

- third, the Canadian economy is well positioned to adjust quickly and smoothly and to take advantage of the new opportunities provided by the improved and more secure access to the U.S. market. Canada's international competitive position has improved substantially over the past several years. Since 1983, Canada's record of output and employment growth has been the best of all major industrialized countries; and
- fourth, not only will the adjustment requirements be minimal compared with the changes normally occurring — every year for instance, there are five million job changes in Canada involving more than four million workers — but the federal government has in place a wide array of programs to assist individuals and businesses to adapt to changes in business and labour market conditions that will arise from free trade.

Substantial programs are in place to assist Canadian workers and businesses to respond to the Agreement.¹ The most important federal program directed at labour adjustment is the Canadian Jobs Strategy, which provides financial assistance for training, job development and relocation of workers. Employment and Immigration Canada also runs the Industrial Adjustment Service and provides counselling, referral and placement services. Unemployment Insurance is always available to help Canadians make the transition from one job to another. An equally extensive range of programs is available which will help Canadian businesses

capitalize on the new opportunities created by the Agreement. They include: the Trade Commissioner service of the Department of External Affairs; the Program for Export Market Development; the Microelectronics and Systems Development Program and the Technology Outreach Program operated by the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion; and the new approach to regional development embodied in the programs and services of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Western Economic Diversification and the Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario. An Advisory Council on Adjustment, composed of representatives from business and labour organizations and academics, has been established to advise the government on the effectiveness of these programs in the context of the Agreement.

Women and the Agreement

The next three chapters present factual information on women in the economy and on aspects of the Agreement that may be of special interest to Canadian women. A snapshot of women in the economy is provided in Chapter 3, with emphasis on women's role in the labour force and their role as consumers. Chapter 4 presents a discussion of selected elements of the Agreement that have particular significance for women. An assessment of the effects of the Agreement on women is found in Chapter 5, with reference to the service and manufacturing industries, women as entrepreneurs and women as consumers.

¹Details on these programs, including aspects of particular significance to women, are found in Appendix A.