Opportunity exists to increase jobs in and make economies more vibrant and healthy for the countries of Mexico, United States and Canada by instituting a tri-country effort to increase the export of goods and services from these three countries to the balance of the world. Harnessing the natural resources, infrastructure, technology and work ethic of the combined countries results in a competitive advantage when projected to the balance of the world. That opportunity can be amplified even more by concentrating on the untapped potential of small-to-medium sized exporters.

Approximately 93% of the world's population resides outside of the three country region of Mexico, United States and Canada. Embracing this significant differential in an aggressive and coordinated manner yields the pathway to more employment in the three country region. Small and medium sized enterprises face barriers to exporting and thus, tend to not embrace this market. If the three country group would work cooperatively to not only sell to the other 93% of the world but actively engage and motivate more small-to-medium sized enterprises to participate in exporting to this 93%, the results could be very significant for the combined group.

Many small-to-medium sized businesses possess the product or service that is desired on an international stage and enjoy an aggressive and nimble reaction ability to compete with all entities throughout the world. However, with the entry barriers that exist for smaller entities, many shy away from the exporting and thus, cede sales to international competitors. One of the many barrier to the export market for small-to-medium sized exporters is the fear of not getting paid for their goods and services shipped abroad. To compete in the world marketplace, exporters need to offer credit terms. Offering of credit terms in the international marketplace is a concern for potential small-to-medium sized exporters. Not having the experience in international credit and collection coupled with the damage that non-payment could do to a small-to medium sized entity is enough to prevent many of these entities from entering the export marketplace.

Independently, each of the three countries have an export credit agency ("ECA") to assist in this credit/collection issue – in Mexico it is Banco Nacional de Comercio Exterior ("Bancomext"), in the United States it is the Export Import Bank ("Ex-Im") and in Canada it is Export Development Corporation ("EDC"). There is some cooperation between these banks such as the co-finance arrangement between Ex-Im and EDC. However, a much deeper and effective program could be brought about by the governments of the three countries committing to having each of their ECAs come together collectively to produce more cooperative and easier understood programs available to support all exporters on a tri-party platform with a unified export financing program. Commitment and the starting point of this effort originates with the three ECAs but then grows to a more public-private effort by including and educating the commercial banks in each country to this effort.

Financing is a real key to the increase in exports from the three country group. As noted, much potential exists in the area of small-to-medium sized exporters in the three countries. In addition to the financing barrier there are other entrance barriers to exporting for smaller firms. As described above for financing, a cooperative effort to address and solve these other barriers could come about by similar efforts on the part of the U.S. Department of Commerce and sister agencies in Mexico and Canada. The private sector should be included in these discussions. One such participant could be the National Small Business Association in the United States and like kind organizations in Mexico and Canada.

A base line should be established prior to the commencement of these efforts. That baseline would be exports from Mexico, United States and Canada to countries outside of the three countries. The target metric would be a 50% increase in that amount over a 5 year period.