

consultations will be possible. I invite your participation in these consultations and look to you for support of the plan of action which they develop.

Canadians have a great stake in our continued prosperity. Improving our competitiveness means a higher standard of living. This, in turn, will provide us the means to be a caring society.

A society that can secure the social programs we see as essential to our being Canadian.

A society that can continue to support the arts and culture which helps us to understand ourselves.

A society with the means, and the will, to make our education and technologies second to none in the world.

Many of you have demonstrated that co-operation and competition are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, the capacity to do both is essential to adjusting to the challenges of the global marketplace. You have shown us -- and the world -- that change and innovation can secure new prosperity. For Canadian companies trading in an evermore competitive world environment, strategic alliances and innovative trade development techniques are not options. The reality is that learning and adopting such techniques, for many companies, is a matter of survival. Our international competitors are rapidly learning these lessons. It's time for Canadians to learn them, too. It's time for Canadian business to act.

A recent United Nations study ranked Canada as the second best place to call home. I think in our hearts we all know that it is second to none. For Canadians to maintain -- and improve -- this ranking, we must seize the historic opportunities before us. The Government has a responsibility to lead, but all Canadians have a stake in securing our future as a united and prosperous country. That is why it is so important for all of you to participate both in the renewal of our Constitution and in the prosperity initiative.

Let's all work together to build a cleaner, more prosperous and united Canada for our children.

Thank you.