

Earlier, I noted your decision to join the GATT, a symbol of your decision to radically shift your underlying national economic philosophy and strategy. The fact that the Mexican Government hosted the informal ministerial meeting last week in Puerto Vallarta is testimony of the valued and valuable role Mexico is playing in these negotiations.

Needless to say, such success is far from assured. The agenda in this current round is extremely ambitious, involving old issues like agriculture and textiles and new issues like services and intellectual property.

Under Secretary Serra's skillful Chairmanship, I believe the Puerto Vallarta meeting has provided much-needed impetus to negotiations on all the issues and has underlined the sense of urgency ministers attach to continued progress.

As you are probably aware, I took the occasion of the ministerial meeting to outline to my colleagues from other GATT countries, a Canadian initiative to create a new institutional framework for the GATT and for anticipated agreements on the new issues, such as services, as part of a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

The framework would include a world trade organization (WTO) with a more effective dispute settlement process as a centerpiece. I am satisfied with the generally supportive response my initiative received and I look forward to working with Secretary Serra on this and other MTN issues in the coming months.

In one traditional area of GATT negotiations, that of market access through the reduction of tariff and non tariff barriers, Canada and Mexico are being quick off the mark. This week I have brought with me a team of senior Canadian officials - from Ottawa and Geneva - to begin bilateral MTN negotiations. It is indicative of the importance we attach to our bilateral relationship that the first of these meetings within the Uruguay Round context should be taking place with Mexico.

As many of you know, Canada's desire for freer multilateral trade has been complemented by a GATT-consistent bilateral free trade agreement with the United States, our principal customer and supplier.