

# Trade

## *Canada's policy*

The well-being and prosperity of Canadians depend on a healthy international trade and investment climate. Over the past 10 years, Canada's total annual exports have almost doubled, reaching \$275 billion in 1996. Exports of goods and services now account for more than 38 per cent of Canada's gross domestic product, the highest proportion among G-7 nations.

Canadian trade policy seeks enhanced and more predictable access to the U.S. and other foreign markets, and promotes continuous improvement and expanded coverage of international rules governing trade and investment.

Canada has been successful over the last decade in pursuing these goals. Canada has been involved in negotiating the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, the North American Free Trade Agreement and the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, which led to the creation of the World Trade Organization. These agreements have resulted in a significantly enhanced rules-based framework to aid trade and investment.

## *Singapore ministerial*

The first WTO Ministerial Conference in December 1996, in Singapore, was a milestone for the multilateral trading system. Members reaffirmed their support for initiatives that liberalize information technology, basic telecommunications services and financial services. They also supported further negotiations and reviews, as agreed to in the Uruguay Round package, in such areas as agriculture and services. Other items such as investment, competition policy and transparency in government procurement were added to the WTO agenda, demonstrating the system's ability to evolve to meet the needs of the changing global economy.

As well, Canada is expanding trade liberalization and pursuing market access priorities through complementary initiatives. These include a focus on Asia-Pacific through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum; activity in Latin America, including the Free Trade Area of the Americas discussions and a bilateral agreement with Chile; progress with Europe through the Canada-European Union Action Plan, and, beyond these, further liberalization through free trade agreements with countries such as Israel.