



news release

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GATT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY MEASURES ENDORSED

The Honourable Michael Wilson, Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade, and the Honourable Pierre Blais, Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs today endorsed multilateral trade proposals to strengthen patent protection for pharmaceuticals.

The proposals contained in the draft text of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) agreement would allow pharmaceutical patent owners to enjoy the full term of protection now provided to patent owners in all other sectors of our economy.

The Ministers said that Canada's position is consistent with the emerging multilateral consensus among developed and developing countries, that stronger patent protection greatly improves the investment climate and the atmosphere in which innovation can take place.

They stressed that the changes to the current patent protection regime for pharmaceuticals reflect three overriding objectives of importance to all Canadians:

- 1) We want more and better medicines and treatments for the diseases that afflict Canadians;
- 2) We want more research and development to occur in this country; and
- 3) We want to ensure that the prices of patented medicines are reasonable for consumers.

The Ministers added that the multilateral proposal can accomplish all three objectives.

Mr. Wilson stated: "These measures will encourage increased research and development in Canada, providing high-paying, skilled jobs for the medical and scientific communities." He also said, "Canada's international competitiveness in attracting new investment to the pharmaceutical industry will be enhanced."