

SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS

Opening and Keynote Addresses

Reaching Out, Looking at a Common Identity, Reforming Education

"In an age of tough international competition, the edge will go to those who have the best education and the best retraining", said the Hon. Thomas E. Siddon, Minister of National Defence, Canada, in opening the Symposium. The Minister stressed the strategic importance of higher education, research and training for Canada's future. He advised that: "The three countries are dispensing with the framework of protectionism, and higher education must adjust by developing joint projects and by reaching out more to business and industry."

Joseph Duffey, Director of the United States Information Agency, presented the U.S. perspective, emphasizing that breaking down trade barriers is not enough to ensure economic success. Economic integration without a deepening commitment to the educational and cultural dimensions of the relationship poses unacceptable risks. He suggested that the three countries give greater attention to the question of a North American identity. He announced that his organization is sponsoring grants for university affiliation projects in the three countries. He concluded: "What we seek to do is, among other things, nothing less than dismantle barriers to academic mobility."

Educational reform is crucial to economic competitiveness, said Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, Minister of Public Education of Mexico. It is essential to effective participation in the global economy. Mexico sees the educational sector as critical. As he presented his country's perspective, he noted: "It is quite clear that, independent of specific trade agreements, education will continue to be a specific factor for economic development in Mexico, the United States and Canada."