

What Was Discussed During the First Round of NAFTA Negotiations?

by Danielle Leonard - Friday, August 25, 2017



And we're off—the first round of negotiations for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—a free trade agreement involving Canada, Mexico, and the U.S.—has wrapped up this month. So what was discussed during these talks?

Though we don't have an exact transcript, in United State Trade Representative Lighthizer's (USTR) [opening statement](#), he underlined a few key objectives of the U.S., such as

- Reduce the U.S. trade deficit.
- Rules of origin must require higher NAFTA content and substantial U.S. content—particularly on autos and auto parts.
- The country of origin should be verified, not “deemed.”
- Labor provisions should be included in the agreement and be as strong as possible.
- A guard against currency manipulation.
- A guard against market-distorting practices of other countries, including third-party dumping and

state-owned enterprises.

The second round is [scheduled](#) to begin September 1 in Mexico. Next, Canada will host negotiations in late September, then move talks to the United States in October. Additional rounds are being planned for the remainder of the year.

It's a race against time as the Trump Administration [hopes](#) to complete negotiations in early 2018. Talks are [expected](#) to be completed before Mexico's presidential election in July 2018, since "Mexican politicians may not support a new NAFTA."

It's a waiting game to see if this a realistic time frame; until then the three countries are committed to continue negotiations at this ["rapid pace"](#). The last NAFTA negotiations took over 3 years to be completed.

Read the full summary of U.S. objectives for renegotiating NAFTA [here](#).



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