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SOURCE: PCO

DATE: JANUARY 6, 2012

REFERENCE/ RÉFÉRENCE: 0601DOC2

LOCATION/LIEU: EDMONTON, AB

TIME/ HEURE: N/A

LENGTH/DURÉE: 7:45 MINUTES

PRIME MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT IN EDMONTON

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TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Premier ministre du Canada) : Merci beaucoup, et merci, chers collègues, pour cette présentation.

Thank you, Steven, for your kind introduction. Also, thank you, so many colleagues, for coming here today: to Brent, to Blaine, to Laurie, Michelle, I see a couple of others there. Thank you all for... thank you all for coming out. I appreciate it. Greetings also to some special guests, to Minister Whittick, to Captain Ferguson, to Mr. Maloney, to Mr. Blakely, Mr. Gerling, ladies and gentlemen.

We have a very important announcement today, as you know, because among the milestones in Canadian history are places that are synonymous with the men and women of the Canadian Forces, places that are synonymous with courage and sacrifice. Queenston Heights, Vimy Ridge, Juno Beach, Kap'Yong, I could name many others. But history, of course, continues, and events in recent years have produced new bywords of Canadian heroism: Panjwahi, Argandhab, and Libya, of course, places that some of the people in this very room have served in. Contained in each of these chapters in the history of our country are the stories of individual men and women, the heroes of Canada's Armed Forces. The milestones of their lives in uniforms are very much the milestones of our history. But the milestone for them that often goes unnoticed is the transition from active duty to civilian life. And a key part of that transition is finding a good new job.

C'est pourquoi je suis très heureux d'annoncer officiellement le lancement du programme du Régiment aux bâtiments Canada, un programme pour nos anciens combattants.

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For this reason I'm happy, I'm very happy today, to announce the launch of a new program to help our Canadian heroes find new ways to contribute to their families and to their communities, and that program is Helmets to Hardhats Canada. This... (APPLAUSE) This new initiative is a partnership between our government, the provinces, the building trades unions, and the private sector.

Cette nouvelle initiative donnera un accès exclusif à des emplois et de la formation aux anciens combattants, ainsi qu'aux réservistes qui sont en transition, et qui souhaitent carrière dans l'industrie de la construction.

Helmets to Hardhats will provide exclusive access to jobs and training opportunities in the construction industry for veterans, including disabled veterans, and for reservists and transitioning members of the Canadian Armed Forces. And it will help train the skilled trades people we need so badly to keep our economy strong, including, of course, skilled workers for the energy sector here in Alberta. I'd like to offer special thanks today, special thanks and congratulations to Canada's building trades unions who really have been spearheading this initiative. Please give them a big hand, everybody. (APPLAUSE) Thanks are also due to TransCanada for their very generous contribution to help get this program started. We're grateful also to the province of Alberta for joining us today in launching Helmets to Hardhats. Though it's just getting started, the idea makes perfect sense. And as more partners get involved, we're going to see the logic literally at work. Because when people serve in our Armed Forces, among other things, they become equipment operators. If you can drive a tank, why not drive a bulldozer? If you can drive a LAV, why not drive a Kenworth? Forklifts work the same

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everywhere, and so do backhoes. So in terms of transitions, Helmets to Hardhats will be a natural fit for many military veterans, allowing them to take advantage of a new set of civilian opportunities that build on the skills they acquired while in uniform.

La prochaine étape est de réunir le plus de partenaires possibles afin d'ouvrir de nouveaux horizons aux hommes et aux femmes qui ont porté notre uniforme.

Our task going forward is to get as many partners as possible involved in this new program. Now, ladies and gentlemen, while of course we have a special responsibility to support our veterans, our government continues to work hard to provide new opportunities for all Canadians. As we've said repeatedly, the economy has been and will remain our number one priority. Canada has been coming through the global recession better than most, much better than most, in fact, in fact, countries around the world are looking at us as a model. For the fourth year in a row, the World Economic Forum says our banks are the soundest in the world. Forbes Magazine ranks Canada as the best place on the planet for businesses to grow and create jobs, and the OECD and the IMF predict our economy will again be among the leaders of the industrialized world over the next two years. But as we have seen all too clearly these past few months, the global economic recovery remains extremely fragile. Canada is not immune to the problems afflicting economies outside of our country. And so we must not and we will not become complacent.

Notre gouvernement continuera à prendre des mesures pour protéger les Canadiens, créer des emplois, et jeter les bases pour une croissance à long-terme.

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Our government will continue taking action to protect Canadians, to create jobs, and delay the foundations for long-term growth. Since the recovery began, Canada's Economic Action Plan has helped create almost 600,000 net new jobs. But there's more to be done. We remain concerned about the number of Canadians that are still out of work, and we need to keep protecting and promoting our advantage in the struggling global economy. That's why we're implementing the next phase of Canada's Economic Action Plan.

Nous maintenons les taxes et les impôts bas, nous investissons dans la formation, et nous augmentons nos échanges commerciaux à travers le monde.

We're keeping taxes low, we're investing in training, and we're expanding Canada's trade in the world's fastest growing markets. And we will continue to make the decisions necessary to ensure this country's economy will keep growing over the long term. In closing, ladies and gentlemen, I know you all agree, and I know Canadians agree that the men and women who have served our country in uniform have earned our deepest gratitude and our highest respect. Our government is working hard to provide our military personnel past and present, and their families, with the care, services, and financial support they need and deserve. Today's announcement is just the latest step we've taken to act on that commitment, but is also part of our larger ongoing effort to create jobs and growth for all Canadians. I want to just end by thanking everyone who's here today. All of the groups here represent a tremendous partnership that is launching a program of value, not just to men and women who have served our country proudly, but a program that is of ultimately could be of great value to the Canadian economy, so thank

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you, everybody, for your participation in this today. Merci beaucoup.
(APPLAUSE)

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