

promote greater economic, social and political development in our hemisphere. Canada's leadership in this process is undeniable: Quebec City will host the hemisphere's leaders at the Summit next April, and we hosted the FTAA Trade Ministers meeting in Toronto last November, the culmination of the crucial start-up phase of the negotiations that Canada chaired.

We place a priority on these negotiations because free trade is good for Canada. Quite simply, trade is first, foremost and always, about people: people finding rewards for their efforts, markets for their products and hope for their future. And we believe, free trade will benefit the people of our hemisphere as well.

For those who, for whatever reasons, oppose free trade and trade agreements, let me ask, why would we exclude others from the kind of prosperity we enjoy, built on trade and engagement with the global economy? Why condemn to isolation the others of this hemisphere who aspire to the same quality of life, range of choice and opportunity that we wish for ourselves? Why deny them the same paths that we ourselves have followed to prosperity?

And who would deny that Canada's success in harnessing the benefits of globalization has produced prosperity for Canadians. Our exports increased by more than 11 percent in 1999 -- reaching \$410 billion. To put it into perspective, that's 43 percent of our entire GDP. And this growth has been taking place for some time. Ten years ago, our exports represented 25 percent of our GDP, so we've increased exports from 25 percent to 43 percent in one decade.

The payback of this volume of trade to Canada -- where one out of every three jobs depends on exports -- is clear. The 427 000 jobs that Canadians created last year was the highest number of net new jobs created since 1979 and can be attributed in large measure to our success in global markets. Our unemployment rate is now at around 6.6 percent, the lowest in a quarter of a century. In fact, most of the two million new jobs created since 1993 are related to our growth in trade.

Trade also contributes to the more intangible aspects of our national life: for example, enhancing our confidence as our companies succeed in tough international markets and contributing to a higher quality of life for Canadians and a greater range of choices for consumers.

In the continued pursuit of the benefits of trade, I am very pleased to say that, the Canadian government is able to express its broad agreement with this Committee's 29 recommendations on the positions and priorities Canada should take in the negotiations. Let me cover the most important points.

Market Access Priorities

Regarding market access, we will push for accelerated tariff reductions for products of export interest while taking into account domestic sensitivities. We will also continue to push for liberalization on agricultural products in keeping with our World Trade Organization [WTO] positions.

We also support improved rules for anti-dumping measures and disciplines on subsidies, especially agricultural export subsidies.

Other negotiating priorities include: a comprehensive government procurement agreement; an intellectual property agreement in line with international provisions; improved competition policy