

Hon Tim Groser

Minister of Trade



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Media Statement

Mexico joins Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations

Minister of Trade Tim Groser this morning welcomed the announcement that Mexico will join Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States and Viet Nam in negotiations to conclude a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement.

“Since New Zealand is acting as the Depository of the TPP agreement, I have today issued a formal statement on behalf of all TPP parties welcoming Mexico to the TPP negotiation. I would like to add New Zealand’s own warm congratulations to our Mexican colleagues,” Mr Groser says.

“New Zealand’s vision for the TPP has always been to create a high quality, comprehensive, 21st century trade agreement, including comprehensive market access outcomes, which over the time will act as a platform for wider Asia-Pacific trade liberalisation and economic integration,” says Mr Groser.

“Today’s announcement is a shot in the arm for the TPP, which underscores the importance of the opportunity this negotiation creates. It takes us another step closer to that regional goal.”

Mexico is New Zealand’s largest goods trading partner in Latin America and 27th largest trading partner overall, with total trade worth NZ\$636m in the year to December 2011. It is a significant market of interest for New Zealand trade and investment. Mr Groser says the inclusion of Mexico in TPP will drive the economic relationship forward and is consistent with our goal of expanding markets for New Zealand’s exports and investments.

TPP Ministers met earlier this month in Kazan, Russia to take stock of progress in the negotiations. They welcomed the solid progress made to date and instructed negotiators to work as quickly as possible to achieve the comprehensive, high standard outcome directed by TPP Leaders in Honolulu last November.

“Today’s developments are a further demonstration of the groundswell of momentum continuing to grow behind this agreement,” says Mr Groser. “I expect further substantial progress to be achieved at the next TPP round, to be held in San Diego early next month.”

Mr Groser added that, as indicated in the announcement, the next step with regard to Mexico joining the negotiations would be for the nine current TPP participants to

complete any applicable domestic legal procedures. Following this – which may take a period of some weeks or months, as applicable – Mexico would formally join the negotiations as a new participant.

“I am aware that Mexico’s decision to join will be closely watched by other regional trade partners, particularly Canada and Japan.” Mr Groser says that the two countries were in different positions with regard to their TPP membership bids. Japan had not formally requested to join the negotiation, although it was keenly interested in TPP’s progress and was consulting domestically on next steps.

Canada had formally signalled its interest in joining the negotiation and was engaged in intensive consultations with the TPP parties about its entry. “Our position on the membership bids of Canada and Japan remains as we’ve previously stated. We look forward to welcoming both to the negotiation once we have established procedures for their entry that are acceptable to their governments and to ours. In both their cases, New Zealand will wish to ensure that the high level of ambition as contained in the statements of Leaders and Ministers in Honolulu late last year is maintained.”

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