



the FTAA individually or as members of a subregional preferential trading arrangement; that the FTAA should co-exist with — not replace — hemispheric subregional agreements such as the NAFTA; and that a temporary administrative secretariat would be established to support the negotiations. These decisions, specified in the Belo Horizonte Joint Declaration, reflect Canadian priorities related to the timing and nature of the negotiations and the ensuing agreement.

In preparation for the Costa Rican ministerial meeting in March 1998, Canada made several proposals related to the possible structure of the FTAA negotiations. Canada's objective was to ensure that the decision taken with respect to the FTAA negotiating structure would reflect the principles and objectives of sound management, efficiency, flexibility and comprehensiveness of the negotiations. Canada also worked to ensure greater transparency in the preparatory process, including input by the private sector, labour groups and other members of the public.

Canada's goal for the FTAA at the Santiago Summit of the Americas is to see the FTAA officially launched, as planned, with the start-up of detailed negotiations to follow soon after. Many FTAA countries have indicated a reluctance to launch the negotiations if the U.S. administration does not have fast-track negotiating authority in time for the Santiago meeting. While the approval of fast-track would send a positive signal of U.S. potential commitment to hemispheric free trade, it is not a technical requirement for negotiations to begin. Accordingly, Canada is on record as supporting the launch of FTAA negotiations at Santiago, regardless of whether the U.S. administration has received fast-track negotiating authority from Congress.