International Economic Organizations and Institutions

Cairns Group

The Cairns Group of agricultural exporters is a group of 13 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and Uruguay) whose common goal is to promote agricultural trade reform.

The Cairns Group was named after Cairns, Australia, the site of its first ministerial-level meeting, held in August 1986. Its efforts are credited with establishing far-reaching objectives for agriculture in the Uruguay Round.

Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)

The CSCE, founded in 1975 by the Helsinki Final Act, is a series of conferences and agreements involving Canada, the U.S. and 33 European states. The purpose of the CSCE is to address the principles guiding relations between the participating states. These include human rights issues, security questions (including military confidence building), commercial exchanges and co-operation in industry, environment and science and technology.

There have been three major CSCE conferences: Belgrade (1977–78), Madrid (1980–83), and Vienna (1986–89). Smaller conferences held this year in Bonn (March–April) and Copenhagen (June) addressed economic co-operation and mechanisms for monitoring human rights.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) is scheduled to begin operations by March 31, 1991, once the Articles of Agreement are ratified by a sufficient number of signatories. The purpose of the EBRD is to assist Central and Eastern European countries in developing their private sectors and to ease their transition from centrally planned to market-oriented economies. Unlike other comparable financial bodies, the EBRD also has a charter role in promoting the environment and sustainable development.

Membership in the EBRD is open to the member states of the European Community, the Community itself, the European Investment Bank, the potential borrowing countries from Central and Eastern Europe, and countries that are members of the IMF and World Bank.

The capital base of the EBRD will be 10 billion European Currency Units (ECUs). Canada will be the eighth-largest single contributor with a 3.4 percent share of total contributions, thus ensuring itself a seat on the Executive Board of the EBRD. Canada's contributions will not be drawn from the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget; thus, Canadian participation in the EBRD will not divert funds from the developing countries.

The EBRD will be located in London, and its first president will be Jacques Attali (France). The Governor for Canada will be Michael Wilson, Minister of Finance.

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is a multilateral trade agreement that came into force in 1948. GATT is the international instrument which lays down trade rules accepted by countries responsible for most of the world's trade. The GATT Secretariat has its headquarters at the United Nations in Geneva. GATT's basic aim is to liberalize world trade. Under its auspices there have been seven rounds of trade liberalization talks (Multilateral Trade Negotiations).

In September 1986, agreement was reached to launch the new round of multilateral trade negotiations known as the Uruguay Round. In December 1988, Canada hosted in Montréal a mid-term conference of trade ministers to review progress made and provide new impetus to the negotiations. GATT has 97 member states, including Canada. The Director-General is Arthur Dunkel (Switzerland).

Group of Seven (G-7)

The Group of Seven (G-7) finance ministers was created at the 1986 Tokyo Economic Summit. It consists of the finance ministers of the summit countries (Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy and Japan), and was formed to enhance the surveillance and co-ordination of international economic policies, with a view to improving the economic performance of member countries.