

## NEXT STEPS

The multi-stakeholder meetings helped the government examine services trade aspects that cut across sectors or regions, and to familiarize itself with a number of important local issues. The meetings allowed the federal government to co-ordinate trade policy development with provincial/territorial governments. They also provided useful input into Canada's negotiating position for the GATS.

The meetings are only one step in a process of continuing consultation with Canadians throughout the GATS negotiations. They have, however, provided valuable guidance.

### ONGOING CONSULTATION

Many participants appreciated the information sessions, and the co-operation between federal and provincial governments in the consultation process.

*"I am happy to see transparency in this process."*

*"Our relationship with federal trade policy officials has been stellar, notwithstanding the overlap with provincial jurisdiction."*

However, a number of participants felt that the process could be improved. Some cited insufficient preparation time, while others felt that the process was not representative enough. In addition, many participants called on the government to convene additional Parliamentary hearings on trade policy issues, in order to ensure further opportunities for debate with political representatives, not only officials.

*"We need more time and more opportunities to consult, and it may be that some subsidies will be necessary (to ensure public interest groups can fully participate)."*

*"After finishing this process, you should consider a publicized on-line discussion, like the World Bank's discussion on poverty a few months ago."*