
Centre for International
Governance Innovation



Canada's Trade Policy Agenda: Looking Ahead

Ottawa, November 17
The Rideau Club

International trade is a crucial driver of Canada's economy and as a small open economy, Canada has long recognized the importance of sound international rules and institutions. Canada has long supported and benefited from the GATT, the WTO and agreements such as NAFTA. However, the world has changed dramatically since progress was made at the WTO and since NAFTA was ratified. Moreover, globalization is facing strong headwinds and several countries are experiencing strong protectionist pressures. Leaders advocating mercantilist trade policies, notably the United States, lead some governments. Other countries, such as China, are pursuing large-scale industrial policies with strong protectionist elements in order to create national champions. In certain sectors of the global economy, few global firms are becoming ever larger and dominant, threatening competition. At the same time, new technologies such as digitization, automation and artificial intelligence are developing rapidly and in ways that will change how economic production and exchange will take place in the future, potentially distorting economic policies in areas such as trade, taxation, competition and regulation.

What should Canada do in this context? What strategies should Canadian trade policy follow moving forward? It has never been more important for Canada to get trade policy right in a rapidly changing global trading environment. This symposium will critically examine Canada's trade policy agenda and address key challenges facing the Canadian government as a new trade policy agenda is developed. More specifically, Canada needs to be clear on the international economic and trade agenda that it will pursue in the next decades so that it can take advantage of the opportunities that technological changes will create while managing the current and future challenges posed by such changes when combined with political, social and economic pressures in favour of protectionism.

We will focus on three important themes: 1). The symposium will critically examine the ideas and questions around "progressive trade" 2). Challenges of increased protectionism 3). Challenges of new technologies, including impact of automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other technological change on trade and investment. The symposium will conclude with an examination of Canada's Trade Policy Agenda: Looking Ahead.

AGENDA

- 7:15 – 8:00 a.m. Registration and Breakfast
- 8:00 – 8:15 a.m. **Introductory Remarks**
- 8:15 – 9:45 a.m. **Progressive Trade**
This session explores how Canada's new progressive trade agenda compares to other visions for inclusive trade and examines the application of 'progressive trade' in Canada to date. It also explores how Canadian trade policy might embrace progressive elements such as human rights and gender more systematically in the future and considers the role of emerging economies and developing countries in this debate.
- Moderator: **Patrick Leblond**, Associate Professor and Associate Director, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, CN-Paul M. Tellier Chair on Business and Public Policy, University of Ottawa, and Senior Fellow, Centre for International Governance Innovation
- Speakers: **Margaret Biggs**, Matthews Fellow in Global Public Policy, School of Policy Studies and Department of Political Studies, Queen's University
Judit Fabian, Postdoctoral Scholar, The School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, and Visiting Researcher, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa
Meredith Lilly, Simon Reisman Associate Professor, International Affairs, The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, and Senior Fellow, Centre for International Governance Innovation
- 9:45 – 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:00 – 11:30 p.m. **Challenges of new technologies, including impact of automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other such technological change on trade and investment**
Rapidly developing new technologies, such as digitization, automation and artificial intelligence are changing how economic production and exchange will take place in the future, affecting economic policies in areas such as trade, taxation, competition and regulation. Moreover, some countries are employing industrial policy to protect domestic firms and establish a lead in dynamic industries while global firms have emerged to dominate certain industries and threaten competition. What should Canada do in this context? More specifically, Canada needs to be clear on the international economic and trade agenda that it will pursue in the next decades so that it can take advantage of the opportunities that technological changes will create while managing the current and future challenges posed by such changes when combined with political, social and economic pressures in favour of protectionism.
- Moderator: **Hugh Stephens**, Executive Fellow, The School of Public Policy, and Senior Fellow, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

Speakers: **Robert D. Atkinson**, President, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation
Emily J. Blanchard, Associate Professor, Business Administration, Tuck School of Business, Dartmouth College
David Crane, Columnist, The Hill Times

11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. **Keynote Lunch - The Politics and Reality of US Trade Policy**
Caroline Freund, Senior Fellow, Peterson Institute for International Economics

12:30 – 2:00 p.m. **Challenges of Increased Protectionism**
This session moves us beyond the pro-free trade versus anti-free trade dichotomy. Recent and ongoing challenges of increased protectionism highlight the need to move beyond neo-liberalism and neoclassical economics as the basis of trade policy. However, what is the right balance for a small open economy? In particular, what is the right balance for Canada? This session is searching for the right mix of ideas about what the key priorities and strategies of Canadian trade policy should be in this environment. The session brings together different perspectives in order to start a dialogue about what the right mix of Canadian trade policy might look like.

Moderator: **Stephen Tapp**, Deputy Chief Economist, Export Development Canada

Speakers: **Susan Aaronson**, Research Professor of International Affairs, Cross-Disciplinary Fellow, George Washington University
Eugene Beaulieu, Program Director, International Economics, The School of Public Policy, University of Calgary
Patricia Goff, Associate Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Senior Fellow, Centre for International Governance

2:00 – 2:30 p.m. Networking Break

2:30 – 3:45 p.m. **Canada's Trade Policy Agenda: Looking Ahead**
In light of the above, what are the trade policy options for Canada? This session includes short speaker presentations followed by an open discussion with the audience on the future of Canada's trade policy.

Moderator: **John M. Curtis**, Executive Fellow, The School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, Founding Chief Economist, Global Affairs Canada, Senior Fellow, C.D. Howe Institute, and Senior Fellow, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development

Panelists: **Wendy K. Dobson**, Professor and Co-Director, Institute for International Business, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto
Jonathan T. Fried, Coordinator, International Economic Relations, Global Affairs Canada

3:45 p.m. **Concluding Remarks**