**Hosted by the Honourable Mary Ng**  
**Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade**  
**Tuesday October 13, 2020, 11:30 am - 1:00 pm**  
**Via WebEx**

Proposed Agenda

Time	Agenda item
11:30-11:32 am (2 min)	Housekeeping and Technical Instructions
11:32-11:37 am (5 min)	P/T Rollcall & Family Picture
11:37 - 11:55 am (18min)	Opening Remarks by Minister Ng
11:55 am - 12:55 pm (60 min)	<p>Roundtable Discussion and Questions for Provinces and Territories - importance of international trade to COVID-19 economic recovery and the need to support existing exporters and encourage new companies to become exporters</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Federal resources supporting current exporters and Canadian companies to scale up to international markets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Q:</b> What are your province/territory's key international trade priorities following the COVID-19 pandemic? How can we best adapt our services and support to assist a broader range of exporters?</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Opportunities for F/P/T collaboration in support of business growth for Canadian companies of all sizes, including businesses owned by women, Indigenous people and other underrepresented groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Q:</b> Accelerating digital capabilities is one way in which governments could help more companies adapt their business. What other new forms of exporting, business models and global opportunities are you seeing? How can we better collaborate to adapt to the strategic imperatives of a post-COVID-19 world and to advance our collective international trade promotion, investment attraction and innovation interests?</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Sectors to pursue in international markets for recovery and growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Q:</b> In the current context, which markets and sectors in your province/territory are offering the best international potential? Are you seeing new sectors emerging and changes in traditional industries?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
12:55 -13:00 pm (5 min)	Closing Remarks by Minister Ng

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# Minister Ng concludes successful meeting with provincial and territorial trade ministers

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From: **Global Affairs Canada**

## News release

October 13, 2020 - Ottawa, Ontario - Global Affairs Canada

The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, today hosted provincial and territorial ministers responsible for international trade for a virtual meeting. They discussed how working together to strengthen and diversify international trade relationships will accelerate Canada's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minister Ng and her provincial and territorial counterparts spoke about the need for open supply chains and a strong, rules-based international trading system that Canadian businesses can rely on. They also noted the importance of advancing the transition to digital trade and e-commerce platforms for businesses of all sizes across the country.

Minister Ng underscored the importance of collaboration among all levels of government to help Canadian businesses of all sizes—in particular small businesses—explore new opportunities in international markets and access the full benefits of trade.

She highlighted Canada's inclusive trade strategy that aims to help and encourage everyone—including women, Indigenous peoples, visible minorities, young people, and LGBTQ2 entrepreneurs—to grow their businesses and reach new markets.

Minister Ng and her counterparts will continue working together as one Team Canada to support businesses and all Canadians as they continue to face challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Quotes

“It was great to bring together my provincial and territorial counterparts for a wide-ranging discussion on how we can harness international trade to build a more prosperous Canada. Supporting our exporters and promoting Canada as a destination for international investment will be critical to our economic recovery—as will our continuing work to protect the health and safety of Canadians.”

- *Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade*

## Quick facts

- In Canada, nearly two thirds of the national economy and millions of good Canadian jobs depend on international trade and investment.
- In the face of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Trade Commissioner Service continues to help Canadian businesses grow globally by connecting them with its funding and support programs, international opportunities, and network of trade commissioners in more than 160 cities worldwide.
- The Government of Canada has also implemented various support programs for enterprises of all sizes to help them overcome the current challenges. This support is made available through various entities, such as Export Development Canada and the Business Development Bank of Canada.
- As of December 2019, there were 1.31 million employer businesses in Canada, of which 1.29 million (98%) were small, 23,027 (1.8%) were medium sized, and 2,984 (0.2%) were large.

## Associated links

- [COVID-19 and Canada’s international trade](#)
- [Export Diversification Strategy](#)
- [Trade and investment agreements](#)
- [Canada’s Trade Commissioner Service](#)

## Contacts

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