



NEWS RELEASE

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHIEF EXECUTIVES ♦ CONSEIL CANADIEN DES CHEFS D'ENTREPRISE

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CEO COUNCIL WELCOMES COMPETITION PANEL REPORT, CALLS FOR SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS POLICY AGENDA

Today's report from the federal *Competition Policy Review Panel* gives Canadians a solid blueprint for action that can deliver stronger economic growth, better jobs and a higher quality of life in the face of intense global competition, says the *Canadian Council of Chief Executives* (CCCE).

"Canada's prosperity is at stake, and all Canadians stand to benefit if our governments move swiftly to implement this balanced and forward-looking competitiveness agenda," said Thomas d'Aquino, CCCE Chief Executive and President. "The sooner we act, the sooner we will strengthen Canada's competitive position in the face of growing international risks and uncertainties."

Mr. d'Aquino congratulated the Panel for taking a broad, strategic approach to the challenges of global consolidation and the recent takeovers of several large Canadian-based enterprises. "The best defence against the disappearance of Canadian champions is to build more of them," he said. "The Panel has put forward a comprehensive and compelling strategy for growing more global success stories in Canadian communities."

The CCCE is the senior voice of Canada's business community, representing 150 chief executives and leading entrepreneurs from all major sectors and regions of the country.

Mr. d'Aquino praised the Panel for challenging Canadians from all walks of life to raise their sights and to seize the opportunities of economic globalization. "Despite all of the positive economic news that Canadians have enjoyed in recent years, as a country we have become dangerously complacent about a wide range of emerging challenges to our quality of life," he said. "The Panel's report serves as an urgently needed wakeup call. And as the Panel itself points out, there is no time to waste."

He added that many of the questions tackled by the Panel's report have been debated by Canadians for more than two decades. "We all know the issues. How do we position Canada for global success? How do we foster private-sector innovation? How do we create a culture of entrepreneurship? How do we build better universities? How do we strengthen our cities? On all of these issues, there is now a strong national consensus -- and every reason for our policymakers to implement the Panel's recommendations with a minimum of delay."

Mr. d'Aquino noted that the competitiveness agenda put forward by the Panel closely reflects the CCCE's own work on competitiveness over the past 30 years. Beginning in the early 1980s, for example, the Council was Canada's private-sector leader in the campaign for North American and international trade liberalization, recognizing that more open competition would provide a powerful spur to Canadian innovation and productivity. Since then, on issues as diverse as inflation, government deficits, taxation, the environment, labour market strategies and regulation, Council members have shown an unyielding commitment to policies that will enhance Canada's standing in the world by strengthening the country's ability to compete internationally for jobs, investment and talent.

Two years ago, in a report titled *From Bronze to Gold: A Blueprint for Canadian Leadership in a Transforming World*, the CCCE urged parliamentarians of all stripes to work together and to think big about how to position Canada for greater success in the future. "We believe in Canada's immense potential with an open global economy," Mr. d'Aquino said. "But as we said in *From Bronze to Gold*, Canadians must show more determination and creativity than ever before if we want our children to prosper in the decades ahead." Mr. d'Aquino noted in particular the Panel's calls for action in the areas of:

- **Tax reform** – lowering corporate income taxes, eliminating capital taxes, reducing personal income taxes for lower and middle income Canadians, and harmonizing provincial sales taxes with the GST;
- **Skills development** – supporting excellence in post-secondary education and reforming Canada's immigration processes to meet labour market needs;
- **Building global businesses** – focusing public policy for small and medium-sized enterprises on firms that demonstrate the desire and capacity to grow internationally;
- **Corporate governance** – giving directors of Canadian public companies the same powers as their counterparts in the United States when assessing takeover offers;

- **Canada’s Economic Union** – eliminating all internal barriers to the free flow of goods, services and people within three years, and harmonizing federal and provincial environmental assessment policies and procedures;
- **Canada-United States relations** – embracing as Canada’s top trade priority the need to move goods and people securely and efficiently across the Canada-United States border;
- **International trade and investment** – setting an ambitious timeline to conclude foreign trade and investment agreements with priority countries, incorporating comprehensive business input;
- **Regulation** – assessing all regulations against competitiveness impacts, and harmonizing wherever possible product and professional standards with the United States;
- **Innovation and Intellectual Property** – ensuring R&D and innovation policies support both domestic and global investment, and that new copyright legislation, patent laws, and counterfeit and piracy laws reward creators and further competition and innovation.

Founded in 1976, the CCCE is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to the goal of making Canada “the best place in the world in which to live, to work, to invest and to grow.” CCCE members lead companies that collectively administer \$3.5 trillion in assets, have annual revenues of more than \$800 billion, and are responsible for the vast majority of Canada's exports, investment, research and development, and training.

The members of the CCCE’s Executive Committee are: Chair, Gordon M. Nixon, President and Chief Executive Officer, Royal Bank of Canada; CCCE Chief Executive and President Thomas d’Aquino; Honorary Chair Richard L. George, President and Chief Executive Officer of Suncor Energy Inc.; and Vice Chairs Dominic D’Alessandro, Paul Desmarais, Jr., Jacques Lamarre, Hartley T. Richardson and Annette Verschuren, the chief executives respectively of Manulife Financial, Power Corporation of Canada, SNC-Lavalin Group Inc., James Richardson & Sons, Limited and The Home Depot Canada and Asia.

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