

Foreword

Faced with increased evidence of shipping-related disruptions in trades with the developing world, the Exporters' Coalition on Canadian Maritime Policy brought this problem to the attention of the Honourable Pat Carney, Minister of International Trade.

The genesis of many of the difficulties faced by Canadian exporters and importers appeared, on first examination, to have their origins in the introduction by a number of developing countries of policies aimed at establishing and supporting their own national merchant fleets.

A wide range of measures, including unique national legislation and regulation, have been introduced with this objective in mind. Some shipping related measures have been described as restrictive barriers to trade, and have been vigorously opposed by both domestic and foreign trade interests.

Aware of the need to protect the competitiveness of Canadian international trade, and the importance of efficient transportation to Canada's ability to compete in world markets, the Minister agreed that the Department of External Affairs should co-sponsor a series of five regional seminars with exporters and importers across Canada to discuss these changes in the performance of shipping in certain trades. The private sector should discuss and develop an effective strategy which would reflect the concerns of Canada's trading community, which the Canadian government could consider for adoption and implementation when faced with restrictive trade practices associated with shipping.

A seminar series entitled "Canada's Trade with the Developing World-Trade solutions to transportation problems" was organized, and took place in Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax during April and May 1987.

194 participated in 15 workshops and focussed their discussion on key questions, developed and presented by the Coalition, to ensure the results of the different workshops could be fairly assessed and collated.

The cross-Canada seminar series culminated in a conference held June 4, 1987 at the Government Conference Centre, Ottawa. Entitled "Canada's Trade Community Speaks Up — Our Solution to Transportation Problems with the

Developing World", it brought together over 140 senior executives from Canada's private sector and government to hear the conclusions of the seminar discussions, presented by workshop chairman from each of the regional meetings.

On this occasion, eminent panelists represented key shipper and carrier interests across Canada, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and FELACUTI, the Latin American Shippers Organization, reviewed various aspects of the seminar discussion, and added their own perspective to the debate.

This document describes the purpose and organization of the five regional seminars, and presents the highlights of their proceedings, and the discussion and recommendations presented at the National Conference in Ottawa.