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# news release

## Canada and Costa Rica Ministers of Labour hold first Ministerial Council meeting under the Canada-Costa Rica Agreement on Labour Cooperation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LIMA, PERU, December 12, 2002** - The Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Minister of Labour and Social Development Canada and Excellency Ovidio Pacheco Salazar, Minister of Labour and Social Security for Costa Rica held their first Ministerial Council meeting under the Canada-Costa Rica Agreement on Labour Cooperation (CCRALC). The Agreement came into force on November 1, 2002. The meeting took place during the 15th American Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Agreement was signed on April 23, 2001 and is a parallel accord to the Canada-Costa Rica Free Trade Agreement.

"I am pleased to have had the opportunity to hold this first Ministerial Council meeting with my colleague Mr. Pacheco Salazar. I look forward to building a strong relationship through this agreement to promote workers rights and promote labour standards both in Canada and in Costa Rica," said Minister Bradshaw.

The CCRALC commits both countries to the effective application of domestic labour law to a series of principles and rights, many of which are included in the 1998 ILO *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*. The principles in the ILO *Declaration* include freedom of association and collective bargaining; the abolition of forced labour and child labour and the elimination of discrimination in employment. Additional principles included in the CCRALC are minimum employment standards, prevention of occupational injuries and illnesses and compensation in cases of occupational injury or illness. The Agreement also includes a mechanism to allow the public to raise concerns about the effective application of labour law in the other country.

The two Ministers instructed officials from their respective Departments to begin the implementation of the Agreement. Under its terms, a program of cooperative activities will be developed to promote the achievement of the Agreement's objectives. Under this program, the Ministers agreed to focus on the improvement of the Costa Rican system of workplace inspections as well as the alternative dispute resolution system for settling individual or collective bargaining disputes.

A copy of the text of the Agreement is available at: <http://labour.hrdc->

[drhc.gc.ca/pdf/pdf\\_e/costarica\\_english.pdf](http://drhc.gc.ca/pdf/pdf_e/costarica_english.pdf).

For information on the Regional Meeting visit the ILO Web site at [www.ilo.org/ilc](http://www.ilo.org/ilc) 

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**Contact:**

Scott Naugler  
Office of the Minister of Labour  
Ph: (819) 953-5646

Linda Bergeron  
Labour Communications  
Ph: (819) 997-2508

(French version available)

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