



Minister for
International Trade

Ministre du
Commerce extérieur

COMMUNIQUÉ

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WORLD TRADE MINISTERS MEETING - SEOUL

MAY 30 - JUNE 1

The Honourable James Kelleher, Minister for International Trade, participated in the World Trade Ministers Meeting in Seoul, Korea, from May 30 to June 1.

The Minister reported that discussions among the eighteen countries represented at the meeting demonstrated a determination to move into a new round of trade liberalization negotiations. In particular, Mr. Kelleher noted strong and growing support from most participants for substantive and urgent action to deal with agriculture.

The Minister took the lead in following up on the Prime Minister's initiative at the Tokyo Summit to urge participants to declare that in the new round of trade negotiations to be launched in Punta del Este in September, agriculture be put as a top priority both in timing and importance. There was growing support that the September meeting should obtain a commitment from GATT Members to a standstill on protection in agriculture and that negotiations to liberalize this sector be put on a "fast track".

Mr. Kelleher noted that it will not be easy to get agreement for urgent action to stop and reverse protectionism in agriculture. However, he said the support among many developed countries was stronger at Seoul than at any previous meeting. There was also clear recognition that full participation of developing countries in a new round requires a commitment by developed countries to deal with barriers to trade and agriculture in an urgent and meaningful way.

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