

PM highlights Government's 2010 accomplishments

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Ottawa, Ontario



As 2010 comes to a close, Prime Minister Stephen Harper today highlighted some of the Government's most significant achievements over the past year.

"2010 has been a great year for Canada. Our number-one priority was and continues to be the economy, protecting jobs and providing economic stability and financial security for Canadians," the Prime Minister said.

Our Government's Economic Action Plan saw thousands of new projects get underway in communities right across Canada, helping put over 440,000 Canadians back to work since July 2009. While the global recession persists and the economic recovery remains fragile, our Government's Economic Action Plan is helping Canada emerge from the global economic crisis faster and stronger than most other major industrial countries.

"The values of hard-working Canadians - living within your means and reducing waste and duplication to keep taxes low - will continue to guide us as we move forward," added Prime Minister Harper.

2010 was also a monumental year for Canada on the international stage.

- All eyes around the world were on Canada in 2010 as we welcomed the world to the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Canada was filled with pride as Canadian athletes delivered some of the most exciting moments in Canadian sporting history, including winning a record 14 gold medals, the most ever by a Winter Olympics host country, and the first Canadian gold medal won on home soil.
- As host of the G-8 and G-20 summits, Canada showed leadership on the world stage. At the G-8, Prime Minister Harper's Muskoka Initiative on child and maternal health, which will save the lives of countless women and children in developing countries,

brought together countries and charitable foundations and organizations. In recognition of Canada's critical role, the World Health Organization recently asked Prime Minister Harper to co-chair the UN Commission on Information and Accountability for Women and Children's Health which will begin its work early in the New Year. As chairman of the G-20 Toronto Summit, the Prime Minister generated a consensus among the leaders of the world's major economies on credible and growth-friendly plans to deliver fiscal sustainability, establishing firm targets to reduce national deficits by 50 per cent by 2013 and reduce debt loads by 2016. Progress was also made on reforming the financial sector and strengthening international financial institutions, which remains an essential element in restoring global economic growth.

- Canada was one of the first countries to respond to the earthquake in Haiti, deploying civilian and military emergency management experts within hours of the crisis. Immediate humanitarian assistance was delivered, and Canada was among the countries leading emergency relief and reconstruction efforts. Canada continues to support the people of Haiti and remains committed to longer-term reconstruction. Canadians demonstrated the generosity for which we are known through personal donations to relief efforts, donations that were matched by our Government.
- In Afghanistan, Canadian troops and civilian personnel, our international partners and the Afghan people continue to demonstrate tremendous courage and dedication in a collective effort to rebuild Afghanistan as a more secure, better-governed and more prosperous nation that will never again be a base for terrorism against Canada or its allies. Canada also announced a new post-2011 non-combat role, focussed on four key areas: investing in the education and health of Afghan children and youth; advancing security, the rule of law and human rights; promoting regional diplomacy; and delivering humanitarian assistance.
- In trade, along with the long list of negotiations with countries such as Korea, Ukraine, Turkey, the Caribbean Community and the European Union, our Government passed legislation for a Free Trade Agreement with Colombia, and launched negotiations towards a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with India. As well, the Harper Government continued to expand foreign markets for Canadian farmers.

On the domestic front, the Harper Government took important steps to protect Canadian consumers, make our streets and communities safer, and improve the lives of Canadian families. These efforts included:

- Introducing legislation to protect children against sexual predators and crack down on child pornography.
- Introducing legislation to crack down on human smugglers who abuse the generosity of our immigration system.
- Introducing legislation that would end sentence discounts for multiple homicides, putting a stop to early parole for murderers.
- Introducing the Standing Up for Victims of White Collar Crime Act, which would impose tougher sentences on those convicted of fraud.
- Passing legislation that lengthens the time required before a person is eligible to apply for a pardon, including for those convicted of serious personal injury, including manslaughter, and child-related sexual offences.

- Introducing legislation that would further reform the pardons system by replacing pardons with a more restrictive "record suspension" and making those convicted of sexual offences against minors - or those convicted of three indictable offences - ineligible for a record suspension.
- Passing the Tackling Auto Theft and Property Crime bill to crack down on auto theft and trafficking of property that is obtained by crime.
- Prohibiting the sale of flavoured cigarettes and banning polycarbonate baby bottles that contain bisphenol A.
- Announcing plans to launch new, stronger messages for cigarette and cigar package labelling to encourage smokers to quit, as well as establishing a toll-free quitline.
- Passing the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act to help keep Canadians and their children safe from various types of hazardous consumer products, including cribs, jewellery and toys.
- Endorsing a joint framework with provinces and territories to curb childhood obesity, and setting joint goals to reduce Canadians' sodium intake.
- Reducing the tax burden for families by introducing the Canada Child Tax Credit.
- Supporting self-employed workers by providing access to certain EI benefits.

"This has been a momentous year for Canada and we can all be proud of the many successes achieved both here at home and around the world," concluded the Prime Minister.

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