

# Going the Distance

## Overcoming Transportation Barriers through APEC

What do roads, bridges, port facilities, airports and power grids have in common? They are all basic infrastructure that many areas in Asia Pacific either lack or need to modernize.

Designing and maintaining transportation systems in Asia Pacific keeps the wheels turning in the fastest-growing economies in the world. These systems must be designed and maintained for efficiency, access and safety.

Inadequate infrastructure obstructs trade and hinders growth. Without a significant expansion of transportation infrastructure, congestion in the movement of freight and passengers is inevitable. As traffic volumes increase, demand for direct service between a larger number of destinations — whether by air, rail, highway or shipping routes — will be inescapable.

Meeting the region's need for transportation infrastructure will require an enormous investment — trillions of dollars over the next 10 years in East Asia alone. But often governments simply don't have the money to build what is needed.

Within APEC, private and public sector partnerships are widely recognized as solutions to infrastructure development challenges in the region. The key is to translate opportunities into financially viable business ventures that provide

public benefits. This means attracting capital through enhanced investor protection.

Leading members of Canada's transportation sector will play a vital role in discussions on infrastructure development taking place around the APEC Transportation Ministerial Meeting from June 22 to 24 in Victoria. A number of prominent Canadian companies active in the region will take part in a Minister-Industry Symposium on Transportation, including Bombardier Inc., CP Rail, Air Canada,

Laidlaw Inc., Via Rail Canada Inc., Ballard Power Systems Inc., and CAE Electronics Ltd. The symposium will enable participants to exchange information and opinion on common problems, to discuss new innovations and best-practice solutions, and to network with peers.

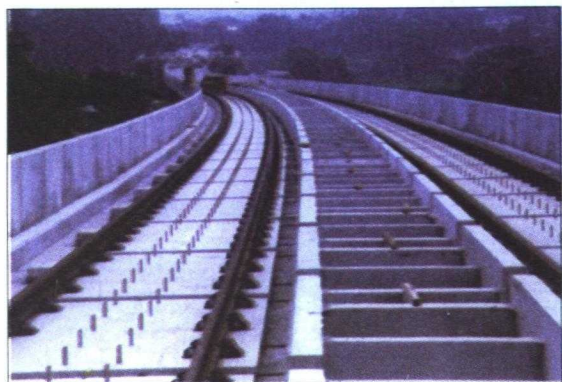
Within APEC, Canadian companies are seen as leaders in the transportation field. Canadian firms have applied transportation models, like Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) and Build-Operate-Own (BOO), to a number of projects with notable success. Of equal importance, they share what they learn with other APEC members, so the benefits are multiplied.

Recent projects include the Confederation Bridge linking Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, the new Highway 407 north of

Toronto, and the rebuilding of a portion of the Trans-Canada Highway in Nova Scotia. "Both highways are being built at less expense than original estimates through public-private partnership," notes John Beck, President of Canadian Highway International Corporation. "By sharing and managing the risks, the roads our government partners need are built faster, at lower cost, and with enhanced environmental and safety norms."

Canada has provided leadership on a number of ongoing APEC transportation projects, particularly on questions concerning safety and security. For example, a Canadian-led project to implement a satellite-based navigation and communication system for the APEC region will make travel safer and more efficient in Asia Pacific. Projects of this kind can also translate into export opportunities for Canadian high-tech firms.

When transportation ministers gather in Victoria, their focus will be on planning, operating and paying for new infrastructure. Strong industry involvement will bring creative solutions to help build a bridge to the 21st century — which promises to be the Pacific century.



The Kuala Lumpur Light Rail Transit System 2, which Canadians helped to build for the Commonwealth Games in 1998, in Malaysia. Photo: SNC-Lavalin



## Women Leaders Network — Looking at the Impact of Women on APEC Economies

Women entrepreneurs own and/or operate one third of all the companies in Canada. In Southeast Asia, women will soon constitute half of all entrepreneurs. Despite their numbers, female entrepreneurs from Bangkok to Toronto face similar challenges, such as accessing financing and export information, as well as gaps in education and training.

At their last meeting in Manila in 1996, APEC leaders called for a "special emphasis on the full participation of women" in recognition of the significant contribution of women to their economies. The Women Leaders' Network (WLN) was established in October 1996, just before the APEC Leaders' Meeting, to promote the integration of gender perspectives into APEC decision making and activities. This informal network brings together women from business, government, non-governmental organizations and academia in the 18 APEC member economies.

Canada will host the second Women Leaders' Network meeting September 13-16 in Ottawa-Hull. The theme of the meeting is "The Economic Impact of Women in the APEC Region." It will address the concerns of women-led small and medium-sized enterprises and the impact of trade and business policies on women.

The Canadian government is also working to promote greater consideration of gender issues in APEC. Progress is being made in addressing the concerns facing women in areas such as education and training, and science and

technology. All of these efforts are consistent with Canada's commitment to national and international gender equality.

"Canada is very much in the lead in getting APEC leaders to address issues of gender equality," says Andrina Lever, President of the Women Entrepreneurs of Canada and one of the co-chairs of the Canadian Planning Committee for the meeting. "APEC and the WLN hold tremendous potential for Canadian women."

Lever has seen for herself how Canada's commitment to equality brings international results. The Philippines was the sponsor of the inaugural meeting of the Women Leaders' Network, and Canadian support through the Canadian International Development Agency played an important role in making that meeting a reality.

For registration information on the 1997

meeting of the Women Leaders' Network of APEC Economies, September 13 to 16 in Ottawa-Hull, contact Lynn Conway, The Conference Board of Canada, telephone: (613) 526-3090, ext. 323; fax (613) 526-5385; e-mail: wln@conferenceboard.ca



### What is APEC? Continued from page 1

"livable" cities, avert food shortages and harness the technologies of the future. Power shortages, lack of efficient transportation and obsolete telecommunications networks can seriously affect people's livelihoods and grind business to a halt.

These issues have a profound impact on the prosperity and quality of life people enjoy. That is why Canada is hosting APEC meetings on trade, the environment, transportation, energy, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to find viable and integrated approaches to growth and development.

APEC has identified three important groups deserving of particular attention: small and medium-sized enterprises, women and youth. Canada will convene a meeting of women leaders from the academic, business and other sectors. The meeting will be held in conjunction with a ministerial meeting and business exposition to stimulate the involvement of SMEs in the region. To build for the future, Canada has made a point of inviting young people to participate in APEC events in 1997 and to consider prospects Asia Pacific may hold for their future.