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PRIME MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT IN TORONTO

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(APPLAUSE)

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Bonjour à tous. Good morning. First of all, thank you, Rob, for your kind introduction, for your leadership on this particular announcement. I want to thank also as well Don Gaine, our gracious host here at Harmony Printing. In fact, I want to thank all the management and employees of Harmony Printing for hosting us today. I do have an important announcement, but before I begin, I have obviously a sad note I just want to take a moment on, and that is to express our heartfelt sorrow at the news of the death of Sergeant Ryan Russell of the Toronto Police. This is a terrible incident that does serve unfortunately to remind us all of the dangerous work that our law enforcement officers undertake on our behalf. For Sergeant Russell, we want to have him, his family, his friends and his colleagues in our thoughts and prayers today, and we would ask everyone to do the same.

Dans un instant j'annoncerai ce que fait notre gouvernement pour réduire les formalités administratives, la paperasse exigée aux petites entreprises.

I am here today to make an announcement about what our government is doing to reduce the burden of red tape on small business. For all kinds of reasons, red tape has multiplied over the years, but most dangerously, sometimes simply because of an old attitude in some circles that government knows best. At the same time, we understand that as Conservatives, today's government is expected to bring a healthy scepticism about government to Ottawa, and to ask hard questions about what government can do and cannot do. Unlike some, Conservatives don't believe that

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government is always the answer. In fact, we believe that sometimes the best thing government can do is simply get out of the way. (APPLAUSE)

Nous entendons des propriétaires des petites entreprises qui affirment passer trop de temps à remplir des formulaires et à traiter de la paperasse, des chevauchements et des dédoublements. Alors que notre grande priorité est l'économie, nous devons réduire le fardeau qui constitue la paperasse et libérer les petites entreprises pour qu'elles puissent faire ce qu'elles font de mieux, prendre de l'expansion, progresser, et ainsi créer des emplois.

As the Canadian Federation of Independent Business often reminds us, not just during Red Tape Awareness Week, but all year around, paperwork in and of itself is unproductive. When governments overregulate, bureaucracies expand and the paper burden grows, the red tape becomes too much for individual entrepreneurs to bear alone. And they have needed to turn to a growing number of lawyers, accountants and consultants for help. Those billing costs are adding up, reducing opportunities for growth, and being passed on to us as consumers at the cash register in practically everything we buy. It is a hidden tax and a silent killer of jobs. In other words, cutting red tape is a most effective way to show that we are making government work for people, not the other way around. No government department has been spared in our efforts to focus on customer service, to eliminate pointless rubber stamps, and to get rid of unnecessary intrusions. In 2007, as part of a government wide initiative, we challenged the Canada Revenue Agency to find ways to reduce the paperwork burden. How many suggestions do you think we received from that particular exercise? A dozen, a hundred, a thousand? The fact is, the CRA identified more than 8000, yes,

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8000 obsolete or non-essential forms, filings and other obligations imposed on business. That's a lot of unnecessary paperwork, and it has been cut. In December, our government passed the necessary legislative amendments so that Canadian business can take advantage of this reduced red tape in 2011. Let me give you one example of a meaningful change. Small businesses used to submit GST files to the Canada Revenue Agency for each quarter. Now it's been cut down to once per year. And a deal with the government of Ontario means that Ontario businesses no longer have to file separate income tax returns for two governments. Now it's just one form for both.

De même, nous avons facilité aux exportateurs la vente de leurs produits en supprimant 1600 exigences désuètes ou inutiles imposées aux entreprises par l'Agence des services frontaliers du Canada. Grâce à ces changements, les entreprises peuvent apprendre et respecter plus facilement les règles. Nous avons donné de l'expansion à (inaudible), guichet unique en ligne de renseigne facile...qui renseigne facilement sur les permis et les licences dont les entrepreneurs ont besoin pour lancer et faire croître leurs entreprises.

To a large extent, Canada's economic action plan itself, our program of stimulus projects, has been a success, because we cut through previously existing red tape to make sure the money hit our economy in a timely manner. And quick turnarounds are just as important to business. As you know, the global recovery is still fragile, so we must keep working to ensure that small and medium-sized businesses can keep driving the economy forward.

Le gouvernement a déjà pris des mesures relativement à notre engagement de réduire de 20 pour cent le fardeau de la paperasse des

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petites entreprises. Mais cela n'a été qu'une première étape. Aujourd'hui nous entendons réduire encore davantage ce fardeau en mettant sur pied la Commission de réduction des formalités administratives. Les commissaires sont présents ici aujourd'hui et entreprennent immédiatement leur travail.

Our government has already delivered on the Paper Burden Reduction Initiative, our commitment to reduce the paper burden for small businesses by 20 percent across government departments. Today we're moving forward to further reduce that burden by launching the Red Tape Reduction Commission. Most of the commissioners are here now, and their job starts today. Our Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism, Rob Moore, will chair the commission. He will work with five other Members of Parliament, Dean Allison, Maxime Bernier, Lois Brown, Cathy McLeod and Chris Warkinton. As well, the commission will include six outstanding small business people representing every region of the country, including the North. They are Catherine Swift on behalf of the CFIB, Bella Ho, Jean Belanger, Shirley McLean, Gord Peters and Dennis Prud'homme. First of all, let's give all these people a hand for their willingness to participate in this exercise. (APPLAUSE) This commission will travel from coast to coast to coast to hear from entrepreneurs, people who deal with red tape, and can speak on how its impact on their own businesses can be reduced. After a first meeting today, their first public consultation will take place on Wednesday in Kamloops. The commission will issue its preliminary report this spring and its final report this fall.

La commission remettra un rapport préliminaire au printemps, puis son rapport final cet automne au ministre Day pour sa considération. À partir de ces rapports, le gouvernement réévaluera la

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meilleure façon de réduire encore davantage les formalités administratives, de sorte que les entrepreneurs puissent passer moins de temps à remplir des formulaires et à passer plus de temps à créer des emplois.

Let me just conclude by saying once again – I know I say this everywhere I go, but saying once again – that although the Canadian economy is continuing to grow and create jobs, we're in a global recovery that remains very fragile. By focusing on the economy, by reducing taxes on employers, and by continuing to find ways to reduce the burdens that government places on small business, we are delivering on our commitment to stand up for Canadians. Merci beaucoup and thank you once again to everybody participating in this exercise. (APPLAUSE)

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