

Statement

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NOTES FOR REMARKS

BY

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TO

**THE CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR THE AMERICAS (FOCAL)
FORUM ON “TRADE AND PROSPERITY AT THE QUEBEC CITY
SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS”**

**Montreal, Quebec
April 18, 2001**



I am honoured to preside over this prestigious forum on Trade and Prosperity in the Americas.

This is an important event because it challenges the perception of some that the Quebec City Summit of the Americas is only about trade, and that trade is all that is needed to generate prosperity. The Summit is about strengthening democracy, creating prosperity, and realizing human potential. In addition, the Summit will be dealing with “connectivity” — in other words, the opportunities for information and communications technology to support social, political and economic progress.

Taken together, activities in each of these areas can be directed to an enhanced state of prosperity, one that is equitable and sustainable.

At CIDA, our policies and programs for sustainable development are based on linking and keeping a balance between economic, social, and political initiatives. Simply put, our vision for the Americas is a prosperous, stable hemisphere — a hemisphere with healthy and educated citizens, strong democratic governments that promote human rights, and the equitable sharing of wealth. An inclusive society, one that fosters a better world for all of the Americas, north and south.

Trade is an important factor for the achievement of this vision. But trade must become a tool for increasing growth with equity. That means that we must find ways for the benefits of trade, and they can be substantial, to be shared amongst all levels of society.

Human capital is still the most critical input for sustainable growth. By sharing the benefits of trade and creating stronger social and political infrastructures as well as viable economic systems, we create a vigorous form of productivity that stimulates a cycle of growth, breaking down the age-old cycle of poverty.

Make no mistake. Developing countries — and there are over 30 of them in the Americas — want trade. They see the potential benefits, the future prosperity. But simply relying on the mechanisms of free markets will not guarantee equity and prosperity.

Your presenters today will deal with some of the complexities of linking trade and prosperity — all of which will be discussed in great detail in Quebec City.

Our first panel will deal with the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs, of the Organization of American States, and Ms. Bustillo, of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, should give us an interesting insight into what is being negotiated and why.

In the second panel, Mr. Otteman, of the Inter-American Dialogue, and Professor Blackett, of McGill University’s Faculty of Law, should give us a better understanding of labour standards in the context of free trade.

In the third panel, Dr. Purcell, of the Americas Society, and Dr. Lewis, of Manchester Trade Ltd., will bring another element into the debate. They will discuss the social responsibility of the private sector, and its role in the overall future development of the Americas.

Finally, Dr. De la Torre, of the World Bank, and Professor Berry, of the University of Toronto, should provide some interesting observations on how some of the financial vulnerabilities might be reduced, so that planning and development can take place in a less risky environment.

The key for a prosperous hemisphere in the future is a shared vision — and the collective will to make it a reality. This requires cooperation and consultation. It requires integrating political, economic and social ideas and actions. And, it requires the patience and the trust to take a longer-term view.

The Quebec City Summit is one step — a very important one — in a dedicated, continuous, and inclusive process to enhance the overall well-being of every individual and every nation in the hemisphere.

People and nations prosper when those around them are prosperous. Enhanced trade in the Americas must come with a plan that reduces the gap between rich and poor. The rationale is ethical as well as economic.

People's lives — their hopes, their aspirations, their achievements — are the most important indicator of how we are doing as a society, as a hemispheric community.

I am confident that your insights and input at this forum will contribute much to the Summit process. I thank you and FOCAL for your work on behalf of all of the people of the Americas.