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Joint statement on the launch of negotiations toward a comprehensive free trade agreement between Canada and the Mercosur member states

March 9, 2018 - Asunción, Paraguay - Ministers of the Mercosur member states, Jorge Marcelo Faurie, Argentina's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship; Aloysio Nunes Ferreira, Brazil's Minister of Foreign Affairs; Marcos Jorge de Lima, Brazil's Minister of Industry, Foreign Trade and Services; Eladio Loizaga, Paraguay's Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Rodolfo Nin Novoa, Uruguay's Minister of Foreign Affairs, met with the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne Canada's Minister of International Trade, on March 9, 2018, in Asunción.

At the conclusion of their meeting, the ministers agreed as follows:

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The ministers agreed to launch negotiations toward a comprehensive Canada-Mercosur free trade agreement (FTA). This represents a significant step toward deepening the important relationship between the Mercosur member states and Canada.

The ministers underscored the opportunity a comprehensive, progressive and commercially meaningful FTA presents for the mutual benefit of Canada and Mercosur. Strengthening ties through enhanced trade and investment flows is an integral step toward a shared interest in sustainable prosperity and a shared commitment to trade liberalization and open markets.

The ministers recognized the importance of advancing this initiative in an inclusive manner. Mercosur and Canada will seek to negotiate issues such as market access for goods and services, labour, the environment, trade and gender, micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, among others. Integrating these elements will reinforce a collective commitment to lasting economic growth and development for all people.

The ministers committed to pursue negotiations of an FTA in order to bring opportunities to the people of Canada and Mercosur without delay and have instructed officials to hold the first round of negotiations in Ottawa, Canada, from March 20 to 23, 2018.