

As I think you all know, one of the main themes of the new Government in Canada is national economic renewal, the pursuit of all means at our disposal to promote balanced and sustainable economic growth. The process of renewal requires cooperation at all levels in Canada. Cooperation, in turn, requires consultation, and last week I issued a Discussion Paper that will serve as a basis for consultations, with the private sector and then with the provinces, on how to secure and enhance Canadian access to the world's export markets.

I will not go into lengthy detail about the Paper, because I suspect that many of you have seen it by now. In brief, however, it covers three areas.

The first part outlines the changing international trade setting, with its many challenges and opportunities, stressing the great potential for increasing Canada's trade with the countries of the Pacific Rim.

Part two of the Paper considers our involvement in the next round of multilateral trade negotiations under the GATT. Canada fully supports the initiative taken by Japan and the United States towards beginning a new round, and we are seeking the views of Canadians so that we may determine our own priorities and help shape the agenda for the Round.

The third part of the Paper addresses our trading relationship with the United States, which is by far our largest trading partner, and sets out four options for securing and enhancing our access to the U.S. market. These include reliance on the existing arrangements, the negotiation of new sectoral agreements and/or non-tariff agreements, the negotiation of a comprehensive agreement, and the negotiation of what might be called a "framework" agreement -- in essence, an agreement in principle to work together to enhance our bilateral trade.

We are entering these consultations with no pre-conceived notions -- except, of course, our support for the GATT. We hope to come to some conclusions within a few months, and begin to put our conclusions into action. My message to you here is that, whatever the conclusions turn out to be, they will in no way distract us from one conclusion we have already reached: that the Pacific Basin in general, and Japan in particular, are going to figure very prominently in our efforts to promote trade.