

## I. INTRODUCTION

This memorandum presents the results of focus group testing of public reactions to various alternative concepts for prospective Government of Canada print advertisements dealing with the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA). An Appendix to this memorandum identifies the different advertisements tested in the groups with reference to the headlines in the ad.

Two groups were conducted in each of Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax, and Montreal, between May 31 and June 2. One group in each city consisted of participants drawn from the general population and the other group was recruited from among that segment of the population with annual household incomes over \$40,000. The purpose of the groups was to ascertain public reaction to the alternative concepts tested, as well as to the idea of federal government advertising providing information about the Canada-U.S. FTA.

We will begin by briefly summarizing our conclusions and recommendations as derived from the focus group research. This will be followed by a review of group participants' views on the idea of federal government advertising pertaining to the FTA issue, and on each of the specific ads tested. This report first discusses those ads which we are recommending that the government proceed with.

### Overview of Conclusions and Recommendations

It is Decima's view that proceeding with print advertisements dealing with the Free Trade Agreement entails a certain amount of risk for the government. The group results reveal, however, that this is mitigated to a considerable extent by the fact that people do not feel they know enough about the FTA and what it might mean. People clearly are interested in receiving more information about the FTA and what it will mean for them, their region and the country.

To be effective, however, the focus group research suggests it will be imperative for any government advertising to be moderate and informational in tone. People want and even expect information about what Canada-U.S. free trade will mean and many believe that