

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADVISORY COMMITTEE SYSTEM

I. MANDATE AND STRUCTURE

This permanent advisory committee system has been established to provide an ongoing, confidential, two-way flow of information and advice between the Government and the private sector on international trade matters. It is the main channel for communicating to the Government the views of the Canadian private sector.

The advisory committee system, which reports to the Minister for International Trade, ensures that the Government has the benefit of private sector views in its deliberations relating to trade policy and trade development issues that arise in Canada's international trade relationships, both bilateral and multilateral.

The advisory committee system has two components -- the International Trade Advisory Committee (ITAC), which has broad terms of reference on all international trade matters; and the 15 Sectoral Advisory Groups on International Trade (SAGITs), which ensure that sectoral views are fully considered in the advisory process.

On issues directly related to the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTN) and the negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), both components of the advisory committee system work closely with the Canadian trade negotiators.

In addition to the above issues, the ITAC and SAGITs interact with the Government in the implementation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and in the examination of issues that affect Canada's competitiveness, especially those directly related to international markets and marketing.

II. MEMBERSHIP - APPOINTMENT AND TENURE

Members of both the ITAC and SAGITs must be Canadian citizens and are appointed by the Minister for International Trade. Members serve for a period of two years, subject to suitable arrangements being made for sensible rotation and the need for continuity.

Members serve without remuneration and may be reappointed for one or more additional periods. However, at all times, members serve