Envoy looks to counter protectionism

2018-04-13

By NA LI in TORONTO |   
 chinadaily.com.cn |  
 Updated: 2018-04-13 22:15

China's ambassador to Canada told the media in Ottawa that starting free trade negotiations with Canada would send a strong message to the world at time when US President Donald Trump is preaching global protectionism.  
Speaking on Tuesday about free-trade discussions between Canada and China, Ambassador Lu Shaye said China is ready to start negotiations on a free-trade agreement (FTA) with Canada at any time.  
"If China and Canada start the negotiation of an FTA, it will send positive signals to the international community that China and Canada are upholding the flag of supporting free trade and economic globalization," Lu said.  
However, Lu said Canada's so-called progressive trade agenda has no place in the free-trade talks that the two countries have been pursuing for several years.  
During a trip to Beijing last December, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attempted to introduce his progressive trade platform including labour, gender and environmental stipulations in the talks without a formal commitment to moving the talks past the exploratory phase and into formal negotiations.  
China doesn't want such concepts being implemented among the negotiations between the two countries, according to the ambassador.  
Despite the differences, Lu characterized relations between the two countries as warm and said China had no deadline to begin formal negotiations, but "we should start the process sooner than later".  
Lu told Canadian media that US trade protectionism waged war against global multilateralism and free trade. It not only undermines the interests of the Chinese people, but will also violate World Trade Organization rules, shake the foundations of the multilateral trading system and disrupt the world's economy and global trade, he said.  
Lu said China will not wage a trade war, but it is not afraid of a trade war imposed by others, and China will fight back strongly if the United States implements a list of targets in an additional $100 billion in duties.  
The ambassador also pointed out that Canada is probably familiar with a similar approach the US uses when it portrays its bilateral arrangements with Canada.  
"Both China and Canada are strong defenders of free trade, and both countries support the resolution of trade disputes through consultation within the framework of the multilateral trading system," Lu said. "China is willing to work together with Canada to curb the momentum of protectionism and safeguard the international multilateral trading system and free trade."

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201804/13/WS5ad0bb9ca3105cdcf651837a.html