

Good afternoon,

I would like to introduce Don Campbell, my Deputy Minister for International Trade, who is accompanying me today.

When we met last year, you will recall that we discussed changes in the global trading environment, with particular emphasis on our policy of Going Global. As you are aware, the Prime Minister announced the policy last fall and committed the Government to an economic and trade framework designed to ensure that Canada will succeed in this decade and into the next century. This policy utilizes the springboard of the FTA as a means of achieving competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Let me turn for a moment to the trade issue that is of highest priority to Canada, as well as to the global trading community.

The Uruguay Round of the multilateral trade negotiations has now entered its final phase.

The time is short and the road will be long between now and the concluding meeting in Brussels. As well, there will be some potholes en route. Obstacles could include a number of issues with national interests at stake. I have in mind agriculture, textiles and some of the new issues such as intellectual property. It is a very complex negotiation but collectively we must reach agreement.

Ministers have agreed at recent meetings including the Informal Ministerial, the Quadrilateral and the OECD Ministerial that our negotiators be directed to develop frameworks for each of the 15 negotiating groups. These will be reviewed at the July 23 meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee.

This deadline must be kept if we are going to make our closing December date. I will host two MTN meetings including the Asia-Pacific Ministers in Vancouver Sept. 11-12 and the Quadrilateral in St.