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## TRADE MINISTER CROSBIE COMMENTS ON CAIRNS GROUP

### MEETING IN NEW ZEALAND

Waitangi, New Zealand, March 19, 1989: International Trade Minister John Crosbie met with ministers from the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting countries in Waitangi, New Zealand, March 17-19, to seek their cooperation to develop a strategy for dealing with the stalemate over agriculture in the current Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations.

At the conclusion of the Waitangi meeting, Cairns Group Ministers issued a statement urging the European Community to modify its negotiating position in a way which would enable agreement on "a negotiating framework that would provide for the establishment of an open, fair and market-oriented agricultural system and bring agriculture fully within strengthened GATT rules and disciplines".

Mr. Crosbie said that there had been some positive changes in the negotiating environment since Montreal, including flexibility on the part of the United States which now agrees that the complete elimination of trade distorting supports and protection is no longer a precondition for negotiating agricultural trade reform. The USA and the EC have also recently commenced a dialogue aimed at narrowing differences.

Commenting on Canada's negotiating objectives, Mr. Crosbie stated, "The long-term health of Canadian agriculture requires improved and secure access to world markets, a substantial reduction in trade distorting subsidies and new trade rules that will apply equally to all competitors in world markets".

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