

In international trade, we must work together to ensure that the Uruguay Round achieves the results which ASEAN members did so much to achieve at Punta Del Este last September. The Venice Summit supported an early results package in Geneva. If we are to ensure credibility for the Uruguay Round, as urged in the ASEAN statement for the Venice Summit, we must ensure that early results become a reality. In our view, one promising area for rapid progress is to strengthen the GATT system.

Mr. Chairman, we all know that we are involved as individual countries in an increasing number of bilateral trade disputes. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to resolve those disputes by circumventing GATT rules. Accordingly, a priority for Canada - one that we share with ASEAN - is the need to ensure that standstill and rollback commitments be fully implemented. We have reaffirmed this commitment at Venice.

Agriculture is of major importance to both Canada and to the majority of ASEAN countries. Canadian farmers, like those of ASEAN, are caught in the cross-fire of an agricultural subsidy war that is not of our making. These tensions in agricultural trade threaten the world trading system and the Uruguay Round.

This is why Canada placed agriculture high on our agenda for the recent meetings of trade ministers and why we hosted a meeting of the Cairns Group of Agricultural Fair Traders in Ottawa in May. At the Cairns ministerial, we were able to reinforce the growing consensus in favour of early agricultural reform. Cairns Group concerns were conveyed by Prime Minister Mulroney to other Summit leaders. These concerns were very similar to those outlined in the ASEAN Memorandum to the Summit countries.

Once again in Venice, as at the Tokyo Summit, the Prime Minister of Canada sought priority attention for the issue of agriculture. Canada was pleased with the outcome; Summit leaders themselves reaffirmed the commitment to what they called "the important agreement on agriculture in the OECD Ministerial Communique", and agreed formally to have the question reviewed at the Toronto Summit next year.

There will be no quick fixes, but there is now recognition that agricultural subsidies must be reduced, and other reform measures pursued. As outlined in the ASEAN Memorandum, these include the separation of income support for farmers from producer prices. There is a recognition that predatory and protectionist trade practices cannot be continued. And there is a recognition that the Uruguay Round negotiations must be quickly advanced. These are valid prescriptions for all countries, not just Summit countries.