

Prime Minister Stephen Harper



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Prime Minister Harper signals Canada's renewed engagement in the Americas

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Santiago, Chile

In a speech marking the 10th anniversary of the Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement today, Prime Minister Stephen Harper declared that reviving and expanding Canadian political and economic engagement in the Americas is a major foreign policy goal of Canada's New Government.

"We are a country of the Americas," Prime Minister Harper said. "Re-engagement in our hemisphere is a critical international priority for our Government. Canada is committed to playing a bigger role in the Americas and to doing so for the long term."

The Prime Minister told the audience of Chilean and Canadian business and political leaders, which included Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, that the Government has three key objectives in the Americas:

- First, to strengthen and promote Canada's foundational values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law;
- Second, to build strong sustainable economies through increased trade and investment linkages, as well as a mutual commitment to expanding opportunities to all citizens; and
- Third, to meet new security challenges, as well as natural disasters and health pandemics.

Prime Minister Harper noted that Canada and Chile are not only long-standing trade partners, but are also serving side-by-side in the United Nations stabilization mission in Haiti. "With a new model of partnership at the heart of Canada's approach to the Americas, we know we can strengthen hemispheric co-operation in support of peace, security and development," the Prime Minister said. "There is no better place for Canada to pursue a partnership than by building on the shared success of our relationship with Chile."



While in Santiago, the Prime Minister and President Bachelet signed the Canada-Chile Partnership Framework, which will deepen and expand relations between the two countries.

The visit to Chile is part of a week-long tour of the Americas that began in Bogotá, Colombia and will include stops in Barbados and Haiti.

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