

This is one of the purposes behind the Canada-India Opportunities Conference, although its wide-ranging agenda is, of course, intended to explore various aspects of the relationship between our countries.

The Canada-India relationship is not new. We worked together closely in the early days of the Colombo Plan, to develop the framework and the policies for a world-wide system of international development. We have helped the Commonwealth develop into one of the more effective international organizations, cutting across regions, race, religion, and economic circumstances. Elsewhere, in the United Nations, in the various arms control and disarmament fora, and in the new round of multilateral trade negotiations, Canada and India are working together on the major issues of the day.

We do not always agree, but when we do agree, we can bring others along.

One important aspect of Canada-India cooperation, for the rest of the decade, will be related to the work of the multilateral trade negotiations in Geneva. These are vitally important negotiations, and in large measure, their success will determine the growth and prosperity of the global economy well into the next century. Despite some signs to the contrary, protectionism continues to feed on the world's huge trade and current account imbalances. Those imbalances, along with the volatility and misalignment on exchange rates, as witnessed by last October's crash, provide ample warning that the world's trading system urgently requires attention.

Serious negotiations are now underway in Geneva. For our part, we want to see rapid progress for greater international discipline in agricultural trade; the implementation of the pledge made in Uruguay two years ago to halt and roll back protectionist measures; and the strengthening of GATT as an institution.

The negotiations in Geneva must address the key interests of all participants - north and south, east and west. The improvement of the multilateral trading system is a fundamental objective of Canada's international trade policy. We are pursuing trade reform everywhere, starting with our closest, largest market.

The agreement with the United States will reinforce the efforts underway in Geneva, and help reverse the build up of protectionism. Not least, the agreement reflects pioneering work in such areas as services and agriculture.