

The focus of the ministerial consultations was on the U.S. market. However, some sectors, in particular agricultural, fisheries, resource products and petrochemicals also gave considerable priority to the need actively to seek offshore markets especially in the Pacific Rim and Europe.

Senior labour representatives in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal agreed with the need for Canada to improve its competitiveness but stressed that two-thirds of Canadian market demand was domestic rather than export-oriented. The Canadian Labour Congress was particularly concerned over the employment impact of increased competition, either from newly industrialized countries or the United States, and the effect bilateral and multilateral trade liberalization would have on unemployment, structural readjustment of the Canadian economy, medicare, bilingualism, social policies, health and safety regulations, and collective bargaining practices generally. Labour tended to argue in favour of investment and job protection provisions so as to ensure "good, secure, well-paying jobs at home and not just entrepreneurial access". It also argued that the flow of technology must be intrinsic to any negotiation to ensure that Canadian industrial capacity did not become obsolete. Attention was also drawn to the importance of trade in services as labour perceived future job creation to lie predominantly in the services area.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES

Provincial governments strongly urged the federal government to take early initiatives to secure and improve Canadian exports to the U.S. and to work toward a new MTN at an early date to further their global market interests. The Regina First Ministers' Conference supported multilateral negotiations and movement towards a process of negotiation with the U.S. but with prudence. On May 28, Federal-Provincial Trade Ministers agreed that there is "an urgent need for a comprehensive agreement to secure and expand our access to the U.S. market". The Ministers also recognized that any negotiations should be based on mutual advantage. Provinces generally felt that sectoral studies would be crucial, that impact studies should be accelerated, that studies should be shared and that provinces should participate actively in the preparatory and negotiating phases. They also argued in favour of transition periods for sensitive sectors and a clear commitment to adjustment measures when necessary and where appropriate.

Whereas Quebec, as well as the Western and Atlantic provincial governments desired to see the federal government proceed with negotiations on a comprehensive trade agreement with the United States as soon as possible, the Ontario government was more cautious in its approach. Ontario's concerns focussed on import surges in high technology, possible disinvestment in