

is part of a global trend that will happen with or without NAFTA. And it is not a trend that anyone need apologize for.

Any healthy trade agreement will have to contain a structure for dealing with the range of disputes that are bound to arise during the normal course of events. The three key elements of a dispute settlement mechanism should be fairness, transparency and timeliness. We will strive to ensure that NAFTA provides for such a system.

We will also work for a common, effective and practical set of rules of origin for all three countries, similar to those found in the FTA. Rules of origin ensure that the benefits of the agreement will extend only to firms producing goods in one of the three countries. These rules will be strict. The Canadian government does not want companies producing goods outside the borders of the agreement to take advantage of the tariff-free benefits inside. Third parties should not get windfall benefits when they made no concessions in the negotiations. All goods that cross our frontiers will have to meet the regulations laid down by the agreement. And we will establish clear processes that companies must undertake to prove that their goods qualify for free trade benefits.

The Canadian government is very conscious of the need to consult closely with Canadians. This is as true for NAFTA as it is with the Uruguay Round of the GATT. We want to consult all sectors of the Canadian economy. The government is committed to holding extensive consultations throughout the talks. These consultations will be conducted with various levels of government, the business community, organized labour and the academic world, all in an effort to ensure that we arrive at a deal that is good for Canada and Canadians.

Government officials will conduct regular meetings with various groups to listen to their concerns and note their suggestions. Minister for International Trade, the Honourable Michael H. Wilson, will continue to hold regular meetings with representatives from business, labour and the academic world. He will also meet regularly with representatives of the various sectoral interests nation-wide. The federal government has also pledged to consult actively with provincial governments on the status of negotiations. Senior officials from both the federal and provincial levels will be meeting later this week, and Mr. Wilson will meet with his provincial counterparts later this month.

Canada's trade policy encompasses a clear vision of the future. It is a future in which companies around the world are able to compete freely in a global marketplace, a marketplace that increasingly permits the free flow of goods, services, investments and ideas.