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MACLAREN TO HOST INFORMAL TRADE MEETING IN VANCOUVER

The Honourable Roy MacLaren, Minister for International Trade, announced today that Renato Ruggiero, Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and ministers from 11 trading partners will attend an informal meeting in Vancouver, November 23-24, to discuss the challenges facing the world trading system.

"I have issued this invitation to Vancouver to discuss a number of matters in preparation for the first Ministerial Conference of WTO member countries in Singapore in December 1996," Mr. MacLaren said.

The Singapore Ministerial Conference will be the first of what will become regular biennial WTO ministerial meetings. It will be an opportunity for ministers to review the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements, to conduct a stock-taking of the health of the multilateral trading system and to provide political guidance for its evolution.

"The purpose of this informal gathering in Vancouver is to consult, not reach decisions," Mr. MacLaren said. "Canada already has regular discussions with Japan, the United States, and the European Union through meetings of the Quadrilateral Trade Ministers. I see value in expanding consultations to include a wider group of players with an increasingly large stake and role in the global economy and whose support is crucial to further trade liberalization and multilateral rule making."

Ministers attending the Vancouver meeting are from Australia, Hong Kong, Hungary, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, South Africa and Thailand.

At the informal meeting in Vancouver, participants will exchange views on their expectations for the Singapore Ministerial Conference.



"A dynamic multilateral trading system is key to achieving the domestic economic priorities of all WTO members," Mr. MacLaren said. "Canada championed the creation of the WTO as the institution to oversee the operation of the world trading system. We are working with our trading partners to continue to strengthen this vital organization and ensure that it will be in a position to meet the trade challenges of the 21st century."

- 30 -

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