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Ottawa Journal: opening new markets for business in Canada

Small and medium-sized businesses represent 99 per cent of all businesses in our great country and account for nearly 90 per cent of jobs in the private sector. Indeed, Canadians rely on small and medium-sized enterprises to make a living and help make ends meet. This is why our Government has announced a number of new measures to help these businesses expand, create jobs, and explore new export opportunities for their goods and services around the world.

One such measure is a new export market development program. This program will provide direct financial assistance to entrepreneurs who are pursuing new export opportunities and markets, especially in high-growth, emerging markets. It has the potential to assist between 500 and 1,000 Canadian exporters per year.

In addition, the Canadian Trade Commission Service (TCS) will receive new staffing and programming resources to further assist Canadians doing business with the world. With 160 trade offices in Canada and around the world, the TCS does important work ? such as providing export advice and guidance to entrepreneurs. In addition, this new expansion will provide the opportunity to add new trade commissioners in priority markets going forward.

These announcements build on our Government's strong record of support for small and medium-sized business. We've kept taxes low, maintained the freeze on Employment Insurance premiums, and worked to reduce red tape and administrative burdens.

Meanwhile, with one in five jobs directly dependent on exports, these announced measures also build on our Government's support for trade. Since 2006, we've concluded trade agreements or concluded negotiations of trade agreements with 38 countries, bringing the total to 43. This includes our agreement with the European Union, which is the world's largest economy and the world's largest importing market for goods. Indeed, our Government has delivered the most ambitious pro-trade plan in our country's history.

Our Government is helping create jobs and opportunities for hard-working Canadians by delivering results for small and medium-sized businesses.

By David Tilson, MP