



Release

Date: January 16, 2009

For immediate release

PRIME MINISTER AND PREMIERS AGREE ON ACTION FOR THE ECONOMY

OTTAWA – Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Canada’s Premiers and Territorial Leaders today agreed to work together on a number of important actions to provide stimulus to the Canadian economy. The Premiers and Territorial Leaders also shared with the Prime Minister their priorities for the January 27 Federal Budget.

“Canada’s political leaders must work together on a stimulus plan that will help Canadian businesses, workers and families succeed so that Canada emerges from the global recession stronger than ever before,” said the Prime Minister.

The First Ministers discussed and agreed on the following themes and action items:

STRENGTHENING CANADA’S ECONOMY

- Meaningful new investments in budgets to support the Canadian economy in the short-term and that would benefit it in the long-term.
- Ensuring continued availability of credit. The First Ministers agreed to strike a working group of finance ministers to develop options on access to credit. This is an important step towards ensuring businesses have access to capital to expand and create jobs, and ensuring Canadians have access to borrowing to meet their needs.
- More action on securing Canadian pension plans. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the Government of Canada’s intent to make permanent changes to the framework for federally regulated pensions in 2009. Premiers and Territorial Leaders will be consulted on this process and will identify actions they can take in their jurisdictions.

ACTION FOR WORKERS AND THE UNEMPLOYED

- Amending two chapters of the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) that build on the work completed by the Council of the Federation. These amendments will

enhance full labour mobility by recognizing, across all jurisdictions, any worker certified for an occupation by a regulatory authority of one province or territory. The amendments also establish a clear and effective dispute resolution mechanism for the AIT.

- Identifying priority areas for progress on harmonizing business regulations and standards.
- Developing a common framework to recognize foreign credentials by September 2009, with an interim report by June 2009..
- Identifying new ways to provide effective and complimentary responses to workers and the unemployed, including:
 - Enhancements to existing programs to support workers.
 - Making existing programs more flexible and ensuring that any new investments will incorporate added flexibility and appropriate accountability.
- Taking quick action to ensure the Aboriginal labour force is well prepared for the future with skills training and support.

MAKING INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS

- Taking immediate steps to get shovels in the ground and to flow the money faster for infrastructure projects in the 2009 and 2010 construction seasons.
- Cutting red tape on infrastructure projects. Actions will include:
 - Simplifying the federal review process for applications under Building Canada and to flow the money faster.
 - Streamlining the regulatory and environmental approvals process to avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication.
- Accelerating Building Canada infrastructure projects on which provinces and territories are in agreement.
- Identifying ways Aboriginal people can benefit from infrastructure projects, including in terms of employment, skills upgrading and business opportunities.

The Prime Minister also informed his counterparts that the Government of Canada will move forward with a common securities regulator on a voluntary basis that respects constitutional jurisdiction, regional interests and expertise.

- 30 -

PMO Press Office: (613) 957-5555

This document is also available at <http://pm.gc.ca>