

The Government has adopted a National Trade Strategy which reflects a consensus of the private sector and provincial governments. That strategy has three dimensions; firstly, to improve the international competitiveness of the Canadian economy; secondly, to improve access to markets in other countries; and thirdly, to improve the effectiveness of our international marketing efforts. In each of these three dimensions a number of initiatives have been undertaken by the Government over the past year. These initiatives have taken into account informal consultation with the private sector and the provinces. The implementation of the initiatives and consideration of further initiatives will be greatly enhanced by the establishment of the ITAC and SAGIT system for consultation.

A number of steps have been taken to improve international competitiveness, in particular, export financing. Further decisions are pending and other initiatives will be considered.

On access, there are three major areas on which initiatives have been undertaken. The first has been to propose to the United States that we enter into trade negotiations with the purpose of reducing or eliminating existing tariff and non-tariff barriers between the two countries. This initiative has been defined as the pursuit of a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement which would be fully compatible with our multilateral obligations under the GATT. The second major initiative has been to participate with some ninety other countries to obtain a consensus to enter into multilateral trade negotiations to further liberalize trade among all participants. Thirdly, the Government is pursuing a number of bilateral discussions with major trading partners to improve access for Canadian goods and services in those markets. The advice of the ITAC and SAGIT will be of particularly critical importance in the context of any trade negotiations that evolve.

On marketing, the Government has introduced a comprehensive marketing strategy, in consultation with the private sector and the provincial governments. This strategy includes the establishment of export and market share objectives in all markets and the identification of priority opportunities and the means to pursue these opportunities in our major markets covering some 95 per cent of our current exports. A variety of innovations