

The Doha Development Agenda has a significant development theme aimed at addressing the needs of developing countries. The major challenge in the trade arena is to better integrate developing countries into the global trading system so they can benefit from the opportunities available in the global economy. WTO trade ministers have committed to helping the developing world build capacity to negotiate and implement WTO obligations and take advantage of enhanced opportunities to trade. Canada supports a two-pronged approach to trade and development that includes strengthening the capacity of countries to trade, especially the least-developed countries (LDCs), in parallel with improving their access to the world's markets.

The next major event will be the fifth Ministerial Conference, which will be held in Cancun, Mexico, in September 2003. At that time, ministers will take stock of the negotiations and decide how to move forward.

In many ways, this collective agreement to further liberalize trade sent an important signal of confidence in the WTO system to the global community. The new round of negotiations seeks to benefit all members, with a special emphasis on providing real gains for developing countries that will contribute to poverty reduction, development and long-term social and economic progress worldwide.

Canada's Objectives in the Doha Round

The trade negotiations will create new opportunities for Canadian exporters of goods and services by expanding access to global markets. They will strengthen the rules-based system by clarifying and improving multilateral trade rules. In addition, they are key to advancing Canada's broader foreign policy goals, most notably our sustainable development objectives. It is important to note that these negotiations will not affect Canada's ability to establish regulations in sectors such as health, public education and social services, or to safeguard its right to promote and preserve its cultural diversity.

Canadians have benefited, and will continue to benefit, from trade. To continue to get the best deal possible for Canadian farmers, exporters, manufacturers and consumers, the government will be participating actively in all aspects of the Doha

negotiations. Canada will pay particular attention to the core agenda of reforming world agriculture trade, opening markets for both goods and services in areas of export interest to Canadians, and strengthening the rules, particularly those that limit U.S. capacity to take unfair trade remedy actions. Canada also strongly supports negotiations on clarifications and improvements to the dispute settlement mechanism.

Other Canadian objectives with regard to the Doha Development Agenda include concluding negotiations for a voluntary, facilitative, simple and low-cost registration system for wines and spirits. In the area of trade and environment, Canada seeks to strengthen the mutually supportive relationship between WTO rules and multilateral environmental agreements.

Considering the needs of developing countries and tangibly advancing the cause of development through these negotiations are integral to our objectives in the Doha Round. To that end, the government is actively:

- pursuing initiatives to strengthen technical assistance and capacity building, both at the WTO and bilaterally;
- seeking to address some of the challenges that many developing countries face in implementing some of the trade agreements; and
- addressing the concerns of some developing countries about taking on new commitments.

These negotiations cover areas where there are potential, significant gains for developing countries. These include market access, for both agricultural and industrial goods, and a strengthened rules-based system. Facilitating the integration of developing countries into the global economy requires a coherent approach, including the integration of trade into poverty-reduction and development plans.

Canada remains committed to a strategy of targeted regional and bilateral free trade agreements that complement its multilateral trade initiatives. Such strategic agreements can contribute to the development of common rules and standards to govern international trade, as well as build momentum and capacity for trade liberalization at a global level. As an increasing number of countries pursue such regional and bilateral arrangements, it is incumbent upon all parties to ensure that these agreements are fully supportive of and consistent with WTO principles.