

Second, representatives of environmental interests have been appointed to both the International Trade Advisory Committee (ITAC) and several of the Sectoral Advisory Groups on International Trade (SAGITs). These key advisory bodies, reporting directly to Minister Wilson, also include representation from a broad range of private sector interests. The views of the provinces are also being sought. To further assist the government's environmental consultations on the NAFTA, all concerned Canadians are invited to send comments to the Office of North American Free Trade Negotiations, External Affairs and International Trade Canada.

Third, the government has established an interdepartmental committee to conduct an environmental impact review of the NAFTA on Canada. To fulfil the 1990 commitment to conduct an environmental review of all new policies, the committee will meet regularly with Canadian negotiating group leaders to scrutinize continuously the environmental implications of the agreement.

The review will be presented to Cabinet at the same time as the NAFTA itself. The conclusions of the review will be made public. The ongoing nature of the review will ensure that the environment is taken into account throughout the negotiations.

Finally, the fourth element of the Canadian action plan highlights stronger bilateral co-operation under the Canada-Mexico Agreement on Environmental Co-operation signed by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari in March 1990.

Under this accord, several environmental projects are underway or are being planned. Of particular importance to both countries are projects aimed at strengthening Mexico's capacity to enforce its environmental standards.

Process of Consultation

On the Canadian side, individual working group leaders are also involved in the process of consulting with provincial governments, industry, academia and the general public. The issues under negotiation are included in the agenda for federal-provincial consultation on issues of international trade policy that was first established during the Canada-U.S. FTA negotiations and which has continued for the MTN. Since May, the Chief Negotiator has met with his provincial counterparts four times, and the provinces have been de-briefed through conference calls following the three ministerial meetings. Federal and provincial trade ministers met on July 17 and December 6, with NAFTA being a principal order of business.