

Dept. of Foreign Affairs
Min. des Affaires étrangères

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Canada is involved in trade negotiations on several tracks — global, regional and bilateral. On all of these fronts, our central policy objective remains the same — to achieve more open, rules-based markets anchored in the World Trade Organization (WTO). The fundamental reason for undertaking all this work is also the same: trade provides an essential stimulus to all economies and gives all of them more of everything than they would otherwise have — more goods, more services, more technology and more ideas. In addition, trade binds nations into a system of interdependence, thus helping to ensure more peace and stability worldwide, a key objective of our foreign policy.

While the public at large generally agrees that trade is a good thing, there has been growing concern in recent years about the links between trade and other public policy priorities such as environmental protection, improved labour standards, human rights, income inequality, job prospects and national sovereignty. At the same time, public attention has been gradually shifting away from trade policy to security issues and to social concerns such as health and education — areas that are linked to trade policy but that are not historically central to it. Trade, some might argue, is no longer the first priority in the public's mind, at least in Canada.



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