

These informal meetings are designed to take stock of where we are in the trade negotiations and what steps we need to take to ensure a large, successful conclusion to the Round next December.

We reaffirmed our political will to take the difficult steps towards real progress in trade liberalization.

We agreed to stick to our deadline of tabling position papers in all the negotiating groups by the end of this year, so that the detailed negotiations can start strongly in the new year.

And we agreed on the necessity of responding to the legitimate needs of developing countries.

The progress that's been made should be further advanced when representatives from 27 GATT contracting parties gather for the Informal Trade Ministers meeting, starting tonight.

After that, the difficult, and critical, area of agricultural trade reform will be addressed when the Ministers from the Cairns Groups of agricultural exporting nations meet in Thailand next week.

In terms of Canada/Japan bilateral relations, I have great hopes for Canada's future trade with Japan, our second largest trading partner, as the doors open wider.

Last year, two-way trade between our countries amounted to \$18 billion - a 23 percent increase over 1987. Japanese investment in Canada has grown by about 20 percent a year over the past eight years. Japanese tourism in Canada has boomed, with annual growth rates of 25 to 30 percent in the past three years.

The relationship is developing at a tremendous pace, as Canadians take an increasingly active role in developing this great market.

This is evident in the food and beverage area. In 1988, Canada exported \$2.1 billion in foodstuffs to Japan, an increase of \$450 million from the previous year. To put this into perspective, Canada exports 70 percent more food to Japan than to all members of the European Community combined.