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CANADA TO HOST GATT MEETING

International Trade Minister, John C. Crosbie, announced that delegations from 105 countries will meet next week in Montreal to review the current round of GATT trade negotiations.

The meeting, December 5 to 8, is the mid-term session of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, launched in Punta del Este, Uruguay in September 1986. It will be the GATT's first mid-term review and will bring together ministers from the participating countries.

Mr. Crosbie will preside over the opening and closing sessions. Ricardo Zerbino Cavajani, Uruguay's Minister of Economy and Finance, will chair the proceedings of the Trade Negotiations Committee to which all the negotiating groups report.

Mr. Crosbie explained that the purpose of the meeting is to review progress in the negotiations. He said that trade ministers will "give their negotiating teams political direction for the concluding half of the Uruguay Round."

"The Canadian government is fully committed to progress in multilateral efforts to liberalize world trade. Canada is a trading nation. Our exporters in all sectors of the economy--services, resource industries, manufacturing and agriculture--need improvement in the rules that govern world trade.

"The FTA and Canada's participation in global negotiations under the GATT reinforce one another. They are both directed toward the objective of securing markets for our exports and strengthening Canada's economy."

Mr. Crosbie added that during and after the Free Trade negotiations with the United States, Canada was playing a major role in the multilateral trade negotiations.

"We believe the Free Trade Agreement can serve as a catalyst for dealing with some of the thornier issues in the multilateral trade negotiations."