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MINISTERS' COMMENT ON AGREEMENT ON CAIRNS GROUP GATT POSITION ON AGRICULTURE

OTTAWA, Nov. 23, 1989 -- Deputy Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister Don Mazankowski and International Trade Minister John Crosbie today provided additional comments on the Cairns Group position agreed to recently at Chiang-Mai, Thailand, as a basis to further the Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTN) on agriculture.

Mr. Crosbie, at the conclusion of the Chiang-Mai meeting, noted that the Cairns Group position meets Canada's key objectives for achieving substantial agricultural trade liberalization and effective trade reform.

Mr. Crosbie said, "It is Canada's position, and one which is central to the Cairns Group position, that effective rules applying equally to all countries, and enforced within multilaterally agreed procedures, would provide a solid basis for the expansion of world agricultural trade."

He endorsed the Cairns Group's call for the elimination of export subsidies and for strengthening the disciplines on countervailing duties to enhance predictability and stability in international trade.

Mr. Crosbie noted that the Cairns text proposal to classify government subsidies into three different categories builds on an earlier Canadian proposal in the MTN on subsidies and countervailing duty issues.

Mr. Mazankowski noted that with about 50 per cent of Canadian farmers' revenue coming from exports, Canadian agriculture would clearly benefit from improved and more secure access to foreign markets and reductions in trade distorting support, as proposed by the Cairns Group.

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