

Miss Carney noted that Hong Kong is the third largest import market in Asia, as well as the world's busiest container port and sixth most active air freight terminal. In 1987, Hong Kong recorded 12% growth in GNP and 40% increase in imports. "This is the reality of Hong Kong. Unfortunately, Canadians have been slow to recognize it. In 1986, we ranked an unimpressive 23rd among suppliers to this market," she said. She was encouraged however by the fact that Canadian exports to Hong Kong have increased more than seven-fold since 1977 to a current annual total of about \$480 million.

Miss Carney emphasized the importance of the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement to Canada's expansion of trade links with Asia-Pacific markets. She said that gaining secure access to the North American market is critical to Canada's international competitiveness not only in markets on this continent, but also in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world. She said the Canada-US Agreement will "make us an attractive centre for investment for foreign companies who want to build on that secure access to the North American market".

- 30 -

For further information, contact:
Ann Collins
Media Relations Office
Department of External Affairs
613-992-6489