

Trade expansion through GATT

Canada . . . is committed to working through multilateral organizations like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to keep the world trading system open. It is in the interest of all nations that we no longer delay the beginning of the next round of the GATT negotiations.

Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark.
Speaking in New York, November 18, 1985.

Canada strongly supports the agreement by the 74 ministers at the September 15-19 conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay, to begin a new round of comprehensive and ambitious multilateral trade negotiations (MTN) under GATT. Aimed at reducing tariffs and other barriers to trade and curbing trade-related government subsidies, the decisions taken during the talks are expected to become the basis for global trade in the twenty-first century.

Canadian negotiators consider the start of a new round vital for the country, which derives one-third of its gross national product from exports. "For us it's a great success," said Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark, who led the Canadian delegation to the ministerial conference in Uruguay. "This historic decision will help us fight back protectionism, strengthen the multilateral trading system under the GATT and liberalize world trade."

GATT was established in 1948 and its current membership of 92 countries accounts for more than four-fifths of world trade. It is the only multilateral instrument that lays down agreed upon rules for international trade. In seven successive rounds of multilateral negotiations, the rules have been refined and obstacles to trade progressively reduced.

Active participant

Canada has traditionally sought access to world markets through the multilateral negotiations under GATT, and the country has benefitted from trade liberalization.

In the most recent negotiations, the Tokyo Round, which lasted from 1973 to 1979, there were important tariff reductions as well as a series of new agreements covering non-tariff measures, new arrangements applying to trade in dairy products, bovine meat and civil aircraft and an improved legal framework for the conduct of world trade. Four areas

were of particular interest to Canada and have been incorporated into the legal system: customs valuation, subsidies, dumping and technical standards.

The declaration establishing the new round of negotiations, which are expected to last at least four years, covers agriculture, resource products, high technology and other exports, as well as new issues of increasing importance in world trade, including services, intellectual property matters and trade related investment measures.



Joe Clark (left) and Argentina's Minister of Foreign Affairs Dante Caputo sign a co-operation agreement. Mr. Clark visited Argentina and Venezuela prior to attending GATT meetings to discuss a number of issues including multilateral trade and agricultural subsidies.

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