

In November 1992, a subcommittee of the House of Commons Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade began public hearings into the NAFTA in Ottawa and five other Canadian cities, where it heard testimony on the NAFTA from a wide range of witnesses.

### **The Process in the United States**

Once the Agreement is signed, the Administration may submit the implementing legislation to Congress. There is no deadline for its introduction. As long as the NAFTA is signed prior to June 1, 1993, it remains eligible for implementation under "fast track" procedures, regardless of when the implementing Bill is introduced. Introduction of the implementing package triggers the 90 legislative day\* timetable for completion. The legislation is then referred to the Committees of jurisdiction in both Houses. There are up to 45 legislative days for consideration on the House floor, up to 15 days each for consideration by House and Senate Committees, and up to 15 days for consideration on the Senate floor.

Once received from the Committees, the legislation will be debated for 20 hours in each chamber and will be voted either "up or down" without amendment. Once approved by both chambers, the implementing legislation will be forwarded to the President for signature.

### **The Process in Mexico**

Once the NAFTA is formally signed, the Agreement is sent to the Senate for approval. Although the Mexican Congress is a bicameral body consisting of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, presentation of international agreements to the Chamber of Deputies is not required under the Mexican Constitution.

If the Agreement is approved by the Senate, it is forwarded to the Senate Internal Committee on Foreign Relations for review. On completion of the review, the Committee officially tables the Agreement in the Senate, where it is debated and a vote held. International agreements require ratification by a two-thirds majority of the Senate. If the Senate vote is favourable, the Senate then authorizes the Executive (the Office of the President) to exchange letters of ratification with Canada and the U.S.

\* A legislative day is a day when either the House or the Senate is in session.