

The Summit: Trade-Heavy

QUESTION

Some argue that the 34 nations' heavy focus on trade issues is diverting them from addressing critically important social and economic needs. How do you respond to these critics?

SUGGESTED REPLY

- First, greater trade and investment liberalization in the hemisphere will help create the necessary wealth to increase spending on these important programs.
- Second, the 34 FTAA countries also committed themselves to a parallel process of initiatives at the Summit of the Americas in Miami in December 1994, known as the Miami Summit Action Plan.
- This Action Plan is an integrated approach to meeting our common objectives of strengthening democracy, promoting economic integration, eradicating poverty and discrimination and enhancing sustainable development.
- Canada strongly supports and is playing a leading role in ensuring the implementation of all of the Summit initiatives. A number of government departments have organized high-level Canadian participation in post-Summit meetings on poverty, defence, labour, and money laundering to name a few.
- Canada played an active role in preparing for the second Summit of the Americas in Santiago in April, which also takes a balanced approach. Trade liberalization is only one of four main areas to be discussed; the other three are key areas of social policy, namely education, elimination of poverty and discrimination, and democracy/human rights.
- We are also pursuing these objectives with equal vigour in the Organization for American States and other regional fora and Canada intends to continue this level of commitment.