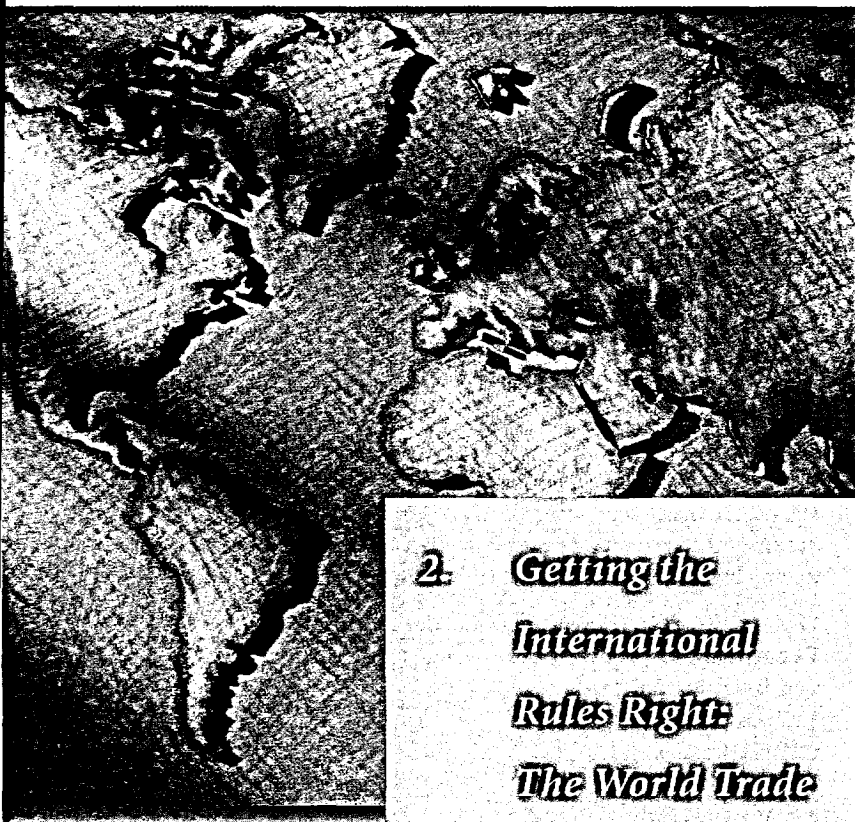




2. **Getting the International Rules Right: The World Trade Organization**

<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/tna-nac>

Canada benefits greatly from the open rules-based trading system that has been developed over the past 50 years. As a medium-sized economy, our current and future prosperity depends on open markets, a stable trading environment and a means to settle trade disputes based on right, rather than political and economic might. The WTO, which oversees the administration and functioning of multilateral trade agreements and helps to maintain the rules governing world trade, remains the cornerstone of Canadian trade policy and the foundation for Canada's relations with its trading partners.

Canada is active in the various bodies of the WTO and in several multilateral fora that influence and guide the international trade policy agenda. We participate actively in the meetings of the G-7/G-8 major powers; the Quadilateral (United States, European Union, Japan, Canada) Trade Ministers; the OECD; the FTAA; APEC; and United Nations (UN) economic institutions and agencies. Our participation in these bodies and in informal trade ministerial meetings helps us to reach consensus on trade issues of importance to Canada. Canada continues to lead efforts in these fora to improve coherence among international trade, financial, economic and social policies to further strengthen markets and promote economic growth and sustainable development. As well, to promote public understanding and support for the WTO and its activities, and for the pursuit of trade liberalization as a whole, Canada continues to support greater transparency, both in ongoing WTO activities and in the conduct of future multilateral trade negotiations.

Preparations for the Third WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle and for FTAA negotiations were prominent in the Government's trade agenda in 1999. In preparing for these, the Government initiated an extensive outreach and consultation program. Consultations were undertaken with the provinces, the business sector, other interest groups and the public. The Government also created a website (<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/tna-nac>) providing information on trade policy issues and inviting public comments on negotiating priorities and objectives. The Parliamentary Standing Committees on Agriculture and Agri-food (SCAAF) and on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (SCFAIT) conducted public hearings across the country on Canada's future trade agenda. The results of the SCAAF consultations were recorded in its