

The long and short of it is that we must take a hard look at our exports.

For those of you who haven't seen it, let me talk briefly about the paper on securing and enhancing our market access.

The paper opens with a description of the international trading environment -- otherwise known as The Land of Plenty of Problems -- and then considers what we can do about it.

One thing we must do, since Canada's export performance depends so heavily on maintaining an orderly international trading system, is to give our active support to beginning another round of multilateral trade negotiations under the GATT. As we do so, we must also determine among ourselves what our objectives should be in a new GATT round, so that the agenda for negotiations will reflect our concerns.

At the same time, we should consider our bilateral trade with the United States, and the paper sets out four options for consideration. We could try to go along under the status quo.

Or we could try to negotiate arrangements limited in scope to particular sectors, or to particular types of trade barriers (such as government procurement).

Or we could negotiate a framework arrangement, which would commit the two governments politically to objectives and mechanisms for the removal of trade barriers and the settlement of bilateral disputes.

Or finally, we could try to negotiate a comprehensive trade agreement with the U.S.

In issuing the discussion paper, the government has made no prejudgment on which of the four strategies would be the wisest and most appropriate. Each has its pros and cons, its gains and its pains. I must stress that none of them is free of risk, not even the status quo.

Our consultations on all of these issues are continuing. Between now and early May, I will be travelling to 15 Canadian cities, from coast to coast to get the opinions of all interested Canadians. When we have heard you, we will meet with the governments of Canada's provinces and territories to discuss our findings. And by late spring or early summer we hope to be in a position to determine the most appropriate actions that are open to us.