

It gives me great pleasure to join you in this conference as we discuss the important issues of Pacific trade and economic development. Before I commence, I believe congratulations are in order for a variety of individuals and organizations. I'd like to congratulate the Canadian National Committee on Pacific Economic Cooperation for their success in hosting the third Pacific Trade Policy Forum; the Chinese Taipei Committee for its financial support; the Institute for Research on Public Policy for its organizational role; and Professor Ted English, without whose hard work, none of this would have been possible.

Earlier today, Germain Denis offered a Canadian perspective of the Pacific in the Uruguay Round of multilateral negotiations. So I do not wish to plough over furrowed ground.

Rather, I felt it might be useful to place Canada's Pacific Strategy in a broader context, so you can better understand our national aims and aspirations.

Sitting here in central Vancouver, it is easy to forget that Canada is a relatively new entrant into the ranks of industrialized countries, with much of our development occurring only in the past 4 decades. Indeed, we are a mere pup in the time frame of Asian history. And our national character is still evolving, with our continuing immigration and urbanization. We are not the country we were even 20 years ago.

That national character has been shaped by geography, history and economic forces.

Despite the percentage of Canadians who live in cities close to the U.S. border, our national mythology has been shaped in great part by our harsh, northern climate and vast, open spaces.

Economics has caused ever-growing links with our Southern neighbours; and

History has caused us to look back across the North Atlantic for our traditions and institutions.

North for mythology;  
South for commerce;  
East for our traditions;  
Rarely have we looked West beyond our shores.

While we have been a nation from sea to sea for over a century, we have never truly turned our minds to the Pacific.

To most Canadians, Vancouver has represented the end of the line, far from the original Canada of Ontario and Quebec. And Asia was the Far East, reflecting a European perspective that one had to round the Cape of Good Hope in search of silk and spices.

Our fundamental challenge, as we approach the 21st century, is to change the way Canadians see the world; and ourselves.

In a very real way, it is to help Canadians see this city not as the end of the line, but as the beginning; not as a point of departure, but the port of entry into the Pacific domain; not as our far Western edge over the Rockies, but our Far Eastern centre on the Pacific Rim.

Our plan to help Canadians adjust to the realities of the 21st century starts with a commitment to the multilateral trading system. As a middle power with a small domestic market, it is