

Minister of Industry,  
Science and Technology and  
Minister for International Trade



Ministre de l'Industrie, des  
Sciences et de la Technologie et  
ministre du Commerce extérieur

# Statement

# Déclaration

No. 93/16

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY

THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL WILSON,

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

AND MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE,

AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TO ANNOUNCE THE INTRODUCTION OF

ACCESS NORTH AMERICA

TORONTO, Ontario  
March 1, 1993

In the fall of 1991, the government launched an unprecedented nation-wide series of consultations to seek the advice of Canadians on how Canada could strengthen its economy and improve its competitiveness. This exercise culminated a year later in the Action Plan of the Steering Group on Prosperity. Today, we are responding in a direct way to the Action Plan's verdict that, as Canadians, we must work to capture a larger share of global markets.

This morning, I am happy to announce the launching of a major new trade program called Access North America. This initiative will increase our exports to Mexico, and these exports will create more jobs.

With the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) legislation now introduced in Parliament, we have set the stage for new trade and investment opportunities in North America. Access North America will help companies turn those opportunities into sales.

I am here with representatives of the private sector to emphasize that we intend to work in partnership with Canadian business to reach out to firms from coast to coast to deliver key components of this initiative.

Mexico is a fast-growing economy that will need telecommunications products, infrastructure expertise, environmental services, new technology and other goods and services that Canada produces. In 1991, Mexican imports grew by nearly 22 per cent, making Mexico a market of immediate opportunity for Canadian exporters.

Canadian businesses have already begun to increase their presence in the Mexican market. One need only point to the 4,500 business people who last year visited the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City.

These companies and others will face tough competition in the Mexican market. However, with the assistance of Access North America, they can meet the competition head-on and come out ahead.

We have already seen the benefits that the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has brought to Canada in the four years since its implementation. Our exports to the United States are setting record levels month after month.

Last year, exports to the United States rose a remarkable 13.6 per cent, to \$122.3 billion, up \$14.7 billion from 1991. In 1992, we also saw the creation of 118,000 jobs in Canada.

Our experience with the FTA shows that participation in the NAFTA will provide even more benefits for Canada. Indeed, the NAFTA expands our access to the vast U.S. market, specifically in areas such as services and government procurement.

The government's total investment in Access North America will be \$27 million over four years. These funds represent a new commitment by the government.

Let me make one thing clear. Access North America is not just another trade program. In fact, it contains some very innovative components.

I would like to briefly outline some of these components. During the next fiscal year, we will establish the first-ever Canadian Business Centre in Mexico City. This Centre compliments our new trade office in Monterrey that I opened in January.

This Centre will also be unique. It will be equipped to host solo Canadian trade shows and will provide companies with meeting space. Canadian companies will also have access to temporary offices, business support and translation services on site.

Perhaps most significantly, the Canadian Business Centre will operate on a cost-recovery basis, in partnership with Canadian industry, enabling these funds to be applied to the operations and activities of the Centre.

For companies that are new to the Mexican market, we will establish NEWMEX -- or the New Exporters to Mexico Program. NEWMEX will introduce a number of Canadian companies to Mexico through briefings on such topics as customs procedures, shipping, labelling, and financial and legal matters.

NEWMEX follows closely in the footsteps of the highly successful New Exporters to Border States -- or NEBS -- Program that we established some years ago for the United States.

We will also be expanding our Fairs and Missions Program for Mexico because they have a proven track record of success in that growing market. Access North America will add more than 40 prominent events annually.

In addition, we will be expanding our Fairs and Missions Program for the United States in those sectors offering specific opportunities resulting from the NAFTA.

Market information and export education will be key to taking advantage of opportunities in Mexico. Access North America will put into place an extensive program of seminars, workshops, sectoral market updates and market niche studies in locations right across Canada. The objective is to acquaint business with the specific opportunities in that market and equip them with the knowledge to pursue them.

In addition, a wide range of resource materials will be developed to provide government officials with the tools that they need to work effectively with industry associations and exporters.

We are also undertaking programs to capture investment opportunities arising from the NAFTA.

As you can see, Access North America is a bread and butter program. It will be a tool for companies who will see the great potential that the NAFTA creates in Mexico, but who will need some assistance in the basics of this new market.

I have no doubt that Canadian companies will take the plunge and make Mexico a key part of their marketing activities.