

Foreword

This volume brings together the results of research and analysis conducted by the World Trade Issues Working Group from late 1999 through 2000, under the overall aegis of the Global Challenges and Opportunities Network (GCON). GCON had been launched as part of a larger policy research initiative (PRI) to advance the general objective of enhancing policy research capacity within the Government of Canada. Given the pervasive impact on national policies of globalization and trade liberalization, a key area for research centred on issues raised by Canada's participation in the global trading system.

As it happened, the timing of this initiative was fortuitous: the failure to launch a new round of multilateral trade negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial meeting in Seattle in December 1999 laid bare a number of fault lines and raised a spate of issues concerning the future direction of global trade policy. The World Trade Issues Working Group tackled these issues through a series of seminars with invited trade policy experts and research papers. The results have deepened understanding of the issues within the government; it is hoped through this compilation to make this work more widely available.

The papers compiled in this volume are very much in the spirit that the PRI envisaged when it launched the GCON working group process. The papers were for the most part written in the personal capacity of staff members from a wide range of participating departments; and they resulted in horizontal, cross-cutting analysis of challenging policy issues confronting the Government of Canada as a whole, while at the same time helping to rebuild the research capacity of the various participating departments. The interdepartmental collaboration created a new network of researchers, helping to break down the "stovepipe" approaches that are widely recognized as inadequate in addressing the complex interdisciplinary issues now facing public governance.