

II. INTRODUCTION

In order to determine general, qualitative attitudes toward international trade, competitiveness and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a series of informal discussions or focus groups were conducted in three major centres in English Canada. Two focus groups were conducted in each of Ottawa, Winnipeg and Vancouver during August 1991.

Participants in the groups were recruited on the basis of moderate support for or moderate opposition to the Canada - U. S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The recruitment questionnaire for this series of groups is contained within the appendix attached. In each city, one group consisted of moderate supporters of the FTA and one group consisted of moderate opponents. While support for and opposition to the FTA was a component of the recruitment process, participants were recruited from a range of age and socio-economic categories to ensure as broad a cross-section of the population as possible.

Each group was moderated by professionally-trained Decima personnel. In each of the three cities in which groups were conducted a representative of External Affairs Canada observed the focus group proceedings through a one-way mirror from a concealed observation room.

The Department of External Affairs prepared a discussion agenda for the focus groups in an effort to ensure that all pertinent issues identified by the Department were included and covered in the course of the discussion. As the agenda was found to be long, it was revised and shortened following the discussion groups held in Ottawa.

