

MINISTERS WELCOMED THE INITIATIVE OF CANADA IN OFFERING TO HOST THE MEETING AND NOTED THAT THIS WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE STRONG SUPPORT GIVEN BY CANADA TO THE GROUP'S ACTIVITIES SINCE ITS INCEPTION AND CANADA'S COMMITMENT TO AGRICULTURAL TRADE REFORM.

MINISTERS NOTED THAT THE CAIRNS GROUP HAS ACHIEVED NOTABLE SUCCESSES IN THE NINE MONTHS SINCE THEY FIRST MET IN CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA.

THE GROUP HAD PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE AT THE GATT MINISTERIAL MEETING AT PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY, IN SEPTEMBER 1986, IN ENSURING THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME AGRICULTURE WOULD BE PLACED AT THE CENTRE OF THE STAGE AND COMPREHENSIVELY DEALT WITH IN A ROUND OF MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS.

THIS HAD BEEN FOLLOWED IN JANUARY 1987 BY SUCCESS AT THE GATT IN GENEVA IN ACHIEVING A WORKABLE NEGOTIATING STRUCTURE WHICH CLEARED THE WAY FOR ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND WORK TO BE COMPLETED AND PROPOSALS FOR AGRICULTURE TRADE REFORM TO BE LODGED BY END OF 1987.