

Je dirigerai la délégation canadienne lors de la réunion ministérielle du GATT qui se tiendra la semaine prochaine à Punta del Este. Cette réunion revêt une importance critique pour le Canada et pour toutes les autres nations commerçantes. Le gouvernement canadien est fermement convaincu qu'une action internationale s'impose en vue d'améliorer l'environnement commercial mondial. Tout comme l'Argentine, le Canada est fortement tributaire d'un système commercial libéral pour soutenir sa croissance et son développement, et nous sommes persuadés que la réunion de Punta del Este offre la meilleure chance de progresser dans cette voie.

We must realize, however, that GATT negotiations by their very nature, will be long and complex, and the world cannot wait while the search for long term solutions is conducted. In particular, the agricultural sectors in both our countries are in a state of crisis. Action is needed now if we are to avoid the destruction of our farming communities. The Cairns Meeting of Fair Traders in Agriculture agreed that while the GATT negotiations were underway, solutions to the current crisis in agricultural trade should be sought urgently.

We believe that one of the ways to achieve progress could be to ask a group of prominent individuals to provide an urgent, independent, and objective analysis of agricultural subsidies and obstacles to market access, and to report to us on their findings and on the remedies we might consider. We would envisage such a group providing their views on the main issues in trade affecting all agricultural commodities, particularly those currently experiencing severe difficulties such as cereals and red meats.

This group could be asked to consider those government policies and programs that impact significantly on production and trade in farm products, particularly those affecting commodity trade in the next two to three years. It could be asked to propose specific and practical actions to be undertaken together by governments within their current legislative and program frameworks. Such a group would be intended to complement the longer-term action of the GATT. It is clear that it could not substitute itself for the negotiations. What we have in mind is that the proposals from the group could go some way toward reducing the current intolerable stresses in international trade in agriculture and reinforcing the confidence of producers in their own futures.