

Mr. Chairman,

I want to thank the Government of Belgium for organizing this Ministerial meeting. Having hosted the Mid-Term Ministerial meeting in Montreal, we Canadians appreciate the hard work and organization required to make sure that a conference of this size runs as smoothly as possible.

This issues before us in the Uruguay Round are too important, the stakes too high, and the time too short for long formal speeches. So, my remarks will be brief.

The key to success in Brussels this week is political action.

After four years of detailed negotiations and deliberations, the issue is no longer where you or we stand. It is rather, are we willing to move to ensure a comprehensive and balanced outcome to these negotiations.

Right from the outset, this has been a tough Round of negotiations. And for good reason. The issues are broader and more complicated than ever before. Still, we cannot let pessimism prevent us from taking this Round to its successful outcome. Canada is prepared to make its full contribution. Today together with Japan, Sweden and Switzerland, we have put forward a proposal to ensure non-discrimination and liberalization of trade in the financial services sector. We hope that this will offer a solid basis for negotiations of this important component of a services agreement.

Today Canada is also making an offer to undertake initial market access and national treatment commitments across a whole range of services.

Agriculture is a priority for Canada in the Uruguay Round. We must improve access to markets. We need to develop effective and equitable rules that apply equally to everyone. It is our farmers, not our treasuries, who should compete in world markets. Let's seek the common ground and take the right decisions for the future.

We need significant movement on tariff and non-tariff barriers. We must try to negotiate global free trade in as many areas as possible. This will create real opportunities for our private sector. World trade will further expand and lead to economic growth in all our countries.

But, improving market access is not sufficient without clearer and more predictable General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) rules on subsidies and countervail, anti-dumping and safeguards. We need to take political action to achieve a reasonable and balanced outcome in our efforts to reform the GATT system.

This will require a solid dispute settlement system and a new multilateral trade organization to administer all the Uruguay Round arrangements in a coherent manner.