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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADVISORY COMMITTEE SYSTEM

I. MANDATE AND STRUCTURE

The purpose in establishing this permanent advisory committee system is to provide an on-going, confidential, two-way flow of information and advice between the Government and the private sector on international trade matters.

This advisory committee system, which reports to the Minister for International Trade, ensures that the Government has the benefit of private sector views in its deliberations on international trade access and marketing issues, both bilateral and multilateral.

The advisory committee system has two components: The International Trade Advisory Committee (ITAC) has broad terms of reference on all international trade matters, including issues relating to trade policy, market access and trade development. The other component consists of 13 Sectoral Advisory Groups on International Trade (SAGITs), which interact with the Government to ensure sectoral views are fully taken into account on international trade matters.

On issues directly related to the Canada-U.S. trade talks or to the Multilateral Trade Negotiations, both components of the advisory committee system work closely with the trade negotiators.

ITAC/SAGITs are the main channel for communicating the views of the Canadian private sector to the Government on these two negotiations. In this regard, private sector submissions on these negotiations are directed to the appropriate SAGIT, and through the Sectoral Advisory Group to the Government.

II. MEMBERSHIP - APPOINTMENT AND TENURE

Members of both the ITAC and SAGITs must be Canadian citizens and are appointed by the Minister for International Trade. Members will serve for a period of two years, subject to suitable arrangements being made for sensible rotation and the need for continuity.