

Domestic policies in the area of competition law can impact on market access. We should accelerate our work in the OECD and elsewhere to bring us to a point where decisions can be made within two or three years on whether to initiate negotiations of a multilateral trade and competition agreement. Such an agreement could include general trade principles such as transparency and national treatment, common standards, and the means of enforcing such standards.

A forward-looking trade agenda would not be complete unless it includes, as an objective, elimination of remaining barriers at the border.

We recognize that globalization of the world economy results in far greater interaction of trade and other policy fields than ever before. The work on some issues, such as trade and the environment, is well advanced in both the OECD and WTO. The OECD has made a good start on trade and labour standards. Some have advocated initiating a discussion of trade and labour standards in the WTO. They need to articulate more clearly the purposes of such a discussion. Although we are open to discussion, we continue to oppose the use of trade sanctions to compensate for failure to achieve multilateral consensus and binding commitments on questions of human and workers' rights. Our analysis should be aimed at ensuring that rules in these areas are complementary, while not jeopardizing the goal of continued trade liberalization.

The OECD must take the lead in advancing the frontiers of trade liberalization and be prepared to challenge, through rigorous analysis and debate, those who oppose moving forward. A priority for the OECD must be further study and research focussed not just on the economic benefits of liberalization but on the costs of protection — from border tariffs to anti-dumping measures, to export subsidies. We should turn the argument against further liberalization on its head — what are the costs of status-quo protectionism? What are we forgoing in terms of lost employment and production? What inefficiencies are we needlessly leaving in place?

Mr. Chairman, the Canadian government firmly believes that the strength of the multilateral trading system is directly linked to our individual and collective commitment to making it work. We need to remind ourselves continually that the system we have so arduously negotiated provides the best possible basis for continued economic growth and jobs. Although we have achieved enormous progress in recent years, culminating in the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round, the challenges before us are still immense. Here at the OECD, we are well placed to develop the means to meet these challenges. By endorsing a clear plan of action, OECD ministers can make a substantial contribution to a further opening of the world economy and to a successful outcome at the WTO Ministerial Meeting in 1996.

Thank you.