

As we define the ambitious agenda for the World Trade Organization, the NAFTA could again provide a crucible for forging a new consensus and for developing new approaches as we seek to expand the boundaries of the rules-based trading system.

But the process must start now. Canada, the United States and Mexico ~~have laid the foundations for a new kind of economic order.~~ We have eschewed the constraints of a customs union or a common market in favour of a much more open economic area — one whose inherent dynamic is to reduce barriers and to expand to others.

We have created an agreement that can move beyond "free trade" to address the need for closer economic co-operation.

And we share an intellectual commitment, not simply to freer markets, but to the ideals of openness, liberation, and freedom — North America's enduring contribution to the onward march of civilization.

For all of these reasons, we must set our collective sights on moving the NAFTA forward — on building a broader and deeper architecture. Trade agreements should not — and cannot — stand still. The European Union began life in the 1950s as a modest coal-and-steel accord between France and Germany. Today it is a supra-national federation of 12 nations, poised to expand yet again.

The Australia and New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement has been augmented six times since it was concluded in 1983, including the addition of a 1990 provision to eliminate antidumping action between the two countries.

Changes of this magnitude require vision and political will. In the NAFTA, there are certain mechanisms to help make this happen; some 25 NAFTA commissions, committees and working groups will deal with the nuts-and-bolts questions of enhancing our free trade area. Public interest has understandably focussed on the Labour and Environment commissions, but there are other groups which will meet regularly to address the more prosaic stuff of trade — rules of origin, standards for agriculture, telecommunications standards, labelling of textile and apparel goods, temporary entry for business people — and so forth.

By far the most important — and most far-reaching of these working groups are the two established recently at Canadian prompting to address the continued absence of common rules governing the application of trade remedy laws — laws which really have no economic rationale in a free trade area. We know that it will not be an easy task to agree on these issues; we also know that our success in this endeavour will signal whether