

Canada is committed to freer global trade and has played an active role in the current "Uruguay round" of multilateral trade negotiations under the auspices of the GATT. These crucial negotiations are scheduled to be completed by the end of this year. Developing countries have vital interests at stake in the complex range of subjects under discussion, notably agricultural subsidies, trade in tropical products, and the re-integration of the MFA into the GATT framework. Canada has recently presented proposals to greatly strengthen that framework. We also applaud the research that is being funded in Canada, through the IDRC and the North-South Institute, on debt and trade bargaining between developed and developing countries. Institutional reform and technical assistance are important to redressing the present imbalances. But there is much else to be done before developing-country concerns are adequately addressed.

The Sub-Committee is not in a position to make detailed recommendations with respect to trade policies. However, we affirm their importance and note the intention of SCEAIT to begin this fall a study of Canadian positions in the Uruguay Round. In the interim, we urge the government to take into account the interests of indebted developing nations in the agreements which hopefully will be reached among the GATT contracting parties. In addition, and regardless of what happens in the multilateral negotiations, Canada should be moving to grant liberalized access to developing-country exports, subject to the reformed criteria of conditionality that we have recommended be applied to all forms of Canadian debt relief and development assistance.

H. Promoting Public Participation and Accountability

We believe that an informed citizenry that is moved to act is worth any number of reports which merely gather dust, no matter how heavy with good intentions or laden with statistics. That is the ultimate test, and we hope to have made a small contribution towards meeting it. As a Committee, we have been impressed by the efforts of the churches and NGOs, notably through the Ten Days for World Development campaign, to dialogue with Canadian banks and to bring Third World debt issues to the attention of the public. And we were impressed by the sincerity of those who wrote to tell us of their deep personal concern.

We believe that Canadians are open to hearing the message that the unfinished business of the debt burden challenges us all. It is our business too. Bringing more accountability and democracy to bear on efforts to resolve the debt crisis means also preparing to accept that we may have to change in fairly fundamental ways. Adjustments are required of the rich even more than of the poor who are too weak to resist them. That hard truth is bluntly stated by the position paper of the NGO working group on the World Bank: