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CANADA PROPOSES STRONGER GATT RULES  
ON PRODUCT CERTIFICATION

International Trade Minister John C. Crosbie announced today that Canada has put forward a comprehensive proposal to the global trade talks currently underway in Geneva to streamline the rules on international product certification. The proposal would have the effect of enhancing Canadian access to foreign markets.

The Canadian proposal suggests ways to improve the operation, transparency and mutual recognition of certification systems under the GATT Standards Code.

"Our proposal is in line with Canada's objective to ensure that improvements to foreign market access are not undermined by disguised trade barriers," Mr. Crosbie said.

A better structured Standards Code with clearer product performance requirements will help reduce the time and cost for Canadian exporters. Mutual recognition of testing and inspection results will enhance trade opportunities between countries.

Mr. Crosbie noted that the Canadian proposal is particularly important at this time not only because it will contribute to a successful outcome of the Uruguay Round, but also because the European Community (EC) is moving towards increased standardization under the EC 1992 initiative.

"The Canadian proposal could be an important step towards ensuring that the same opportunities exist for Canadian and EC producers to gain acceptance of their products throughout the European Community once certified in any one member state," Mr. Crosbie added.

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The proposal has been developed in full consultation with industry sector advisory groups, expert bodies such as the Standards Council of Canada as well as the provinces.

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