

We are also working in other areas to make our trade development efforts respond to your needs. With regard to the Program for Export Market Development (PEMD), we are putting into place some fundamental changes that you have been asking for.

As a result, we now have a program -- PEMD -- that provides support on a longer-term basis, while reducing the administrative burden for its clients.

The fundamental concept in these changes is that of market development strategies. Instead of requesting assistance on a single-activity basis, companies will be able to apply for assistance for a number of activities. PEMD therefore is now able to provide longer-term assistance that will mesh well with your marketing strategies.

Combined with the strategic information in the *International Trade Business Plan*, these changes to PEMD will be helpful to you as you pursue opportunities in the international marketplace.

All of the initiatives that we have undertaken in the areas of trade development and trade policy have one thing in common with the *International Trade Business Plan*: they all reflect our commitment to create an environment where Canadian companies can indeed realize their potential in the international marketplace.

In this era of fierce global competition, however, we can't make these changes effective by ourselves. We have to work in partnership with the private sector to establish a strong Team Canada approach that will seize the opportunities in all markets.

We have made a giant step forward in that direction with the publication of this *International Trade Business Plan*. You have helped us to bring transparency, coherence and strategic direction to our international business activities.

Keep in mind that this Plan is for you. It will allow you to better align your own priorities and plan the activities that you would like to carry out jointly with us.

To make it a fully effective document, we also need to hear from you. Let us know what you think -- so that we can incorporate your views for future editions.

Copies of the *International Trade Business Plan* are available outside on tables in the reception area. I encourage you all to pick up a copy and find out how you can best take advantage of our many trade development activities.

Thank you.