

work has already generated more than \$40 million for Canadian firms and significantly more business is expected.

In the United Arab Emirates, Canadian exports are running at about \$40 million per year. "The United Arab Emirates has the potential to be an important growth market for Canadian goods and services," Mr. Wilson said. "The presence of almost 500 Canadians actively involved in banking, health care, education, transportation, gas, and general business indicates the firmness of the foothold already established."

At Abu Dhabi, Mr. Wilson will also meet with Canadian troops aboard HMCS *Huron*.

While in Dubai, Mr. Wilson will officially open a trade office to be operated by the Canada-Arab Business Council, a private-sector organization with funding support from the federal government.

"I am delighted to make the Middle East my first official visit as International Trade Minister since I held the portfolio in 1979," Mr. Wilson said. "I am confident this mission will prove to be a building block in an increasingly important trade relationship -- one which could generate many new jobs for Canadians."

The delegation will include representatives from all regions of Canada and all the major sectors in which Canada has export potential for the region.

"Firms like Bell Canada International, Lavalin International, CANSULT Group, UMA Ltd., and SNC International have already become part of the fabric of life in the area, providing world-class expertise and technology. A variety of other Canadian firms are also providing vital services to help repair this war-ravaged region," Mr. Wilson said.

"This mission is part of the Government's overall effort to boost Canadian involvement in the Middle East, and in particular, in the Kuwait reconstruction effort," Mr. Wilson said.

He noted that External Affairs and International Trade Canada has established a task force to help channel Canadian business interests in Kuwait reconstruction; seminars held across Canada have drawn more than 3,200 people, and an expert Private Sector Liaison Group has been created to provide advice both to the government and to the private sector on how to approach the region. Specialized incoming and outgoing trade missions are being planned for the fall.