

This report summarizes the results of the first phase of the research -- a series of focus group discussions conducted April 17, 18 and 19, 1990 -- including 2 each in Toronto, St. John (N.B.), Vancouver and Montreal. Participants were screened to reflect a balanced representation by age and sex and excluded anyone who may have previously participated in a focus group where Free Trade was discussed.

As noted above, the purpose of the preliminary focus group research was to obtain qualitative insight into the opinions and concerns of Canadians with respect to selected issues related to trade and international trade. The discussion results are useful both as qualitative data in themselves and as a means of exploring the range of public opinion and providing an interpretive context for the quantitative survey design and results. The focus group results are also useful in the development of hypotheses and questionnaire items for further tracking research. Topic areas covered in the focus group discussions included:

- 1) economic outlook and driving factors
- 2) international trade: a context
- 3) competitiveness
- 4) international trade: a focus
- 5) the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement
- 6) communication needs/perspectives.

A complete list of the question areas is contained in the Moderator's Guide, a copy of which is appended to this report. The Moderator's Guide was developed by the Angus Reid Group in close consultation with the Communications Policy division of the Department of External Affairs Canada.

The highlights of the following report were presented in an oral briefing to the client on April 26, 1990.