

Canada–Mexico Relations

Canada has a broader relationship with Mexico than with any other Latin American country. Implementing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been a priority but is only one aspect of the expanding relationship. A stronger partnership with Mexico is an important Canadian objective.

In multilateral forums, including the Organization of American States, the United Nations, and the Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC), Canada and Mexico co-operate increasingly in a range of areas, such as landmines and illicit drug trafficking. On Jan. 1, 2002, Mexico will become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and will assume the chair of APEC.

Frequent contact between the two governments is maintained at the highest level. Canada's Prime Minister has met three times with Mexico's President since the latter was elected in July 2000. The most recent meeting was at the APEC Summit in Shanghai in October 2001.

During an earlier meeting prior to the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April 2001, the two leaders issued a joint statement outlining their new agenda for Canada–Mexico relations, which focuses on shared commitment to promoting democracy and good government, strengthening civil society, protecting the environment, defending human rights, and building peace and prosperity within the hemisphere and around the world.

Ministerial contact has also been frequent. Since January 2001, Canadian ministers of Foreign Affairs, International Trade, Human Resources Development, Finance, Justice, Natural Resources, Canadian Heritage, Environment, and Labour have each met their Mexican counterparts. There is also strong co-operation between Canadian and Mexican independent institutions dealing with such issues as human rights, elections, and indigenous peoples.

Contact between Canadian and Mexican citizens has increased in recent years. About a million Canadians visit Mexico annually and 140,000 Mexicans visit Canada. Cultural and academic exchanges have expanded, including the support of seven Canadian studies programs in Mexican universities and a major Canadian film festival in Mexico City featuring 10 leading independent filmmakers. Another program allows Mexican workers to enter Canada during seasons when agricultural workers are in short supply. As a result of this program, Mexicans make up more than 50 per cent of temporary workers in Canada.

Mexico aims to improve its economic and social development and sees a reinvigorated North American partnership as the best means to achieve this. Mexico is undergoing significant political, social and economic changes and sees in Canada a valuable partner.