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March 20, 2020

## Prime Minister and Ministerial Briefing: COVID-19 updates

### Prime Minister's Remarks

- The Canada – U.S. border will be closed to non-essential travel as of midnight tonight.
- A flight repatriating Canadians from Morocco will leave this weekend. Other airlifts will occur shortly.
- Announced a new reciprocal agreement with the U.S. to return all irregular immigrants that cross the U.S. – Canada border.
- Announced a new mobilization initiative with industry to combat COVID-19 by massively scaling up of production of medical supplies. Government will support companies already manufacturing supplies + provide support to companies that want to re-tool to produce medical supplies, rather than what they currently produce. Also announced the creation of new Federal procurement streams to buy needed supplies.
  - Ministers Bains and Anand will update in more detail on this later today.
  - “If you own a business and you’re wondering what you can do, please reach out”.
- The Government received 500,000 applications for EI this week, compared to 27,000 the week before.

### Media Q&A – Select Questions Only

- Is Canada considering a full lock-down?
  - We are considering all options, nothing is off the table. We will announce further measures as needed.

### **Minister Bains – Further Details on ‘Plan to Mobilize Industry to fight COVID-19**

- Government is initiating a ‘Plan to Mobilize Industry to fight COVID-19’ that will partner with industry to greatly increase domestic supply of COVID-19-related supplies.
- All existing Innovation, Science and Industry research and industrial-support programming (like SIF and the Innovation Superclusters) will be reoriented to include a specific focus on COVID-19.
  - All applications under those programs will be condensed and approvals given more quickly.
- A portal will go live on the Industry Canada website today, where companies can let the Government know their capacity to help.
- Government has already signed three letters of intent with medical companies that can help by, respectively, rapidly scaling up productions of ventilators, diagnostic tests, and protective equipment for the healthcare sector.
- Government will invest heavily to increase domestic production of COVID-19 solutions.

### **Minister Anand**

- Public Services and Public Procurement Canada is standing up a centralized procurement program for COVID-19-related supplies – i.e. medical gowns, ventilators, N-95 masks.
- Supplies are purchased centrally and disbursed to the Provinces.
- Planning is ongoing to meet the needs of future demand, not just current need – seeking to be over-prepared.

### **Ministers Feeland/Blair – Border Closure**

- Valid visas for students and temporary foreign workers will be recognized despite the border closure, but they will need to self-isolate for 14 days after crossing the border.
- In many cases of policy-making, we are choosing speed over precision. Not every single detail of all our policies in this context will be immediately available. We apologize for that, and will work to overcome it.
- The partial border closure will be in place for 30 days and renewed as needed.

**Dr. Tam – Chief Medical Officer / Minister Hajdu**

- Update on new cases, etc.
- There is a Fed-Prov supply-sharing agreement in place, so that medical supplies can be shifted where they are most needed.
- Social distancing provides essential time for medical researchers to create other solutions to COVID-19 – need everyone to keep up with social distancing to buy time.