

CANADA - CUBA TRADE

Since the beginning of the century, Canada and Cuba have maintained strong trade and commercial ties.

In 1992, the level of our bilateral trade amounted to \$369 million with Canadian exports accounting for \$113 million, and imports for \$256 million. Of all of Cuba's major hard currency trading partners, Canada was the number one importer and number four exporter with Cuba.

Major Canadian exports to Cuba in 1992 comprised of agri-food products, industrial material, paper products and telecommunication equipment. Our imports focused on sugar and related products, as well as nickel mineral, which together accounted for more than 93% of our imports from Cuba that year.

After the sugar industry, the tourism industry has been the second largest earner of hard currency for Cuba, bringing more than US\$ 250 million into the Cuban economy in 1990. In 1992, 26% of the 420,000 visitors were Canadians who spent more than \$100 million. Cuban authorities have placed a high priority to the development for the tourism industry and are seeking to rapidly increase the accommodation network, opening up opportunities for Canadian businesses to supply equipment, services and consumables. Within other sectors there are opportunities for agri-food products especially for tourist industry, building materials and hardware, equipment and services for the mining and petroleum industries.

Whereas in 1988 Cuba conducted 85% of its trade with the East-European Bloc countries, Cuba has had to modify its trade and economic policies to take into account the current global commerce conditions where business must be conducted on an open-market basis.

External Affairs and International Trade Canada promotes sales of Canadian goods and services through government-initiated and industry-initiated programs in sectors such as tourism, hardware, industrial products and agri-food products. The Canadian Government has supported efforts of exporters to the extension of credit facilities. The *National Bank of Canada* has also financed sales of Canadian products to this market.

Canada maintains normal commercial relations with Cuba and consistently resists any effort by third parties to constrain trade and commercial initiatives of firms resident in Canada.