

The North American Commission on Labour Co-operation officially opened its Secretariat offices in Dallas in September 1995. Each country has also established a National Administrative Office to implement a co-operative work program, featuring tripartite (business-labour-government) participation in projects related to the three main areas of labour law in the three countries, namely industrial relations systems, employment standards, and occupational safety and health. The United States hosted the first Commission meeting in Washington in 1994 and Canada hosted the 1995 meeting. Mexico will host the 1996 meeting.

Accession to the NAFTA

The NAFTA was consciously designed as an outward-looking agreement, with the potential to be expanded to include new members who are willing and able to take on its obligations. Canada believes that membership should remain open to countries willing and able to undertake NAFTA's obligations, including the side agreements on environment and labour.

Canada has been an active proponent of Chile's accession to the NAFTA. Stronger economic ties with Chile will create more opportunities for Canadian trade and investment in this high-growth market. Negotiations to achieve Chile's accession to the NAFTA were officially launched in June 1995.

Despite a temporary delay due to the present lack of U.S. fast-track negotiating authority, the NAFTA partners have declared their determination to have Chile accede to the Agreement and are continuing discussions to this end. In the meantime, Canada and Chile have launched negotiations on an interim bilateral free trade agreement and parallel agreements on environmental and labour co-operation that will serve as a bridge to Chile's eventual full accession to the NAFTA.

Chile's market liberalization and economic stabilization programs have already resulted in important gains for Canadian business. According to preliminary trade figures for 1995, Canadian exports to Chile grew more than 22 per cent to \$386 million. Canada is the second-largest foreign investor in Chile, with total current and planned investments amounting to \$7.4 billion.

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