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Archived - September 2016 Mandate letter: International Trade

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities.



September 23, 2016

The Honourable Michael Chan
Minister of International Trade
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1N3

Dear Minister Chan:

Welcome back to your role as Minister of International Trade. As we mark the mid-point of our mandate, we have a strong and new Cabinet, and are poised to redouble our efforts to deliver on our top priority — creating jobs and growth. Guided by our balanced plan to build Ontario up for everyone, we will continue to work together to deliver real benefits and more inclusive growth that will help people in their everyday lives.

We embark on this important part of our mandate knowing that our four-part economic plan is working — we are making the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history, making postsecondary education more affordable and accessible, leading the transition to a low-carbon economy and the fight against climate change, and building retirement security for workers.

Building on our ambitious and activist agenda, and with a focus on implementing our economic plan, we will continue to forge partnerships with businesses, educators, labour, communities, the not-for-profit sector and with all Ontarians to foster economic growth and to make a genuine, positive difference in people's lives.

Collaboration and active listening remain at the heart of the work we undertake on behalf of the people of Ontario — these are values that ensure a common purpose, stimulate positive change and help achieve desired outcomes. With this in mind, I ask that you work closely with your Cabinet colleagues to deliver positive results on initiatives that cut across several ministries, such as our Climate Change Action Plan, Business Growth Initiative, and the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy. I also ask you to collaborate with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government to drive digital transformation across government and modernize public service delivery.

We have made tangible progress and have achieved the following key results:

- Successfully organized past Premier's business missions, including to the United States, China, India, and Israel and the West Bank — not only leveraging opportunities for Ontario businesses abroad, but also increasing awareness of what Ontario has to offer. These missions resulted in 209 signed agreements with Ontario businesses, generating close to \$2.92 billion that will create up to 2,050 jobs.
- Ministerial business missions to China generated \$228 million in investments to the province as well as jobs in agri-food, clean technology, restaurant services and commercial property development.
- Additional ministerial business missions to Mexico, the United Kingdom and Germany identified over 592 qualified leads and \$36.6 million in potential sales.
- In 2015-16, the ministry assisted an estimated 1,575 new and experienced exporters prepare for international markets and brought 700 companies on international trade missions to foreign markets. These companies anticipate \$835 million in potential export sales opportunities, directly attributed to these missions.

Your mandate is to promote new economic, business and cultural partnerships across Canada and around the world, and strengthen Ontario's growth and competitiveness through trade policy. Your specific priorities include:

Developing International Trade Strategies that will Help Ontario Businesses Increase and Diversify Exports, and Become More Productive

- Establishing a trade strategy that identifies new markets and can direct trade missions to and from jurisdictions with the highest potential to open up new export opportunities.
- Expanding Ontario's international footprint through deeper in-market relationships, new tactics, and building the business case for new international trade representatives.
- Seizing the untapped potential of incoming commercial delegations by taking a leading role in welcoming and supporting the delivery of inbound missions with strategic partners.

Engaging with Businesses and Key Stakeholders to Support Increased Trade and Growth through Globalization

- Establishing and working towards clear targets for market diversification and the number of Ontario companies actively exporting.
- Working with Ontario companies to stimulate their interest in exporting through a multi-faceted marketing and outreach campaign.
- Leading engagement with all stakeholders within the trade ecosystem (for example, municipalities, the federal government, business leaders, associations and all chambers of commerce) to ensure full alignment to drive increased exports.

Supporting the Growth of Ontario Businesses

- Supporting Ontario firms to scale-up and start or expand exports and become more productive by offering them a continuum of services including introduction to exporting markets and in-market supports.
- Collaborating with the Minister of Economic Development and Growth to ensure that Ontario's International Trade Export Strategy and Business Growth Initiative's Scale Up programs work together to help more Ontario enterprises access international markets.

In addition to the priority activities above, I ask that you also deliver results for Ontarians by driving progress in the following areas:

- Continue to develop Ontario as a destination for investment and trade by reaching out to our global partners, including deploying key trade missions.
- Continue to build on the existing linkages created by Ontario's and Canada's international trade and investment offices around the world.
- Continue to work across government to ensure strong collaboration and information-sharing — and develop comprehensive analytical, business and market intelligence to underpin all Ontario trade activities.
- Work with the federal government to negotiate and implement important new international trade agreements, while addressing the sensitivities of key Ontario sectors, such as agriculture and auto, and ensuring access to global markets in an increasingly competitive environment.

As you know, taking action on the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is a priority for our government. That is why we released *The Journey Together*, a document that serves as a blueprint for making our government's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples a reality. As we move forward with the implementation of the report, I ask you and your fellow Cabinet members to work together, in co-operation with our Indigenous partners, to help achieve real and measurable change for Indigenous communities.

Having made significant progress over the past year in implementing our community hubs strategy, I encourage you and your Cabinet colleagues to ensure that the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs and the Community Hubs Secretariat, at the Ministry of Infrastructure, are given the support they need to continue their vital cross-government work aimed at making better use of public properties, encouraging multi-use spaces and helping communities create financially sustainable hub models.

Responsible fiscal management remains an overarching priority for our government — a priority echoed strongly in our 2016 Budget. Thanks to our disciplined approach to the province's finances over the past two years, we are on track to balance the budget next year, in 2017–18, which will also lower the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. Yet this is not the moment to rest on our past accomplishments: it is essential that we work collaboratively across every sector of government to support evidence-based decision-making to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient and sustainable, in order to balance the budget by 2017–18, maintain balance in 2018–19, and position the province for longer-term fiscal sustainability.

Marathon runners will tell you that an event's halfway mark is an opportunity to reflect on progress made — but they will also tell you that it is the ideal moment to concentrate more intently and to move decisively forward. At this halfway mark of this government's mandate, I encourage you to build on the momentum that we have successfully achieved over the past two years, to work in tandem with your fellow ministers to advance our economic plan and to ensure that Ontario remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I look forward to working together with you to build opportunity and prosperity for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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