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MARKETPLACE '85 RESULTS

The Minister for International Trade, the Honourable James Kelleher, said today he was pleased with the results of Marketplace '85, a program of individual interviews between business people interested in exporting. The interviews were conducted by Canadian Trade Commissioners especially brought to Canada from Embassies and Consulates abroad for the project. The events were held in full cooperation with the Provincial Ministries responsible for Trade.

Marketplace '85 took place during the month of March in 19 centres across Canada. Although the final results are not yet available, preliminary information indicates that over 6,000 interviews were conducted by Trade Commissioners, and an additional number by various other experts representing the Canadian International Development Agency, the Export Development Corporation, the provinces and the regional offices of the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion.

The programme was targeted at small and medium size firms. Most of the companies registered fell into this category. A sizeable portion of the registration consisted of firms that have never exported before and many were not aware of export assistance programs available to them by Federal or Provincial governments. Many of those firms have very good export potential due to the foreign demand for their products. New export business will definitely be generated through the exercise.

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In addition to Marketplace '85, another 5,000 interviews were conducted at the High Technology Conference in Ottawa from March 18 to 22. Attendance at this Conference consisted mostly of established exporters in this industry sector who were looking at means of improving their performance abroad.

A series of Seminars on financing exports to developing countries making use of the facilities offered by international institutions such as the World Bank, was also held in some Marketplace '85 centres. These specialized seminars were also well attended and should result in additional export business for Canada in the field of major infrastructure projects.

"Overall, Marketplace indicates a strong interest on the part of the business community exporting to all regions of the United States closely followed by the countries of Asia, and the Pacific", Mr. Kelleher said. In eastern Canada, the Caribbeans and Central America were also found attractive. Most companies came to Marketplace '85 to seek an assessment of the potential for their products in specific markets. Request to find agents or distributors abroad were numerous. Other topics raised at the interviews consisted of counselling and assistance requests, ranging from general export education to specific problem solving.

"The follow-up phase of Marketplace '85 should ensure that any Canadian firm with export potential that has visited Marketplace will eventually be put in touch with a prospective buyer abroad", Mr. Kelleher said. This follow-up phase of Marketplace '85 is now in progress with the Provincial governments, the DRIE regional offices, the Geographic Bureaux of the Department of External Affairs or Canadian posts abroad being the major centres of action.

A more detailed report on Marketplace '85 will be released early May, with selected data by provinces, and industrial and service sectors.