

Ottawa Journal ? Canada's global leadership

Canada is positioned to be a strong and credible voice on key issues in our global community. Our prominence and global influence on the world stage continues to grow under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

In a time of global economic uncertainty, our Government has prioritized Canada's economic recovery and resulted in significant measures of economic success. With the creation of over one million net new jobs since the depth of the global recession, we have the best job growth record among all G7 members.

Our Government's investment in jobs, growth, and long-term prosperity has enhanced the resilience of the Canadian economy, our economic credibility, and in turn, demonstrated to the international community that Canada is a great place to invest. Our Government has remained focused on pursuing an ambitious and balanced trade agenda that will help Canada's economic recovery and ensure long-term prosperity. In October, our Government reached a free trade agreement with the European Union, a historic accomplishment for Canada's trade relations. It will boost Canada's economy by \$12 billion annually—the equivalent of 80,000 jobs—and Canadian businesses will have preferential market access to the EU's half a billion consumers. We also reached an agreement for free trade with South Korea which is expected to help grow our economy by \$1.7 billion per year.

In addition to increased jobs and economic activity, expanding Canada's free trade agreements also provides hard-working families more choice at a lower cost for everyday household goods.

We are also working to maintain and build on all of Canada's bilateral relationships. While in Malaysia, Prime Minister Harper signed a declaration of intent to conclude a new tax agreement between Canada and Malaysia to help promote trade and investment between the two countries. In an increasingly global community with shared concerns, our Government is also committed to helping ensure the safety and security of Canadians and our interests abroad. While in Malaysia, Prime Minister Harper renewed our commitment to enhance security cooperation between the two countries for the safety of all our citizens. Prime Minister Harper also announced Canadian support for four projects that will strengthen Malaysia's ability to counter international crime, human smuggling, and organized crimes. These projects build on what we've already done in the global community to help combat money laundering, terrorist financing, corruption, tax evasion, and other crimes.

Canada's growing prominence on the world stage has also afforded us the opportunity to take a leadership role within the international community to address issues of human rights and equality, while promoting Canadian values of freedom, democracy, and rule of law. Our Government introduced the Office of Religious Freedom to promote Canadian values of pluralism and tolerance in our global community. The Office is working with like-minded partners to raise awareness and develop policies and programs to protect religious minorities under threat, to oppose religious hatred and to promote tolerance.

Prime Minister Harper has also demonstrated real leadership in addressing the health challenges and disadvantages faced by women, infants, and children in the poorest of countries, in launching the Muskoka Initiative on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health with G8 countries in 2010.

Thanks to the Muskoka Initiative and subsequent global action, maternal and child mortality rates are declining. However, there is still more work to be done.

Canada hosted the Summit on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. Through this Summit, we are accelerating our health initiatives and continuing to push this issue into the forefront. Indeed, our Government announced that Canada will be providing an additional \$3.5 billion in funding for various projects to help children and mothers in the developing world.

As we strengthen ties and promote economic prosperity, Canada is positioned to lead on the world stage and promote Canadian values. Our Government is delivering on the priorities of Canadians.

By David Tilson, MP