

Canadian direct foreign investment in the region is approximately \$209 million. In March 1998, Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Trade and Investment with Central America to enhance our economic relations with the region. Although the region is a relatively small market, Canada's efforts in expanding its role in Central America are paying dividends. Our exports to the region are growing and Canadian companies have been competing successfully.

Consulting with Canadians on our mutual goals is an important part of how Canadian trade policy is formulated. Therefore, it is essential that the Government be fully aware of the interests and sensitivities of Canadians with respect to this initiative. To that end, I would welcome your advice and views on any priorities, objectives and concerns about a free trade agreement with Central America. I would appreciate receiving your views by Friday, February 9, 2001, although I will consider views received after that date. You may provide your input using the following contact point:

Trade Policy Planning Division (EAD) / Central America
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0G2
Fax: (613) 944-0757
E-mail: consultations@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Alternatively, views may be communicated through the Trade Negotiations and Agreements page of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's Internet site at www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca.

Your input is a critical part of our consultative process on this issue. I look forward to your comments and advice.

Sincerely,

Pierre S. Pettigrew