



COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION

RELEASED FOLLOWING COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION MEETING ON FEBRUARY 23 AND 24, 2004

THE COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION TAKES ACTION TO IMPROVE TRADE IN CANADA

VANCOUVER, February 24, 2004 – Canada’s Premiers are taking action to improve the flow of trade within Canada. Domestic trade accounts for \$232 billion in economic activity a year.

Premiers are demonstrating the provinces’/territories’ collective commitment to resolve long standing challenges related to domestic trade barriers by:

- **Reconfirming their commitment to internal trade and honouring all obligations under the current Agreement including timely nomination of panelists to dispute panels;**
- **Agreeing to move ahead with Crown Corporations Procurement as recommended by the Internal Trade Ministers which covers approximately \$20 billion in economic activity a year;**
- **Approving and releasing an ambitious Workplan that tasks provincial/territorial Ministers responsible for internal trade with a series of priority actions, including the areas of agriculture, energy and recognition of foreign credentials, with specific timeframes for their completion;**
- **Confirming that provincial/territorial Ministers responsible for internal trade will meet in early April to implement the short-term priority items. Short-term actions include improved dispute settlement and an assessment of gaps in coverage under the current Agreement. Ministers are tasked with a “whole of government” approach to examine internal trade matters both within and beyond the current Agreement to ensure progress is made in a variety of sectors; and,**
- **Directing provincial/territorial Ministers to meet regularly on internal trade, at least annually prior to the annual summer meeting of the Council of the Federation, and to provide regular progress reports on the Workplan to the Council.**

In order to ensure continued momentum, the Council of the Federation will remain closely involved in activities to address internal trade barriers. Premier Lord and Premier Doer will provide a report of the Ministers' activities to their colleagues at the next meeting of the Council in July 2004.

- 30 -

For more information:

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