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Mexico, the United States, and Canada Joint Statement on the First USMCA Deputies Meeting

January 13, 2022

Following the first meeting of Deputies under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA/Agreement), Mexico's Under Secretary of Foreign Trade, Luz María de la Mora, Deputy United States Trade Representative Jayme White, and Canada's Deputy Minister for International Trade, David Morrison, issued the following statement:

"Today, Mexico, the United States, and Canada held the first-ever meeting of Deputies under the USMCA. The meeting provided the Deputies the opportunity to review progress on the implementation of the Agreement since the inaugural meeting of the USMCA Free Trade Commission (FTC), convened by Ministers in May 2021. The Parties reaffirmed their commitment to making North America a resilient, inclusive, and competitive economic region with trade policies that foster equitable growth, promote innovation, help protect our shared environment, and benefit our societies.

During the meeting, the Committees established under the Agreement presented updates on their work to advance key implementation issues. Despite the challenges and difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committees have continued to meet both in person and virtually, including the Committees on Agriculture (comprising the Working Group for Cooperation on Agricultural Biotechnology), Competitiveness, Trade Facilitation, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), Temporary Entry, State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), Environment, the Labor Council, and the Advisory Committee on Private Commercial Disputes.

Mexico, the United States, and Canada also held substantive discussions on four broad, thematic issues, including: labor, environment, inclusive trade (including SMEs and competitiveness), and SOEs:

- **Labor.** The Deputies received updates from the Labor Council and discussed a key obligation in the USMCA—the importance of full implementation of the prohibition of trade in goods produced through forced labor. The Deputies recognized and embraced the opportunity that the Agreement provides the three countries to be leaders in combatting forced labor globally and to building a truly fair and free trading system. Through the discussion, Mexico, the United States, and Canada reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate on this critical issue and to fully implement the shared obligations to prohibit the importation of goods produced by forced labor. The Parties agreed to report concrete and measurable outcomes on implementing this key obligation at the 2022 FTC.
- **Environment.** The Deputies received updates from the Environment Committee and shared recent progress in implementing the Agreement's environment obligations. The Parties also discussed potential next steps to advance trade and environmental issues in the region, including through environmental law enforcement cooperation and convening an Environment Committee meeting and public session in 2022.
- **SMEs.** The Deputies stressed the importance of having the benefits of trade extend to all of our citizens. They pledged to continue working to make trade inclusive, ensuring that underrepresented and

underserved groups, such as women, youth, and Indigenous peoples, have the opportunity to be included in, and can benefit from, the USMCA.

The SME Committee presented its report and outlined activities planned for 2022 to support SMEs. These activities include, among others, training and best practices exchanges. The Deputies also noted that the SME Dialogue will convene in February in San Antonio, Texas with a group of diverse stakeholders to provide views on implementation of the Agreement.

- **Competitiveness.** Following the USMCA Workforce Development Event hosted by the George W. Bush Institute on December 13, 2021 in Dallas, Texas, Deputies agreed to continue this committee's focus on regional workforce development to further enhance the competitiveness of the region. The three countries pledged to each host follow up events in their respective countries in 2022. They also began discussing possible work on strategies to maintain North American supply chains resiliency in times of emergency.
- **State-Owned Enterprises and Designated Monopolies.** The Committee's report highlighted the negotiations on SOE disciplines at the sub-central level, and Deputies highlighted that the USMCA includes high standards and robust disciplines designed to address the trade distortions caused by the non-market-based activities of SOEs.

Mexico, the United States, and Canada agreed to continue advancing USMCA implementation and noted that, though there have been challenges, progress continues to be made under the Agreement. The Deputies agreed to advance regional economic recovery by strengthening North American integration. The Deputies noted that they would follow up to their respective teams to give additional guidance, and report progress to the Ministers before the FTC meeting later this year."