

SINCE 1984, MY COLLEAGUES AND I HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTING A BROAD-BASED STRATEGY TO MEET THESE CHALLENGES. OUR GOAL HAS BEEN TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE, VALUE-ADDED CANADIAN ECONOMY -- AN ECONOMY WHERE SKILLED CANADIANS PRODUCE AND SELL VALUE-ADDED GOODS AND SERVICES.

CENTRAL TO THAT GOAL WAS THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES -- AN AGREEMENT WHICH WILL ALLOW OUR COMPANIES TO DEVELOP COMPETITIVE SCALE AND SPECIALIZATION AND WHICH WILL INCREASE OUR ABILITY TO EXPORT VALUE-ADDED FINISHED PRODUCTS.

IT HOLDS THE POTENTIAL OF BEING A MAJOR CATALYST FOR CANADIAN COMPETITIVENESS.

THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM IN GENEVA CERTAINLY AGREES.

WHEN WE CAME TO OFFICE, CANADA RANKED ELEVENTH IN THE WORLD IN ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS. NOW, THAT SAME ORGANIZATION RANKS US FOURTH.