

Joint Statement of the Labor Council United States – Mexico – Canada Agreement

Virtually
June 29, 2021

The Labor Council (the Council) of the United States – Mexico – Canada Agreement (USMCA) convened its first meeting on June 29, 2021. Pursuant to Article 23.14 of the USMCA, the Council may consider any matter within the scope of the Labor Chapter and perform other functions as the Parties may decide. The Council is composed of senior governmental representatives from trade and labor ministries, as designated by each Party.

The Council meeting was held via videoconference and hosted by the United States. Ms. Thea Lee, Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor, and Mr. Joshua Kagan, Acting Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Labor, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, led the U.S. delegation. Mr. Rakesh Patry, Director General of International and Intergovernmental Labour Affairs, Employment and Social Development Canada, and Mr. Andrew McCracken, Director of North American Trade Policy, Global Affairs Canada, led for Canada. Mr. Alejandro Encinas Nájera, Head of the Unit of Labor Policy and Institutional Affairs, Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare, and Mr. Ricardo Aranda Girard, Director General for International Trade Disciplines, Secretariat of the Economy, led for Mexico.

During the meeting, Parties noted the importance of the commitments in the Labor Chapter and expressed their desire for effective implementation of the Chapter. The Council discussed the domestic mechanisms, institutions, and procedures that each Party is employing to advance the fulfillment of the Labor Chapter's provisions. In addition, the Council held in-depth discussions on several topics, including: (1) the ongoing implementation of Mexico's recent historic labor law reform; (2) the Agreement's requirement that each Party prohibit the importation of goods into its territory from other sources produced in whole or in part by forced or compulsory labor; (3) key labor policies for migrant workers; and (4) areas for ongoing and future cooperation and technical capacity building. The Parties expressed their strong desire to continue collaborating on matters addressed in the Labor Chapter.

A public session of the Council was held on the afternoon of June 29. The Council provided an opportunity for workers, employers, civil society organizations, and the general public to discuss matters related to the implementation of the Labor Chapter of the USMCA. The Parties noted the value that the public session provided in enhancing transparency and facilitating the exchange of information with the public regarding the implementation of the Labor Chapter's obligations.