

on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and how it fits with the interests of the Asia Pacific community. He emphasized that "this important agreement among two developed countries and a major developing nation represents a significant step forward in regional trade liberalization and should reinforce our efforts to conclude the Uruguay Round."

He noted the precedent-setting nature of the NAFTA in such areas as the environment, investment and a wide range of services. "The coverage of these areas in the NAFTA could help prepare the groundwork for future trade agreements," he said.

Ministers also will discuss the prospects for economic growth in the dynamic Asia Pacific region as well as issues pertinent to the region, such as human resource development, marine resource conservation, tourism, telecommunications and technology transfer. Mr. Wilson said that he would be urging his counterparts to explore ways to strengthen private sector involvement in the sectoral activities of APEC.

Minister Wilson also will hold a number of bilateral consultations with APEC partners in Bangkok. Issues he will discuss include trade liberalization measures and Canada's trade with Japan; financial services and agricultural issues, including beef, with Taiwan; and problems in pork and beef trade with Australia.

The APEC meeting will be attended by ministers from Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, China, Hong Kong, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan), Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

- 30 -

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
External Affairs and International Trade Canada
(613) 995-1874