

Minister for
International
Trade



Ministre du
Commerce
extérieur

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ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (APEC) MEETING
TERMED A SUCCESS BY INTERNATIONAL TRADE MINISTER

International Trade Minister John C. Crosbie said the first-ever meeting of Ministers from 12 Asia-Pacific nations, which ended today in Canberra, represented "an historic step in the economic life of the Region, and a powerful impetus in the drive towards a more open and fair world trading environment.

The Ministerial meeting on Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), initiated by Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, "should be seen as a beginning, not an end. We accomplished what we came here for - to establish a process for greater understanding and co-operation, as a means of ensuring that the exciting pace of economic and trade growth in the Region is maintained," Mr. Crosbie said.

To maintain the momentum set in place by the Canberra meeting, Ministers agreed to a second such meeting in Singapore in 1990, and a third in Seoul the following year.

Rejecting any concept of a trade "bloc", Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the multilateral trade system represented by GATT (the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and to the achievement of a timely and comprehensive outcome to the Uruguay Round by the end of next year.

"The progressive liberalization of trade at the global level is the best opportunity we have to sustain the growth of our interdependent economies," Mr. Crosbie said.

The conference accepted a Canadian proposal that Asia-Pacific countries consult and co-operate to ensure the success of the Round. In this regard, it was agreed to convene a meeting of Ministers concerned with trade policy in September 1990 to consider how to achieve a major outcome in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTN).

Ministers agreed that the development of a permanent institutional framework in Asia-Pacific should be a careful step-by-step process.

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Nevertheless, the conference recognized that the process would benefit from ongoing co-ordination by officials, backed up by regional governments and existing institutions such as the Pacific Economic Co-operation Conference (PECC).

Ministers agreed that officials meet soon to develop a work program based on their discussions. In addition to Canada's proposal for consultations on the MTN, Ministers agreed to pursue co-operation in such areas as technology transfer, and economic and trade data collection and exchange. They also agree to explore work in specific areas such as energy, transportation, telecommunications, and the environment.

Mr. Crosbie encouraged Asia-Pacific countries to address environmental concerns in economic decision-making. "No economic gains can justify irreparable ecological loss," Mr. Crosbie said.

Mr. Crosbie particularly stressed the benefits of greater regional co-operation in the area of marine resource conservation. "The ocean is our common heritage and our most precious resource."

Mr. Crosbie joined a number of other Ministers in asserting the need for greater control over driftnet fishing.

On the question of participation, Mr. Crosbie supported the involvement of Hong Kong, as well as China and Taiwan. He noted that these major regional economies should be drawn into the consultative process.

For more information, media may contact:

Media Relations Office
External Affairs and International Trade Canada
(613) 995-1874

MINISTERIAL-LEVEL MEETING

JOINT STATEMENT

Ministers from Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and the United States gathered in Canberra, Australia on 6-7 November 1989 to discuss how to advance the process of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. A full list of Ministers and Observers attending the Meeting is attached.

Discussions covered a variety of topics under four agenda items:

- World and Regional Economic Developments
- Global Trade Liberalization - The Role of the Asia-Pacific Region
- Opportunity for Regional Cooperation in Specific Areas; and
- Future Steps for Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

At the conclusion of this first meeting, Ministers expressed satisfaction with the discussions, which demonstrated the value of closer regional consultation and economic cooperation on matters of mutual interest.

Ministers also expressed their recognition of the important contribution ASEAN and its dialogue relationships have played in the development to date of APEC, and noted the significant role ASEAN institutional mechanisms can continue to play in supporting the present effort to broaden and strengthen regional economic cooperation.

Multilateral Trade Negotiations

The discussions on world and regional developments, and on global trade liberalization, focused particularly on the need to advance the present round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Every economy represented in Canberra relies heavily on a strong and open multilateral trading system, and none believes that Asia Pacific economic Cooperation should be directed to the formation of a trading bloc.

Ministers agreed that the further opening of the multilateral trading system was of substantial and common interest for all countries in the region, and that the Uruguay Round represents the most immediate and practical opportunity to pursue this objective on a broad basis. In particular, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to open markets and to expand trade through the successful conclusion of the Round by December 1990.

Ministers agreed that continued close consultation within the region should be used wherever possible to promote a positive conclusion to the Round. In this respect, it was agreed that Ministers concerned with trade policy should meet in early September 1990 to discuss the emerging results and consider how to unblock any obstacles to a comprehensive and ambitious MTN result. Ministers would then meet again in Brussels in early December on the eve of the concluding session. In the meantime, senior officials should consult regularly in Geneva to exchange views on MTN progress.

Ministers expressed strong support for the timely and successful completion of the Uruguay Round. They noted that much remained to be done if the December 1990 conclusion was to be achieved. They called on all Contracting Parties to work with them more vigorously to that end.

Future Steps

Ministers agreed that it was premature at this stage to decide upon any particular structure either for a Ministerial-level forum or its necessary support mechanism, but that - while ideas were evolving - it was appropriate for further consultative meetings to take place and for work to be undertaken on matters of common interest and concern.

Accordingly, Ministers welcomed the Republic of Korea's offer to host a third such meeting in Seoul during 1991.

Ministers asked their respective senior officials, together with representation from the ASEAN Secretariat, to meet early in 1990 to begin preparations for the next Ministerial-level consultative meeting.

They asked senior officials to undertake or set in train further work on a number of possible topics for regional economic cooperation, on the possible participation of other economies in future meetings, and on other issues related to the future of such cooperation, for consideration by Ministers at their next meeting.

Summary Statement

Attached to this joint statement is Chairman Evan's concluding summary statement which records the substance of discussions during this meeting.

Visiting participating Ministers and their Delegations expressed their deep appreciation to the Government and people of Australia for organizing the meeting and for the excellent arrangements made for it, as well as for the warm hospitality extended to them.

Ministerial-Level Attendance

Australia

Senator the Honourable Gareth Evans QC
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

The Honourable Michael Duffy, MP
Minister for Trade Negotiations

Senator the Honourable John Button
Minister for Industry Technology and Commerce

The Honourable Paul Keating, MP
Treasurer

The Honourable John Kerin, MP
Minister for Primary Industries and Energy

Senator the Honourable Peter Cook
Minister for Resources

Brunei Darussalam

H.R.H. Prince Mohamed Bolkiah
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalem

Pehin Dato' Haji Abdul Rahman
Minister of Industry and Primary Resources

Canada

The Honourable John C. Crosbie, QC, MP
Minister for International Trade

Indonesia

H.E. Mr. Ali Alatas
Minister of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. Arifin M. Siregar
Minister of Trade

H.E. Mr. Hartarto
Minister of Industry

Japan

H.E. Dr. Taro Nakayama
Minister for Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. Hikary Matsunaga
Minister of International Trade and Industry

Republic of Korea

H.E. Ho-Joong Choi
Minister for Foreign Affairs

H.E. Seung-Soo Han
Minister of Trade and Industry

Malaysia

The Honourable Dato' Haji Abu Hassan Haji Omar
Minister for Foreign Affairs

New Zealand

The Honourable Mike Moore
Minister of External Relations and Trade

The Philippines

Dr. Jesus P. Estanislao
Secretary of Socio-Economic Planning and
Director-General, National Economic and Development Authority

Singapore

B-G Lee Hsien Loong
Minister for Trade and Industry

B-G George Yong-Boon Yeo
Minister of State (Finance and Foreign Affairs)

Thailand

H.E. Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila
Minister of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Dr. Subin Pinkayan
Minister of Commerce

United States

The Honourable James A. Baker, III
Secretary of State

The Honourable Robert A. Mosbacher
Secretary of Commerce

Ambassador Carla A. Hills
United States Trade Representative

Observers

Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)

H.E. Mr. Rusli Noor
Secretary-General

Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference (PECC)

Mr. Brian Talboys
Chairman PECC VII

South Pacific Forum

Mr. Henry Naisali
Secretary-General