

Minister of Industry,  
Science and Technology and  
Minister for International Trade



Ministre de l'Industrie, des  
Sciences et de la Technologie et  
ministre du Commerce extérieur

## Statement

## Déclaration

93/15

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**NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY  
THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL WILSON,  
MINISTER OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
AND MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE,  
TO A PRESS CONFERENCE AT WESTON APPAREL,  
ANNOUNCING THE FASHION APPAREL SECTOR CAMPAIGN**

**WESTON, Ontario  
February 26, 1993**

Thank you, Paul,<sup>1</sup> and good morning ladies and gentlemen.

I am very pleased to be here today to launch a new and critical phase of the Fashion Apparel Sector Campaign (FASC).

We are here at one of Canada's most successful apparel manufacturers, which is affiliated with one of our most important apparel retailers. Weston Apparel and its parent, Dylex, are showing that Canadians have what it takes to succeed in a competitive global economy.

The apparel sector includes a number of Canada's most successful and competitive entrepreneurs, with over 2,000 firms producing virtually every kind of apparel. This sector has been very successful in meeting the apparel needs of Canadians. And exports to the United States have more than doubled since 1988. With highly targeted and aggressive marketing, the men's suits sector, in particular, has been so effective that Canada now leads all other countries except Italy in exports of men's suits to the United States. However, this record is no guarantee that they will be able to continue to succeed in rapidly changing market conditions. The industry has recognized it faces a number of strategic challenges, and is responding.

The Government of Canada and the apparel industry are today launching a sector campaign to help the industry win in a more competitive, more integrated global market. The industry has taken the lead in helping itself make that adjustment. In designing and participating in the Fashion Apparel Sector Campaign, Canada's apparel designers, manufacturers and distributors recognize that there are some strategic concerns that demand an industry-wide response.

I want to say that the structure of this campaign and the industry's commitment to its implementation does credit to the leadership of the industry, in general, and to the Canadian Apparel Manufacturers Institute, in particular. They identified areas where the industry as a whole had to play a much stronger role, and made a proposal to Industry, Science and Technology Canada (ISTC).

The result is a two-part campaign: first, the establishment of the first cross-Canada, industry-wide association -- the Canadian Apparel Federation (CAF); and second, an inter-firm linkages program to improve collaboration among companies. Both the government and industry will contribute to these programs. I am pleased to announce today that the federal government has committed \$6.7 million to the campaign over the next four years.

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Mancini, President of Weston Apparel, will introduce the Minister and industry representatives, then turn the podium over to the Minister.

The industry will match this investment and expend even more effort in pursuing these initiatives.

The creation of the CAF will help to position this industry to take advantage of the opportunities that a wider, more open market presents. The government is pleased to be able to provide the start-up financing needed to create this new organization. The CAF will receive \$4.3 million for set up and establishment of common services that will eventually be self-financing. The CAF will work toward improving the industry's market intelligence, quality, training and work force development. In addition, the CAF has a role to play in developing more value-added products and services, through the integration of our independent entrepreneurs into more effective collaborators in success.

The other element of the campaign is the inter-firm linkages program, which will be co-ordinated by ISTC. This program is intended to help the industry improve its collaborative efforts to improve quality, increase market presence and develop new market opportunities. It will provide \$800,000 in each of the next three years for demonstration projects that are intended to show how small, independent Canadian firms can collaborate to win against larger, integrated, international competitors at home and abroad.

Over the next three years, the inter-firm linkages program will demonstrate ways in which inter-firm collaboration can help suppliers, designers, manufacturers, distributors and retailers across the country to strengthen their competitiveness.

In the United States and Europe, buyers are starting to recognize a Canadian "look." The Toronto Designer Fashion Show, held earlier this month, highlighted some of the talent that is developing this look. This look is an important asset that Canadians must use to distinguish our products at home and abroad. Enhancing the collaboration among independent designers, suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors will be needed to exploit this advantage to the fullest. This is what the linkages program will do. Weston Apparel and its working relationship with TipTop Tailors might be a model of what this program could encourage.

There are many other projects in which the linkages program can help the industry pursue its goals. For example, by acting as a catalyst for the development of industry-wide standards of quality and care, the linkages program can ensure better industry-consumer relations. Another project could entail demonstrating to the apparel sector the value of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), which is sweeping other industries. Similarly, with more effective collaboration, the development and co-operative marketing of recognizable Canadian-designed fabrics could be possible. Equally, the program could help independent

Canadian designers, manufacturers and retailing firms to develop matching and complementary product lines to meet broad demands from U.S. and European customers.

The Government of Canada sees the funding of this campaign as a strategic investment in a highly competitive sector. It is intended to make the sector even more successful as it adjusts to a larger, more competitive marketplace. The federal government's investment in the Fashion Apparel Sector Campaign is one of the ways we are following through on our commitment -- outlined in last December's economic statement -- to invest in partnerships to build industrial competitiveness.

As many of you know, the federal government established the Prosperity Initiative nearly 18 months ago and asked a private sector-led steering group to build a consensus on how to meet the challenges posed by an increasingly competitive global marketplace. The action plan this steering group produced focuses on measures to build competitiveness through the application of technology and innovation. It urges action to improve the effectiveness of education and training. The plan also suggests ways in which every Canadian can have the opportunity to participate fully in the nation's economic life.

I am struck by the degree to which the focus of the sector campaign designed by this industry parallels very closely many of the recommendations in the Prosperity Action Plan. Your focus on training, innovation, inter-company and labour-management co-operation, expanding into new markets and strengthening the role of trade associations all demonstrate this parallel. This industry is showing the way that many others must follow if Canada is to remain prosperous.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to make the launch of this key sectoral campaign official.

*(Minister proceeds to the table to sign the letter of offer.)*