



news release

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CANADA WELCOMES AGREEMENT IN GENEVA TRADE TALKS

OTTAWA -- International Trade Minister, John C. Crosbie, today welcomed the positive outcome of the global trade talks this week in Geneva. As a result, the Mid-Term Review of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, initiated at the GATT Montreal Ministerial meeting in December, has been successfully concluded.

Mr. Crosbie said, "The way is now paved for the GATT talks to move into their detailed and substantive phase with a view to their completion by the end of 1990. This breakthrough opens the way to covering agriculture in a way never before included in a GATT context, as well as to improved market access for resources, manufactured products and trade in services."

A key element of the package agreed at the Geneva meeting is a negotiating framework for the liberalization of international agricultural trade and a progressive reduction of trade distorting support measures. The Minister said, "The agricultural reform framework agreed in Geneva is intended to lead to the establishment of a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system, with the ground rules applying to all trading countries."

A short-term freeze provides that the current support and protection levels in the agricultural sector will not be increased during the period of the negotiations. Countries have also agreed by October 1989 to examine the possibility of reducing support and protection levels for 1990. "This short-term political undertaking shows a commitment to the negotiations. For Canada, the important goal is a long-term agreement on agriculture which will bring about a level playing field," Mr. Crosbie noted. Agriculture Minister Don Mazankowski added, "I want to underline that, in the short term, Canada continues to retain all of its rights under GATT, including the ability to introduce import controls in support of supply management; Canadian Wheat Board payments will continue to operate as in the past."

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