



MEDIA RELEASE

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Economic, social benefits to commerce and trade

Today is International Trade Day, and the St. John's Board of Trade is raising awareness of some of the economic and social benefits from commerce and trade.

"It is important to keep in mind that international trade is about business, yes, but it is also about people," said Board Chair Jo Mark Zurel. "Microloans, for instance, are about international trade with a social conscience. International trade gets a bad rap sometimes but it has a significant economic and social benefit to people around the world."

A recent study by the Brookings Institution, *Poverty in Numbers: The Changing State of Global Poverty from 2005 to 2015*, reports an 'unparalleled' fall in the global poverty rate and attributes most of the change to the highest levels of sustained economic growth recorded in the developing world. The World Bank notes that active trading countries benefit from technology spill-over and use the knowledge gained to catch up; in fact, former centrally-planned economies missed out by having politically imposed isolation and are trying to reverse those effects.

"There are challenges to international trade, absolutely," said Mr. Zurel. "But the fact that nearly half a billion people moved above the poverty threshold in the past five years is a reason to celebrate trade. There are more reasons – trade has a tendency to stimulate democracy, it can calm tensions between countries that might have otherwise been solved by military conflict, and it can create opportunities for at-risk groups. Put simply, trade is important to people."

There are challenges to commerce and trade locally, and work remains on issues such as transportation and the cost of doing business in the city and province. However, the Board supports efforts by all levels of government to support international trade and encourages outbound and incoming trade missions and other positive initiatives. The Board encourages governments to aggressively pursue trade policy as a means of ensuring economic stability and security as well as achieving social goals such as global poverty reduction.

The St. John's Board of Trade is a non-partisan, business advocacy organization that is the principal voice of business for over 800 members and their 30,000+ employees in the St. John's area. Its mission is to improve the local business climate, enhancing its members' ability to do business through advocacy and member services. Twitter: @stjohnsbot

