

Many of you, and the companies you represent, have taken part in the numerous trade missions that I and other ministers and senior trade officials have led to markets throughout the world. At the end of this month, I will be leading another such mission to South America.

As you can see, far from limiting our trade promotion activities to our North American neighbours, we are confident that the market experience and increased competitiveness gained by Canadian companies successfully engaged in the United States and Mexico will have a springboard effect for venturing into other markets. Of course, our efforts in this hemisphere are only part of the picture. We also have initiatives such as Pacific 2000 and Renaissance Eastern Europe, to name two. They are designed to encourage you to diversify your markets and exploit sales opportunities wherever they may be.

This is all part and parcel of the Government's global trade agenda. It's working, as our increased export figures, which I referred to earlier, clearly demonstrate.

Of course, through our many trade activities, the Government will provide whatever assistance it can to help you maximize your opportunities and this brings me to the other component of the Government's trade priorities: trade development.

We have put into place initiatives such as Access North America and others to assist exporters to take advantage of emerging market opportunities around the world.

By opening new markets and increasing our exports, we will create new jobs for Canadians and, in the process, help further promote Canadian prosperity.

Similarly, by opening the door to new market opportunities, the *International Trade Business Plan* will also help put us on the path to greater prosperity.

In this way, the Plan responds directly to some of the recommendations in the Prosperity Action Plan. Specifically, the Steering Group on Prosperity recommended in Action 17 the development of "a co-ordinated global trade, investment and technology strategy led by the private sector to increase exports, double the number of firms exporting and promote strategic alliances."

Furthermore, Action 18 recommends that we "consolidate trade development programs to eliminate duplication and overlap."

The *International Trade Business Plan*, although far from perfect, represents a major step toward achieving these sensible recommendations.