

important international agreements. In addition to significant tariff cuts, the Tokyo Round brought greater discipline to the use of non-tariff barriers such as import licensing, government subsidies, customs valuations, technical standards and government purchasing policies.

As early as 1981, with the world in the worst economic recession since the 1930s, Canada and a group of other countries began thinking about a new round of negotiations. This, they agreed, was needed to counter severe and growing protectionist pressures, and to move forward with trade liberalization. They also believed that it was necessary to strengthen the GATT, because member-nations were increasingly ignoring or evading its rules.

Fearing a trade war and recognizing the need for liberalizing trade, the GATT countries launched the current round of multilateral trade negotiations (MTN) in September 1986.

The ministerial declaration, which formally launched the Uruguay Round, indicates that this new round of negotiations will be the most far reaching and comprehensive ever undertaken. The Punta del Este Declaration states the following important political commitments:

- to halt the introduction of new protectionist measures and to promote policies that will remove barriers to trade;
- for the first time in GATT history, to include objectives for across-the-board negotiations on agriculture;
- to reduce or eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers in order to improve market access;
- to include negotiations on "new" (in the context of GATT negotiations) issues such as trade in services, trade-related intellectual property matters and trade-related investment measures; and
- to reinforce and extend the mandate of the GATT.

After preliminary planning sessions, 14 separate negotiating groups began meeting in January 1987, and have since made generally satisfactory progress. Their goal is to complete the first phase of the negotiations by the end of 1987. These preliminary discussions will pave the way to substantive negotiations in 1988, which should be completed by 1990.

During 1987, Canada participated in a number of high-level international meetings, which seemed to reinforce political commitment to the new round of negotiations. These included a meeting of Trade Ministers in New Zealand in March; the meeting of Quadrilateral Trade Ministers (Canada, USA, Japan and the EEC) in Japan in April; the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Ministerial Meeting in Paris in May; the Cairns Group Meeting of Agricultural Traders in Ottawa in May; and, most recently, the Venice Economic Summit in June 1987.

In June 1988, Canada will host the Economic Summit in Toronto, at which the MTN in general and agriculture in particular will be high on the agenda. We will be active participants in a number of international meetings leading up to the Economic Summit. A key step in this process will be a meeting of Quadrilateral Trade Ministers, which Canada will host in the Spring of 1988.