

First USMCA Deputies Meeting

File date: Jan 24th, 2022

Institutional Context

The United States, Mexico, and Canada reached an agreement to modernize the NAFTA agreement into a 21st century, high-standard agreement. The new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) will support mutually beneficial trade leading to freer markets, fairer trade, and robust economic growth in North America. The key issues it focuses on include Intellectual Property, Digital Trade, Financial Services, Environment, Agriculture, and Trade. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) launched a USMCA Center to serve as a one-stop-shop for information concerning the USMCA. The USMCA Center coordinates CBP's implementation of the USMCA Agreement, ensuring a smooth transition with a consistent and comprehensive guide to our internal and external stakeholders.

First USMCA Deputies Meeting¹

The First USMCA Deputies Meeting took place on January 12th, 2022. The meeting was made up by the Mexican Under Secretary of Foreign Trade, Luz María de la Mora; Deputy United States Trade Representative, Jayme White; and Canada's Deputy Minister for International Trade, David Morrison. The discussions circled around four thematic issues:

Labor

- The Deputies received updates from the Labor Council and discussed the importance of full implementation of the prohibition of trade in goods produced through forced labor.
- Mexico, the United States, and Canada reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate and to fully implement the shared obligations to prohibit the importation of goods produced by forced labor.
- The Parties agreed to report concrete and measurable outcomes on implementing this key obligation at the 2022 FTC.

Environment

- The Deputies received updates from the Environment Committee and shared recent progress in implementing the Agreement's environment obligations.

¹ Mexico, the United States, and Canada Joint Statement on the First USMCA Deputies Meeting. (2022). United States Trade Representative.

<https://ustr.gov/about-us/policy-offices/press-office/press-releases/2022/january/mexico-united-states-and-canada-joint-statement-first-usmca-deputies-meeting>

- The Parties also discussed potential next steps to advance trade and environmental issues in the region, including through environmental law enforcement cooperation and convening an Environment Committee meeting and public session in 2022.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and Competitiveness

SMEs

- The Deputies stressed the importance of having the benefits of trade extend to all citizens. They pledged to continue working to make trade inclusive, ensuring that underrepresented and underserved groups, such as women, youth, and Indigenous peoples, have the opportunity to be included in, and can benefit from, the USMCA.
- The SME Committee presented its report and outlined activities planned for 2022 to support SMEs. These activities include, among others, training and best practices exchanges.
- The Deputies also noted that the SME Dialogue will convene in February in San Antonio, Texas with a group of diverse stakeholders to provide views on implementation of the Agreement.

Competitiveness

- Following the USMCA Workforce Development Event hosted by the George W. Bush Institute on December 13, 2021 in Dallas, Texas, Deputies agreed to continue this committee's focus on regional workforce development to further enhance the competitiveness of the region.
- The three countries pledged to each host follow up events in their respective countries in 2022.
- They also began discussing possible work on strategies to maintain North American supply chains resiliency in times of emergency.

State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and Designated Monopolies.

- The Committee's report highlighted the negotiations on SOE disciplines at the sub-central level, and Deputies highlighted that the USMCA includes high standards and robust disciplines designed to address the trade distortions caused by the non-market-based activities of SOEs.