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CANADA'S TRADE MINISTER PRESSES TO FINISH URUGUAY ROUND ON SCHEDULE

Geneva -- The Canadian Minister for International Trade, John C. Crosbie, emphasized today the importance of concluding the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations on schedule, the week of December 3 in Brussels.

"A postponement of the Brussels meeting would only defer difficult decisions which must be addressed," Mr. Crosbie said. "The last Round of trade negotiations concluded over 11 years ago and we have been working on this Round for over four years. The time is long past to agree on the reforms that the world trading system clearly needs."

As part of the effort to move negotiations forward, Mr. Crosbie met with U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills and GATT Director-General Arthur Dunkel, and has held discussions with Ministers from other key countries. Mr. Crosbie also met with Ministers from the 13 other agricultural exporting countries of the "Cairns Group" to discuss how to unblock negotiations on agriculture.

Mr. Crosbie stated: "While the Uruguay Round has made good progress over recent years in advancing negotiations in all areas and identifying key issues for decision, it is obvious that the delay in receiving an offer on agriculture from the EC has affected the pace of negotiations in the Round. Without a satisfactory result in the agricultural negotiations, the prospects of a successful outcome to negotiations in all other areas of the Round are non-existent."

Mr. Crosbie expressed his support for the efforts by Arthur Dunkel to push the negotiations forward and reconfirmed Canada's commitment to work on all fronts. "I am convinced that all the elements are on the table for a big result and I have encouraged my counterparts to take a positive role in advancing the negotiations," the Minister said.

In Canada's view, the consequences of a breakdown of the multilateral negotiations would be profound and long-lasting. It would signal the unwillingness of the world's major trading powers to come to grips with the key problems affecting international trade and to deliver on commitments made in Punta del Este, Uruguay, four years ago and reconfirmed by heads of government at the Houston Summit in July 1990.

Since the war, successive GATT rounds of trade liberalization have been central to economic prosperity and jobs. The key role of trade is increasingly recognized in the reorientation of Eastern European and many developing countries toward market economies.

"For Canada, as a nation with a high dependence on trade, the stakes are extremely high," the Minister said. "Countries resisting fundamental changes in agriculture have been major beneficiaries of the international trading system. They must be prepared to accept their responsibilities to conclude the Round in all areas, including agriculture."

It is to reinforce this point that Canada's Minister of State for Grains and Oilseeds, Charles Mayer, who has accompanied Mr. Crosbie on this trip, will join with other Cairns Group Ministers in making direct representations to Ministers of several European Governments in the coming days.

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For more information, media may contact:

Paul Benoit
Press Secretary
Mr. Crosbie's Office
(613) 992-7332