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Press Release

Ottawa – November 25, 2014 – The XXth Canada-Mexico Interparliamentary Meeting concluded today following two days of meetings and discussions between 40 Canadian and Mexican parliamentarians.

These annual meetings, hosted by the Speakers of both parliamentary chambers in Canada and Mexico, have been held alternately in Canada and Mexico since 1975, and provide parliamentarians with an opportunity to exchange views and ideas on key issues facing the two countries.

The XXth Canada-Mexico Interparliamentary Meeting took place in the context of the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, 40 years of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, 20 years since the implementation of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and 10 years of the Canada-Mexico Partnership.

In the opening ceremony, the Honourable Pierre Claude Nolin, Speaker *pro tempore* of the Senate of Canada, said: “Everyone in this room knows that the ties between our countries have grown stronger in the last 20 years in particular. But we also know that we have not even approached the limits of what our relationship could be.”

The Honourable Andrew Scheer, Speaker of the House of Commons, stated: “We, as parliamentarians, have an important role to play in this cooperation, and regular exchanges are an essential component of our overall partnership. Through the debates at interparliamentary meetings, we are better positioned to make decisions that are in each other’s interest.”

Senator Marcela Guerra Castillo, President of the Committee of Foreign Affairs (North America) of the Senate of the Republic of the United Mexican States, declared “Mexico and Canada have progressively increased their political, economic, social and cultural ties and, as of today, we are well suited to advance towards the establishment of a genuine strategic bilateral partnership based on the quest for competitiveness and progress”.

Deputy Eloy Cantú Segovia, President of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico, affirmed “We are not here to commemorate the great achievements of the past in the Mexico-Canada relation, but to conserve them, and to improve them”.

This year’s business sessions focused on two themes of the Canada-Mexico relationship: economic cooperation and competitiveness: a strategic vision for North America; and issues affecting mobility and human linkages.

Regarding economic cooperation and competitiveness, Mexican and Canadian parliamentarians examined structural reforms in Mexico and new opportunities for increased investment and integration between the two

countries, not only in the energy sector but also in telecommunications, infrastructure and logistics and customs. The agricultural sectors and bilateral trade in agri-food were also discussed, as were the benefits and progress made in the 20 years since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Parliamentarians also considered how both countries can improve the quality of life of their citizens through their participation in multilateral commercial coalitions, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Pacific Alliance.

The benefits that the establishment of a free trade zone in North America has had in the strengthening of the bilateral relation were highlighted during this first business session. The Canadian and Mexican positions also coincided on the need for greater efforts to facilitate investment in infrastructure in order to take full advantage of the strategic geographical position of North America and propel its competitiveness before other regions. Both delegations concurred in deepening our ties in the energy sector, so that governments, the private sector and civil society organizations can exchange best practices in regard to an efficient and sustainable exploitation of energy resources in North America, with the ultimate goal to guarantee prosperity for our peoples.

In respect to the Transpacific Partnership (TPP) round of negotiations, it was agreed that this represents an opportunity to enhance our commercial ties and to increase North American competitiveness in the Asia Pacific region.

During the second session, which addressed mobility and human linkages, delegates highlighted the importance of cooperation between both nations to maximize the exchange of knowledge and capacity building of their human capital. They noted that this could be achieved through an increase in student, academic and scientific skill building and technical exchange programs. Participants also were in accord that pandemic preparedness and response was one of the many areas that could be targeted for such cooperation. They also reviewed the benefits that the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program - celebrating its 40th anniversary - and the Skilled Workers Program have brought to both Mexico and Canada, and exchanged views on the North American Trusted Traveller Program.

The Canadian participants were receptive to the call to continue the efforts towards the implementation of new programs aimed at facilitating and expediting the process for Mexican citizens to obtain a visa to visit Canada, with the ultimate goal of one day lifting the visa requirement. All concurred that the trilateral accord to establish a North American Trusted Travelers Program was a step in the right direction and it was agreed that our governments should explore more options to remove existing obstacles to human mobility between our countries.

Parliamentarians from both countries underlined the need to increase educational and scientific exchange programs between Canada and Mexico in sectors in which our economies are complementary, such as automotive, aerospace, farming machinery, and energy industries. They also coincided in that it would be beneficial to ratify the bilateral Convention on Air Transportation to improve mobility and enhance our logistical connections.

Parliamentarians from both countries expressed their satisfaction on the state of our bilateral relation and confirmed the importance of parliamentary diplomacy as a mechanism which contributes to deepen the link between our nations on the ground of mutual recognition and respect.

Parliamentarians from both countries acknowledged the Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, Speaker of the Senate of Canada, who has announced his imminent retirement from political life, and whose final act of international protocol was to serve as host of this Interparliamentary Meeting, as he did at the XVIth and XVIIIth editions of this mechanism for dialogue between Canada and Mexico, at which the ties of friendship between the two nations were significantly strengthened.

Both delegations agreed to meet in Mexico for the XXI Interparliamentary meeting, to continue this dialogue.

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