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News Release



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3 December 2009

Beijing, China

Prime Minister Stephen Harper today announced that the Government of China has granted Canada Approved Destination Status, a designation that makes it easier for Chinese nationals to visit Canada. The Prime Minister made the announcement in Beijing following his meeting with Wen Jiabao, Premier of China.

"Approved Destination Status marks a significant moment in the history of our relations with China, indicating not only our mutual commitment to strengthening our diplomatic and commercial partnerships, but also our people-to-people ties," said Prime Minister Harper. "As Canada prepares to welcome the world to Vancouver for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games, this new designation will help more of our Chinese friends discover why Canada is one of the best places in the world in which to invest, innovate, work and compete."

Approved Destination Status allows Chinese travel agents to advertise and organize group tours to countries with the designation. This means that obtaining permission to arrange group travel to that country becomes easier. As a result, this should encourage more people from China to travel to Canada, which will have a positive impact on the Canadian economy.

In 2008, visits to Canada by Chinese citizens were up 5.3 per cent from the year before, for a total of 159,000. Chinese travellers had the highest average length of stay (28 nights) in Canada and spent more than visitors from any other country (\$1,648.51). According to a Conference Board of Canada survey, approved destination status is expected to boost the yearly rate of travel to Canada from China by up to 50 per cent by 2015.

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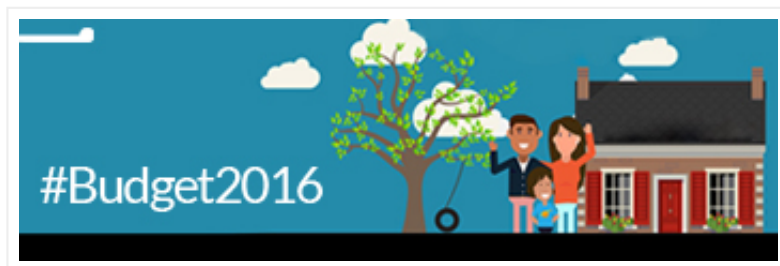
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