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## Canada signs free trade agreement with Colombia

### *Agreements on Improved Environmental and Labour Standards Also Part of Historic Deal*

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LIMA, PERU

Canadian businesses and exporters will have unprecedented open access to the Colombian market thanks to a historic new free trade agreement signed between Canada and Colombia today.

“In a time of Global economic instability free trade is more important than ever,” said Prime Minister Stephen Harper who witnessed the signing of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement with Colombian President Alvaro Uribe. “By expanding our trading relationship with Colombia, we are not only opening up new opportunities for Canadian businesses in a foreign market, we are also helping one of South America’s most historic democracies improve the human rights and security situation in their country.”

The Free Trade Agreement will provide greater market access for Canadian exporters of products such as wheat, pulses, barley, paper products, and heavy equipment. In addition the Agreement will provide greater stability and protection for Canadian businesses involved in oil and gas, mining, manufacturing, and financial services.

In addition to the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon and International Trade Minister Stockwell Day signed three other deals with their Colombian counterparts: the Labour Cooperation Agreement, the Agreement on the Environment and the Double Taxation Convention.

Under the Labour Cooperation Agreement, Colombia agrees to respect and enforce core labour standards such as the elimination of child labour, forced labour and workplace discrimination, as well as respect for freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively. The Agreement on the Environment commits Canada and Colombia to pursue high levels of environmental protection in their trading relationship. The Double Taxation Convention eliminates double taxation for individuals and companies from one country doing business or earning income in the other.

“While there is no denying that Colombians continue to live with serious security challenges, the improvements we have seen over the last several years gives us much reason for optimism,” said the Prime Minister.

“Deepening both economic and political engagement between our countries is the best way Canadians can support the citizens of Colombia in their efforts to create a safer and more prosperous democracy.”

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