

Mr. Wilson noted that in mid-March, the three countries will continue additional discussions on the environment and labour. Discussions on these issues have been under way, either bilaterally or among the three countries, almost since the beginning of the NAFTA negotiations. All three governments have agreed that additional labour and environmental accords can be negotiated separately, without reopening the NAFTA.

A number of trade-related environmental measures were included in the NAFTA. In addition, Canada, the United States and Mexico agreed on August 12, 1992, the date the NAFTA negotiations were concluded, that environment ministers would meet to consider the establishment of a North American Commission on the Environment. In September they agreed in principle to its formation, and talks have been under way since.

"Throughout the negotiating period, Canada put forward a number of proposals to strengthen co-operation in the environmental and labour fields," the Minister said. "We will continue to press for meaningful agreements in these areas in consultations with the environment, business and labour communities."

The Minister emphasized that the NAFTA is only one component of the Government's trade agenda. As its top priority, the Government continues to press for a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

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