Executive Summary

Canadian women will benefit significantly from the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. As workers, entrepreneurs and consumers, women are major contributors to the Canadian economy and can expect a substantial share of the opportunities and benefits generated by free trade.

The Free Trade Agreement will eliminate tariffs and reduce trade barriers, and provide a more stable and predictable environment for trade and investment in North America. The Agreement provides assurances for Canada against future protectionist actions by the United States. The establishment of a new trading relationship between Canada and the United States is based on security of access to each other's markets. This Agreement will expand opportunities and options for women throughout the economy.

For women, free trade will mean increased employment opportunities. In the service sector, where 84 per cent of employed women work, women can anticipate new opportunities for employment and new opportunities to advance their careers. In the manufacturing sector, more efficient and competitive industries will mean more and better jobs for women. Growth in the primary industries will expand opportunities for women in non-traditional occupations.

For Canadian farm women, the Free Trade Agreement will improve access for agricultural products to the U.S. market and in so doing, make that access more secure.

Women entrepreneurs, whose numbers and successes continue to grow, will benefit from new business opportunities.

Women as consumers will find that the Agreement will result in more competitively priced products and a wider selection of quality goods and services.

Finally, the economic growth created by free trade will mean an expanded financial foundation for our social programs.

The Agreement is designed to provide an environment for a growing and prosperous Canadian economy. And it is in a thriving and expanding economy that women are best able to improve their economic well-being and achieve full economic and social equality.