

# Final Report

Mission to Hong Kong WTO Ministerial Conference

Date: December 13 to December 18, 2005



## Overview:

Almost 150 nations took part in the World Trade Organization's (WTO) 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong, December 13 to 18, 2005. The purpose of the Ministerial Conference was to negotiate new rules for international trade.

Ed Stelmach, Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations, along with Doug Horner, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (*report prepared separately*), represented Alberta as part of the Canadian delegation. The Canadian delegation included more than 150 representatives from Canada's federal, provincial and territorial governments, along with 300 representatives from Canadian industry and other interested groups. Alberta believes in strong and direct provincial participation in these negotiations and will continue to take an active role to ensure that Alberta's priorities are recognized and reflected in the results.

The original budget estimate for the mission to Hong Kong for Minister Stelmach and one staff member was \$27,500. Final costs were just over \$24,500.

The mission was successful in meeting its objectives as outlined below.

## Mission Objectives:

1. Provide input to federal ministers and officials during the negotiations to ensure provincial concerns are raised, and provincial constitutional responsibilities are respected.
2. Meet with representatives of other countries and industry organizations to advance Alberta's interests.

## Results:

The Hong Kong Ministerial Conference achieved modest gains in reducing trade barriers and a commitment to develop a framework for on-going trade negotiations by April 30, 2006.

The Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration included a commitment to sectoral negotiations on industrial goods, which will lead to reduced tariffs and increased opportunities for Alberta's manufactured and industrial products. There were also discussions on trade in services, which will result in more opportunities for Alberta's engineering, oil and gas, and environmental service sectors and others who are active internationally. In agriculture, agreement was reached for an end to export subsidies by 2013. However, there was no movement on market access issues which are extremely important for Alberta's trade-dependant agriculture producers.

Alberta looks forward to further gains in the detailed negotiations that will take place until April 30, 2006. At these important Geneva-based negotiations, all countries will work towards a final framework for a global trade agreement. This will include negotiations aimed at securing agreement on:

- improved and ambitious commitments for agricultural (including sensitive products) and non-agricultural products. The Alberta government, along with Alberta industry will continue to pursue the reduction and elimination of tariffs for all products and in all markets, to create disciplines on the use of trade remedy laws; and
- disciplines on all forms of export subsidization, including state trading enterprises.

## Delegation:

Ed Stelmach, Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations  
Ron Glen, Executive Assistant to the Minister