

on behalf of the NAFTA (Chapter 11) Investment Experts Group, which is made up of officials of the Canadian, American and Mexican governments.

- In July 2003, a multi-stakeholder session was held on the margins of the Montreal informal ministerial meeting hosted by International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew. The session allowed civil society representatives to exchange views, *inter alia*, with Minister Pettigrew and with the WTO's Director General, Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi.
- In September 2003, the WTO Ministerial Conference held in Cancun, Mexico, allowed the participation of some 250 Canadian individuals, including ministers, senior officials, other governmental representatives, parliamentarians, and representatives of non-governmental organizations, business associations and unions, etc.
- In October 2003, the NAFTA multi-stakeholder roundtable discussion provided an opportunity for 51 representatives from the business community, non-governmental organizations, academia and associations to have a thorough exchange on NAFTA, its impacts after 10 years and possible future developments. Minister Pettigrew, Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Peter Allgeier and Mexico's Under-Secretary for International Trade, Angel Villalobos joined the roundtable at the end of the day to receive recommendations from participants regarding the development of further trilateral work on NAFTA.
- In November 2003, Canada's delegation to the FTAA Miami Ministerial Meeting included parliamentarians and provincial representatives. Interested Canadians were briefed on site and by teleconference call. In addition, Canada's International Trade Minister met with parliamentarians and with business and civil society representatives from the hemisphere to exchange views on the FTAA negotiations.

In addition, the government encourages Canadians to participate in annual trade-related international conferences and consultative initiatives, including the World Trade Organization public symposium, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) forum, the OECD Trade Committee and Joint Working Party on Trade and Environment consultations, and the Free Trade Area of the Americas thematic meetings.

Furthermore, the government actively participates in national, regional and international initiatives that advance understanding of how trade affects women and men differently, how to address these differences, and how to develop approaches to support the advancement of gender equality. Canada supported and participated in the first-ever session on gender and trade at a WTO symposium held in June 2003 and in the Gender Equality, Trade and Development session held in conjunction with the WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun in September 2003. These two events successfully drew the attention of the WTO and the multilateral trading system to the significant contribution that women make in international trade and highlighted the differential impacts of trade liberalization on women and men.

To keep Canadians informed and up to date on trade-related issues and events abroad, the government provides briefings by teleconference, webcast and audiocast, etc. Canadians are also encouraged to use the Department's trade negotiations and agreements Web site (www.tradeagreements.gc.ca), which contains an extensive consultation section ("It's Your Turn") to enable users to send in comments on Canada's trade policy agenda and stay abreast of specific consultation initiatives launched by the government.

IF YOU ARE DOING BUSINESS ABROAD, WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU...

We particularly welcome direct input from Canadian exporters and investors describing barriers they have encountered in foreign markets. Individual companies, industry associations and other interested organizations are encouraged to contact the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade with specific information on tariff or non-tariff barriers and other business irritants. Business people are invited to report any problems they are experiencing by communicating in strictest confidence to:

"Foreign Trade and Investment Barriers Alert"
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