



No. 101

April 26, 1991

INTERNATIONAL TRADE MINISTER
MICHAEL H. WILSON
APPOINTS CHIEF NEGOTIATOR FOR TRILATERAL TALKS

International Trade Minister Michael H. Wilson today is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. John M. Weekes as Chief Negotiator for the North America Free Trade Negotiations involving Canada, Mexico and the United States. Mr. Weekes has been Canadian Ambassador to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in Geneva, Switzerland, since 1987, and as such has been actively involved in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Mr. Wilson said, "We have selected Mr. Weekes for this task because it was clear that Canada should be represented by an experienced senior negotiator in these important talks, which are scheduled to begin formally in the next few months."

Mr. Weekes will be supported by a special office for negotiations within External Affairs and International Trade Canada and by a team of expert negotiators for specific issues drawn from various government departments.

Mr. Wilson further noted that there would be very close co-operation between the teams dealing with the Multilateral Trade Negotiations and the North America Free Trade Negotiations. "We have two important negotiations running in parallel, often dealing with the same issues. We will ensure that the Canadian position in both talks is consistent and co-ordinated," Mr. Wilson emphasized.

Mr. Wilson said that Mr. Weekes would be expected to work closely with the provinces in developing the Canadian approach to the talks. The Government intends to work just as closely with the provinces as it has done in the FTA