



communiqué

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CANADIAN TRADE POLICY FOR THE 80s

The Honourable Gerald Regan, Minister of State (International Trade) announced today, at a news conference in Ottawa, the results of the Federal Government's review of Canadian trade policy. The review represents the outcome of a comprehensive effort to define the nature, objectives and priorities of Canadian trade policy for the 1980's.

In releasing a short summary of the highlights of the review, a Discussion Paper and a Background Paper, Mr. Regan said: "These documents should serve to enrich the awareness in Canada about the instruments of trade policy, the links with domestic policy and the actual potential we see for growth and for initiatives in the years ahead."

Emphasizing that the competitiveness of Canadian industry is the fundamental key to a strong trade performance, the Minister stated: "It is essential that our costs not increase more rapidly than those of our competitors. We have not done well in the improvement of productivity in recent years. Improvement of performance in this regard is the key to maintaining a competitive position in world markets."

The Minister stressed the vital importance to Canada of an effective multilateral trade and payments system: A strengthened multilateral system for trade is essential to Canada's future well-being. We will therefore be giving this objective first priority in the GATT and in working with our principal trading partners. "In this regard, I am pleased to announce that the next Quadrilateral Meeting of Trade Ministers (Canada, U.S.A., Japan, E.E.C.) will be held in Canada on September 26 and 27".

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On the management of our trade and economic relations with the U.S.A., our major trading partner, Mr. Regan stated: "We are proceeding to examine the pros and cons of limited free trade arrangements in specific sectors such as urban mass transit, clothing and textiles."

Finally, Minister Regan emphasized his determination to work hand in hand with Canadian producers and the provinces to search out and develop new export markets and to expand existing markets. In this regard, the Minister said, "October has been designated as export trade month, an initiative that was developed jointly with provincial Trade Ministers earlier this year." He also added "I look forward to meeting my provincial counterparts in the near future to strengthen our consensus on trade policy and to confirm specific initiatives for export trade month."

The Minister for International Trade urged all Canadian producers, including subsidiaries of foreign-owned companies, to aggressively seek out export opportunities. He indicated "My highest priority will be to support their efforts with all the resources at my disposal. I am confident that the policy framework which the Government has approved will provide a strong foundation for such support and reflects a firm commitment to trade expansion."