

Negotiations on Agriculture."

The Minister of Agriculture welcomed these hearings as an important public forum for agri-food stakeholders to express their views to government on the forthcoming negotiations and the priorities to be pursued by the Government. In addition, in late 1998 and early 1999, the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry held hearings on international trade in agricultural and agri-food products and the approach and priorities that Canada should adopt in the next round of WTO negotiations on agriculture. The Committee's report entitled, *The Way Ahead: Canadian Agriculture's Priorities in the Millennium Round*, was issued in August 1999.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is a third avenue for Parliamentary involvement in the international trade environment. In a meeting held on February 24, 2001, the IPU announced that it would be organizing the first parliamentary meeting on international trade, to be held in June of this year in Geneva. The planning group established the overall theme for the June meeting under the following banner: "For a free, just and equitable multilateral trading system: Providing a parliamentary dimension."

The subjects to be debated include:

- Globalization from a trade perspective: the role and action of parliament as a relay between government and the people
- WTO and the current international trading system: the role of parliaments in the field of legislation
- Parliamentary oversight with respect to future trade negotiations, particularly from the development perspective.

More importantly, the planning group indicated that they would encourage every parliament holding a membership in the IPU to nominate Members of Parliament who are directly involved in parliamentary activities dealing with international trade to attend this meeting. They were particularly interested in Parliamentarians who have had experience with interesting multi-lateral trade negotiations. The comments from IPU General Secretary, Anders B. Johnsson, are worth noting as he stated, "It will be a complement to the work of governments and will discuss the international trade issues from the particular perspective of parliaments in their constitutional role of relaying the views of people to governments, of legislating and overseeing government."

Attached to this report is the annotated provisional agenda for this meeting, which clearly indicates that Parliamentarians who are involved in this organization have now defined an agenda for clarifying the role of parliamentarians and for advocating changes within the WTO.

A fourth way in which Parliamentarians have become involved with international trade issues is through the various parliamentary associations and friendship groups that involve both Senators and Members of the House of Commons. These associations and groups operate on both multilateral and bilateral levels to promote Canadian interests abroad on an ongoing basis. Among these are the aforementioned IPU, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association, the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group, the Canada-France