



Japan Canada Chambers Council

May 20, 2016

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.,
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister,

In 2014 the Canadian Chamber of Commerce together with the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry partnered to create the Japan Canada Chambers Council (JCCC). Drawing its membership from senior business leaders from both organizations, the JCCC works as a platform to build relationships and advocate policies to support Canada's bilateral trade and investment with the world's third largest economy. I am pleased to serve as the Canadian Chair of the JCCC, an honour I share with the Japan Chair, Mr. Shoei Utsuda, Counselor of Mitsui & Co.

Our members believe that unless urgent action is taken, the tremendous potential of the relationship between Canada and Japan will never move from opportunity to reality. Mr. Trudeau, as you meet with His Excellency Shinzo Abe during the G7 Leader's Summit, we urge you to raise the issue of reigniting bilateral trade negotiations through the Economic Partnership Agreement.

The JCCC strongly support the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as a means of promoting closer Canada-Japan ties. But the TPP is not enough. An increasingly volatile world economy, as well as the specter of a more protectionist United States, means that neither Canada nor Japan can afford to that the other for granted.

As you know, Canada and Japan have complementary economies, with the former's strength in energy, metals, agriculture and forest products aligning well with the latter's automotive and manufacturing sectors. The two Pacific Rim nations also have strong synergies in areas of mutual strength, such as scientific research, that could benefit from greater cooperation.

Yet despite the potential benefits, trade between Japan and Canada has stagnated. Exports from Canada to Japan have grown little more than 3% over the last decade, while Canada's imports from Japan have declined. There is good news - foreign investment from both sides show an upwards trend - but business will need help to capitalize on this opportunity.

Both the Japanese and Canadian governments need to place a higher priority on building a distant, albeit friendly, relationship into a close and mutually-beneficial partnership. We believe that successfully concluding bilateral trade negotiations between Canada and Japan would help to preserve and build upon the benefits of the TPP.

I have included in this letter a Communiqué from the JCCC's most recent symposium. The event took place in Vancouver, Canada on March 21, 2016 and drew approximately 200 participants from Canada and Japan's business, government and diplomatic communities to discuss new growth and cooperation between the two countries.

Mr. Trudeau, on behalf of the JCCC, our founding Chambers and our partners, I wish you a successful trip to Japan.

Sincerely,



Steve Dechka
Canadian Chair
Japan Canada Chambers Council

Enclosures (1)

cc: The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Minister of International Trade
Ms. Christine Hogan, Deputy Minister, Department of International Trade

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