

It is not enough to re-write the rules. In order for Canada to prosper, we need business to actively seek out new markets, new opportunities abroad.

The plain fact of the matter is that there never has been a trade agreement that filled an order book. Trade agreements help to create the environment in which business can be conducted. But the only way to capture sales is for business to go out and pursue them. Today's winners of the Canada Export Awards did not wait for new trading rules before filling their order books.

I need hardly remind this distinguished audience of the importance of aggressively seeking out new markets abroad. But I do believe that in speaking to this audience, in a city whose welfare is based so heavily upon international trade, this critical message must be given to all Canadians:

Canadian business should position itself today, not in one or two years, to take advantage of a new agreement with the United States. Similarly, do not wait for the results of the MTN negotiations commenced in Punta Del Este. Position yourselves now to exploit the many opportunities that exist in today's market place.

As I stressed at the luncheon Awards ceremony, we will continue to provide support for your efforts through export development programs in Canada and in our missions overseas. We will continue to do whatever we can to identify foreign opportunities for Canadian producers, and to help you win those contracts. Such activities may not make good copy in magazines - other than "Canadian Export World", they may not be the stuff of good political debate; but they make for good government.

But ultimately, the success of government initiatives will depend upon the attitudes and ambitions of Canadian businesses.

You and I know that opportunity is not enough. We know that opportunities will be lost if we do not maximize our ability to compete abroad. And we know that opportunity and ability are meaningless without the proper attitude - the willingness to see the opportunities in change and the will to seize them - the very attitude exemplified by those companies we honoured this afternoon.

Thank you.