

Prime Minister's remarks updating Canadians on Canada's Plan to Mobilize Industry to fight COVID-19

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Good morning everyone.

At the beginning of the crisis, our government announced a plan to mobilize industry so that we could quickly produce the items we need, right here in Canada.

Since then, companies from all across the country have volunteered to help us and we make significant progress every week.

I would therefore like to start today by providing an update.

First, we have signed a contract with GL Chemtec in Oakville to ensure the supply of chemical products that are essential to testing.

As certain activities start up again, we must strengthen other measures, like testing and contact tracing.

We must therefore ensure that our healthcare professionals have the right tools to administer more tests and analyze them.

We also signed two new contracts to make sure our frontline workers can continue to do their jobs safely.

Joseph Ribkoff, a clothing manufacturer based out of Dorval, will be providing us with 1.2 million made-in-Canada medical gowns, with deliveries starting in July.

And the Stevens Company, a medical supply distributor in Brampton, will be supplying 15 million shoe covers as well as 5 million disinfectant wipes, all made in Canada.

Over the past few months, our government has helped companies re-tool their manufacturing facilities and massively scale-up production to meet the demands of this crisis.

And I want to thank every entrepreneur and every worker who stepped up to

contribute to this fight.

As we start to reopen and some people head back to work, the need for personal protective equipment and other essential supplies like hand sanitizer and disinfectant will continue to grow.

And we're making sure we're ready for that.

On Saturday, a ship carrying 160,000 litres of hand sanitizer arrived in Vancouver and we're expecting seven more ships with hand sanitizer in the coming days.

We also have almost 1 million face shields and more than 7 million pairs of gloves on their way to the provinces and territories.

And, to connect businesses looking for PPE with suppliers, today we're launching a PPE supply hub website.

We also created new, innovative procurement streams to allow more businesses to develop solutions and products Canadians need because of this pandemic.

We've always known that Canada is home to some of the best innovators in the world and it's been great to see so many of them use their talent and know-how to help our communities during this crisis.

In April, we put out a call asking for creative, made-in-Canada prototypes that will help current and future outbreaks of COVID-19 and similar public health emergencies.

And, in just two weeks, we received over 550 proposals.

We will soon be selecting some prototypes for testing, and innovators will be able to work with the government to scale up production.

After spending the past few months at home, we are slowly starting to get back to normal.

We obviously have to remain very vigilant and continue following the health authorities' guidelines, but some businesses can start reopening and that's good news.

Neighbourhood stores, small businesses, and shopkeepers play an important role in our communities and we have missed them during the lockdown.

Now is the time to support them as much as possible, while being careful and wearing a mask if necessary.

Reopening presents a number of challenges for business owners.

After having closed up for several months, many of them are having trouble restarting their activities and rehiring their employees because they are having cash flow problems.

Over the past few weeks, as businesses get ready to reopen, more employers are using the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to rehire their employees.

Just take Track 'N Trail in Edmonton.

Track 'N Trail was well established in the community, selling outdoor clothing, equipment, and footwear for 36 years, but when the pandemic hit, they had to close down their stores.

After a number of challenging months, they're now ready to welcome customers again.

And as part of getting their shops back up and running, they used the wage subsidy to help rehire their employees.

Shops, local entrepreneurs, and business owners are the backbone of our economy.

They make our towns and cities better places to call home.

And collectively, they are the largest employer in the country.

As we start to reopen, some businesses will need support to get back on their feet and our government will be there to help with programs like the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy.

I also want to remind people that we launched a hotline service to help entrepreneurs and small business owners, including not-for-profit organizations and charities, navigate these uncertain times.

People with pressing financial needs can now call 1-866-989-1080 to speak with an accountant or a business advisor.

During this pandemic, our government has been there for Canadians every step of the way, and we will continue to propose measures to support them.

On Saturday, we shared draft legislation with the opposition parties, which included additional proposals to help people.

This legislation will aim to provide direct support to people with disabilities, support more workers through the wage subsidy, and ensure that Canadians who aren't able to meet certain judicial timelines, such as bankruptcy, aren't unfairly punished.

We will also strive to make CERB payments more flexible, while making sure that those who knowingly and wrongfully claim the CERB face consequences.

Discussions are ongoing, but I fully expect us to be able to work well with the opposition to deliver this important support to Canadians.

The next few weeks will be busy as we begin restarting some activities, but, as always, you can count on our government as we move forward.

Thank you very much.