

ANNEX 8

TRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

As indicated in the review, Canada is addressing the relationship between trade and the environment in bilateral, trilateral and multilateral forums. This annex outlines the important initiatives that are currently under way at the multilateral level. The consultative process established during the NAFTA negotiations will provide environmental advice to the government on future discussions on trade and the environment in these multilateral forums.

A. CONTEXT OF THE ISSUE

The NAFTA is a precedent-setting trade agreement both in terms of its environmental provisions and in the extent of public input that was received on environmental concerns. Nevertheless, it constitutes only one of three avenues through which the linkages between trade and the environment are being addressed at the international level. Bilateral environmental co-operation, such as that which is taking place under the Canada-Mexico Agreement on Environmental Co-operation, constitutes the second avenue. The third avenue, and the subject of this annex, is Canada's participation in three multilateral bodies in which this relationship is being actively considered. Just as the NAFTA would incorporate many of the environmental provisions that have been agreed on previously in these bodies, the environmental innovations of the NAFTA would offer opportunities for advancing global environmental agreements.

The three organizations are the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

B. UNITED NATIONS

Examples of collective action at the international level include the 1974 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and the 1989 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal. As indicated in the chapter on Environmental Provisions, the NAFTA would be the first free trade agreement to accord priority status to specific trade obligations set out in these multilateral environmental and conservation agreements.

Canada was an active participant in the negotiations leading up to the signature of these and other multilateral environmental and conservation agreements. The June 3-13, 1992 UN Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil provided a useful insight into the international context in which such international environmental and conservation agreements are considered.

As a world body, the UN is both an "east-west" and a "north-south" organization, comprised of members at all levels of development. The developed countries generally