

QUADRILATERAL TRADE MINISTERS MEETING

BACKGROUND

Ministers responsible for International Trade of Canada, the United States, the European Community and Japan have met on a regular basis (two or three times a year) since 1982. The last Quadrilateral meeting took place in San Diego (California) at the beginning of January 1986 and prior to that Sault Ste. Marie in July 1985.

The idea of ministerial discussions on trade was first raised during the preparations for the 1981 Ottawa Economic Summit, against the background of the experience developed during recent multilateral trade negotiations (Kennedy Round and Tokyo Round). The first Quadrilateral Trade Meeting was held in January 1982 at the initiative of then United States Trade Representative, Mr. William Brock. The objective was to provide an opportunity for informal discussions among the participants on international trade and trade-related economic developments, and trade prospects and problems of common interest.

During three days of informal meetings in Portugal, the Ministers and their officials will review the international trading situation and the issues involved. They are expected in particular to discuss the mid-September ministerial meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay, on a new round of multilateral trade negotiations.