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- Use of Trade Statistics
in Ministerial Briefs and Speeches

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The inconsistent presentation of trade statistics for ministerial use is a matter of growing concern. Practice varies across the Department and between headquarters and our Posts abroad. To a large degree, the inconsistencies reflect unfortunate but real (and increasing) problems with the quality and timeliness of trade statistics as collected internationally, as well as in Canada. The attached package has been designed to explain the nature of the problems we face and to introduce an approach that will ensure greater consistency in the presentation of trade statistics for Departmental use.

2. To ensure that Ministers receive a consistent picture of Canada's international merchandise trade from Departmental briefing material, all drafters of such material should in future adopt the standardized approach reflected in the attached format and explained in the background material. This approach is flexible enough to allow for drafters to present accurately Canada's trade with individual markets, while at the same time ensuring that we are all working from a consistent set of comparable merchandise trade statistics.

3. Each trade director should ensure that at least one member of her/his division becomes fully familiar with the problems associated with the use of trade statistics and is responsible for quality control when trade data are prepared for ministerial use.

4. The responsibility for the quality of briefing material, including the use and presentation of trade statistics, remains with each Branch. To assist in this regard, however, I have asked CPE to organize early in 1995 an information session to expand further on issues

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