

He said there was a reasonable chance that a negotiating framework for long-term reform of agricultural trade could be agreed at the coming meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee in Geneva. The negotiation of this reform would be facilitated if all major participants committed themselves not to increase export subsidies, trade distorting supports as well as market access barriers.

Participation in the Cairns Group ministerial meeting in New Zealand was one of a series of consultations that Mr. Crosbie has had since Montreal in order to help overcome the present impasse to the GATT negotiations. He has met with the United States, the European Community, Japan and Australia. He has also kept in close continuing contact with Arthur Dunkel, Director General of the GATT who was charged at Montreal with the task of seeking to develop the necessary consensus to successfully complete the Mid-Term Review of the MTN begun at Montreal.

Mr. Crosbie said that the GATT Director General had been devoting intensive energy to completing his task. He was pleased that all Cairns Group Ministers shared the need to continue to support fully Mr. Dunkel in reaching a reasonable outcome to the current impasse.

Commenting on the outcome of the Cairns Group meeting in New Zealand, Mr. Crosbie noted, "The Cairns Group is committed to securing a positive result on agriculture at the TNC meeting in April. Agriculture is at the heart of the Uruguay Round and failure to obtain a satisfactory agreement in April would seriously jeopardize overall prospects for the Uruguay Round and represent a major setback to efforts to strengthen the multilateral trading system."

The Cairns Group of Ministers, said Mr. Crosbie, urged Japan to play a more active role in the process of agricultural reform.

The Cairns Group comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Fiji, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and Uruguay.

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