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TRADE MINISTERS MEASURE POTENTIAL FOR PROGRESS IN MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

At a meeting today in Ottawa, International Trade Minister John C. Crosbie and U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills reviewed the prospects for bringing the Uruguay Round of global trade talks under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to a successful and positive result at the end of next year.

Mr. Crosbie and Mrs. Hills agreed that strong leadership from the USA and Canada will be needed in the months ahead to continue to make progress on the difficult and complex issues facing these negotiations, particularly on agriculture, services, subsidies, trade-related intellectual property, trade-related investment measures, and market access (tariffs and non-tariff barriers).

Both Ministers regarded a substantial global reduction of trade barriers and a major reform of the GATT rules as essential to an open and fair global trading system. In this regard, they discussed areas where both countries should build upon the experience gained in negotiating the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) to help develop proposals in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations.

The Ministers exchanged views on the essential elements of agricultural trade reform. They expressed confidence that despite the very difficult decisions ahead for many MTN participants, the objectives set for agriculture at the conclusion of the Mid-Term Review last April can be achieved. Agriculture remains an essential element of a successful Uruguay Round outcome, they said.

Mr. Crosbie underlined the importance Canada places on improving access for all resource-based products, including fisheries, forestry and minerals.

The Ministers reviewed Canada's MTN position paper on subsidies and countervail, which aims at a balanced and comprehensive reform of existing GATT rules. Mrs. Hills welcomed the proposals and said that the USA would be putting forward proposals soon in the MTN. The Ministers agreed on the importance of taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the Uruguay Round to improve international rules in this area.

They reiterated their intention to give priority to the issue of government procurement liberalization in the MTN, as was agreed in the FTA.

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Mr. Crosbie and Mrs. Hills will meet again in Tokyo in November, at the time of the Quadrilateral Ministers' Meeting (Canada, USA, Japan, and the European Community). The "Quad" will be followed by a meeting of International Trade Ministers representing some 25 of the main participants to the MTN.

These meetings will follow a visit by Mr. Crosbie to Canberra, Australia, to discuss ways to enhance co-operation among countries in the Pacific region.

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