

beneficiary -- economically, politically and socially -- of the Pacific century, we must be an active Pacific player.

In recognizing that the highest priority of the government is to create jobs, to get the Canadian economy moving again, exports will be a key element in creating many of those jobs. And we also recognize that along with those jobs must come flows of the technology, the capital and the management skills that increasingly characterize today's world economy.

Nowhere in the world is business more dynamic than in the Asia-Pacific region. Most of you in this room know all the facts and figures. Asia-Pacific will be a key element in broadening our focus aggressively in areas beyond North America. We salute the focus that you as British Columbian firms already have on the region, and we intend to build on this base working together with you.

While we are still new in office and we have undoubtedly much to refine in fully developing our Asia-Pacific trade strategy, I can see four key building blocks.

First, we must recognize that the Asia-Pacific region challenges us to be more competitive and to be better prepared to meet our own national agenda. Our Pacific partners are setting new global standards in education, in worker training, and in levels of quality and productivity. These are all directly relevant both for our trading strategy and for creating durable opportunity at home.

Second, co-operation with the private sector and with other players, including the provinces, is key. You in this room are the real experts on Asia-Pacific business. I encourage you to communicate directly with us on your ideas regarding initiatives that we could undertake to enhance Canadian commercial prospects throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Third, on the trade policy front, we must do everything we can to improve global trade rules. This will mean completing the Uruguay Round, getting a multilateral trade organization up and running, and continuing to pursue our rules-based agenda at the broadest international level.

The final building block will be to complement our multilateral efforts with regional efforts. Improved co-operation and dialogue with other Asia-Pacific governments are required to ensure that rules, rather than the unilateral projection of power or pressure policies, will rule in the Pacific trading relationship. While most of these rules will and should be multilateral, some may need to be regional, and indeed bilateral.

APEC is the key institution in which to pursue this regional dialogue. In all the "alphabet soup" that I have had to make my way through since becoming Minister for International Trade about