



news release

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PRIME MINISTER CAMPBELL SIGNS NORTH AMERICAN AGREEMENTS ON ENVIRONMENT AND LABOUR

The Honourable Tom Hockin, Minister for International Trade, announced this morning that Prime Minister Kim Campbell today signed the North American Agreement on Environmental Co-operation and the North American Agreement on Labour Co-operation.

U.S. President Bill Clinton and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari are also signing the agreements in their respective countries today.

Mr. Hockin, accompanied by Human Resources and Labour Minister Bernard Valcourt and Environment Minister Pierre H. Vincent, said the two agreements expand on commitments to high labour standards and environmentally sustainable growth made by the three countries in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The legal texts, which formalize the two agreements reached by Mexico, Canada and the United States on August 13, 1993, create the operating framework for co-operation on environmental and labour issues and the means to ensure that each of the three countries respects and enforces its environmental and labour laws.

"Our common goal is to improve living standards and working conditions for all North American workers," said Mr. Valcourt. "The labour agreement gives us an institutional framework in which to realize these goals."

Mr. Vincent noted that the agreement on environmental co-operation "reflects our belief that economic development must take place in a fashion that respects and protects the environment. In fact, good economic policy -- including trade policy -- and good environmental policy go hand in hand."

Mr. Hockin welcomed today's further step toward the implementation of the NAFTA and the export opportunities for Canadian workers that the NAFTA represents. "Exports mean growth and growth means jobs for Canadians," Mr. Hockin said.

Mr. Hockin also released the text of an understanding among ministers of the three NAFTA countries establishing a working group to facilitate the effective use of Chapter 8 of the NAFTA, dealing with import surges.

- 30 -

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