

initiatives to improve access to markets, namely, through future multilateral trade negotiations and through possible bilateral initiatives with the United States. These two priorities do not exclude the government's interest in being made aware of any access problems in particular markets that may be pursued on a bilateral basis.

27. Given the importance of exports to Canada and the volatile and competitive international trade environment, the fundamental task for Canada is to identify our principal market access problems and to decide on the best ways and means to address them, both in multilateral negotiations and through improving and building bilateral relationships.

28. In the U.S., our most important market, protectionist pressures are rising, fuelled by a record trade deficit. Given the potential threats facing Canada in the U.S. market and the importance of that market to Canada, the key question that arises is whether our objectives can be met through bilateral arrangements and, if so, which is the approach likely to work best to assure our access. We must move urgently to define Canadian interests and determine how best to pursue them.