

BACKGROUND

- ° The Government of Canada has decided to propose trade negotiations with the United States. It is not committed to concluding a trade agreement with the United States.
- ° The aim of the negotiations is to secure and enhance Canadian access to what is, by far, our largest export market. That access is now being eroded. More than two million Canadian jobs directly depend on exports to the United States. The Government will try to forge a better, fairer foundation for our most important trading relationship.
- ° The Government seeks a new commercial arrangement -- one which will stimulate growth and create jobs in our country. Canada will not conclude a deal which fails to meet these objectives.
- ° The Government's purpose is to preserve jobs in the short term, create jobs in the medium and long term, and to forge a stronger -- and more competitive -- economy.
- ° Undisputed access by Canadian business to the enormous United States market will attract new international investment to Canada.
- ° The impact of the agreement would be phased, i.e. not immediate. Any necessary transitional measures would be implemented.
- ° Canada's sovereignty and cultural integrity are not subject to negotiation, now or ever. The Government will ensure that any trade agreement with the United States will strengthen, not erode, Canada's unique identity and social institutions.
- ° Canada's medicare system and our fundamental social programs are not on the table.
- ° This government believes that a strong economy and a vibrant cultural community are the essential ingredients of an independent and distinctive nation.