

Minister Lee, Distinguished colleagues:

John Crosbie was going to introduce the discussion this afternoon on the Uruguay Round in his capacity as Chairman of the upcoming Vancouver meeting of APEC Ministers responsible for the MTN. I can't imitate John's accent, but we fully share a determination to have APEC make a success of the Uruguay Round.

It is fitting for us to review here in Singapore the progress made to date in the MTN. Our host country is one of the great success stories of the last thirty years in world trade. By 1978, it ranked 31st among exporters of goods, and continuing its impressive ascent, climbed to 18th spot in 1988. Singapore has also emerged as the 17th leading exporter of services. All that with a population smaller than our dynamic city of Toronto.

In fact, I could go around this table and give many similar examples. The Asia-Pacific region is one of the most dynamic in the world. It comprises an impressive diversity, but has shown remarkable economic and trade growth in recent years. These striking achievements highlight the importance of an open, multilateral trading system to countries at all levels of development. It is an example, and a lesson, that we should bear in mind as we work toward a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

In these final critical months of the negotiations, it is timely for us, as APEC Ministers, to review the current state of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations. What happens in Brussels in December will have an enormous impact on each of our economies, and on what and how much we trade with each other, as well as with the rest of the world. This group of Asia-Pacific countries represents many of the key players in the Uruguay Round. Canada believes that APEC countries can have a real impact on the progress of the negotiations by setting out common concerns, common interests, and by clearly facing and discussing the differences among us.