

CANADA AND THE URUGUAY ROUND

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is the cornerstone of the world trading system and of Canada's international trade policy. Canada was one of the 23 founding members of the GATT in 1947 and has played a leading role in the development of the GATT system ever since.

The eighth major round of multilateral trade negotiations (MTN), known as the Uruguay Round, was launched in Punta del Este, Uruguay in September 1986. This Round is expected to conclude in 1990.

The Montreal Ministerial Meeting, beginning December 5, 1988, will bring together trade, finance and agriculture ministers from the 105 countries and international organizations participating in the Uruguay Round. The purpose of this meeting is to review developments to date at the mid-point of the MTN and to provide political impetus and direction to the various negotiating groups for the final two years of negotiations.

The future growth and prosperity of Canada's economy depends on a fair and open world trading system. Canada's top priority in the Uruguay Round is to expand and secure access to world markets for Canadian exports.

Canada's overall objectives in the MTN are as follows:

- to improve market access for Canadian exports by reducing or eliminating, where possible, tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, especially for agricultural and natural resource-based products;
- to seek clearer and more effective GATT rules for agricultural products to open up world markets to Canadian agri-food exports and to reduce export subsidization, especially by the United States and the European Community, which is harming Canadian farmers;