

CAFTA welcomes commitments to maintain trade flows and establish contingency appeal arrangement for trade disputes

Ottawa, ON - March 28, 2020 - Dan Darling, President of CAFTA, issued the following response to a recent joint statement from the governments of Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Myanmar, New Zealand and Singapore affirming their commitment to keeping trade lines open, as well as news today that Canada and 15 WTO members are establishing a contingency appeal arrangement for trade disputes.

“As nations grapple with COVID-19 and its dramatic economic fallout, we welcome commitments by trading partners to keep trade lines open and refrain from imposing tariffs and non-tariff barriers thereby ensuring robust and resilient global supply chains remain operational.

“On behalf of Canadian agri-food exporters, which include a substantial portion of the supply chain currently under immense pressure, it is encouraging to see nations working together to ensure that cross-border trade continues to flow, and we urge Canada to continue this work with our key international trading partners to secure similar commitments.

“We’re also pleased to see that Canada and 15 other members of the WTO have established an interim arrangement to hear appeals and resolve disputes between trading partners. We welcome the progress to return some certainty and certainty to global trade rules three months after the paralysis of the WTO Appellate Body. It is important that we have assurance that trade rules are respected. Given the vital role the WTO’s dispute settlement system plays for Canadian exporters, we are hopeful that the full functionality of the Appellate Body is soon restored.

“While governments are rightly focused on fighting the spread of COVID-19, we must also recognize that unequivocal global coordinated efforts will be required post-pandemic to jump-start the engines of our economies for recovery to take root. History has proven that cutting tariffs, removing barriers, and facilitating the unfettered flow of trade can help spur growth and restore confidence for global economic recovery. As the head of the WTO recently stated, it will be important that countries tap into each other’s growth which will help economies recover more quickly than if we try to act alone.

“These announcements this week demonstrate that in times of crisis working together is the best option and that trade policy can and must be part of the solution.”

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CAFTA is the voice of Canadian agriculture and agri-food exporters, representing the 90% of farmers who depend on trade and the ranchers, producers, processors and agri-food exporters who want to grow the economy through better access to international markets. This includes the beef, pork, meat, grains, cereals, pulses, soybeans, canola as well as the sugar, malt, and processed food industries. The sectors CAFTA represents 90 per cent of Canada’s agri-food exports and support over a million jobs in urban and rural communities across Canada.

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