



International Trade
Commerce international

Statement

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NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY

THE HONOURABLE PIERRE PETTIGREW,

MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE,

TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

ON

THE FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS

OTTAWA, Ontario

June 14, 2000

Let me begin by stating that a key component of Canada's export success has been the network of international trade agreements that we have negotiated. These agreements – NAFTA, for example – have worked extremely well. And while we face real challenges as we negotiate and define new agreements such as the FTAA [Free Trade Area of the Americas], it is something to which the Canadian government is firmly committed.

Our recent response to this Committee's report on the FTAA, known as The Free Trade Area of the Americas: Towards a Hemispheric Agreement in the Canadian Interest, outlines what we aim to achieve in these negotiations.

The FTAA is a historic opportunity to unite 34 countries of the Americas into a free trade area of impressive proportions. The potential is considerable: it's a market with a combined population of over 800 million and a GDP of \$17 trillion.

The FTAA is also a vital part of the Summit of the Americas process, the aim of which is to