

THE CONSULTATIONS

During the summer and fall of 2000, together with its provincial/territorial counterparts, the federal government organized a series of consultations with interested stakeholders on Canada's GATS negotiating position. The consultations are one of several mechanisms being used by the government to solicit the views of Canadians. Other consultative activities include the following:

- a series of electronic questionnaires to over 10 000 Canadian businesses actively engaged in exporting;
- ongoing consultations with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's permanent Sector Advisory Groups on International Trade, made up of business, academic and other stakeholders in various industry sectors;
- public hearings by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade;
- a public call for submissions by notice in the *Canada Gazette*;
- extensive public information on the departmental Web site (<http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca>) and on an interdepartmental site focussing specifically on the GATS (<http://services2000.ic.gc.ca>); and
- meetings with individual stakeholders, associations and special interest groups.

The objectives of the multi-stakeholder consultation meetings were twofold:

- to provide a report on the state of the GATS negotiations to stakeholders and members of the public with an interest in the GATS; and
- to collect initial viewpoints on the GATS negotiations from the participants, who represented a broad cross-section of interested Canadians.

Invitations were sent to 1165 interested individuals and organizations, of which 335 were represented at the 12 sessions. The participants included service providers; regulators; business, labour and consumers' associations; local governments; and non-governmental organizations. (For a full list of invitees and participants, see Appendix A.) A one-day consultation meeting was held in each province and territory except for Nunavut, which at the time of writing had not scheduled a session.