

segments. Efforts focus upon influencing a shift of visits from peak to shoulder and off-seasons. Investigations into the potential of new customer segments (e.g., Middle-age, incentive travel, "resort" travellers, and eco-tourists) are continuing. New products and regions are being packaged and promoted in a highly-targeted fashion (such efforts have already begun with the School Excursion Touring Project; the Canada West "Beaver Kaido" and Canada East "Romantic Kaido" projects). All activities flow from strategic direction outlined in Tourism Canada's Business Plan, and are summarized in their annual Operational Plan. Both of these form an important component of "Canada's Action Plan for Japan" - an integrated effort of federal and provincial governments and the private sector, under the aegis of the Asia/Pacific Partnership Committee (APPC). Chaired by Tourism Canada, the APPC is comprised of public-and-private sector organizations that have indicated an intention to invest funds and/or in-kind services in support of a jointly conducted Market Plan.

Japan is a sophisticated market of growing importance that is undergoing considerable change in consumer travel purchase behaviour because of the "bubble burst" economy: a wiser consumer seeking value rather than "brand", an increase in small groups as well as Foreign Independent Travel (FIT), and "off-peak" purchases. All these changes will require a long-term commitment to address. Competition for a greater share of this shifting yet lucrative market has become very intense. This competition will certainly increase with completion of the Narita Airport facility expansion, and with the opening of the Kansai International Airport in September 1994. The completion of this latter airport is expected to create another wave of strong growth in traffic. To maintain and build our share through to the turn of the millennium, Canada must achieve a strong market presence now, and position itself with tourism partners to meet the competition head-on in 1994.

One of the key recommendations of the Joint Report of the Canada-Japan Forum 2000, presented to the two Prime Ministers in December 1992, addresses this objective, i.e., the encouragement of enhanced mutual awareness of each other's cultural heritage and historical development. One direct result of these initiatives was the development of the successful September 1993 high-level Japanese MOT Tourism Mission visit to Canada. As part of the Mission's program, a Canada-Japan Tourism Conference was held in Montreal. As the main action item, the head of the Japanese delegation, the Japanese MOT Parliamentary Vice-Minister, challenged the Canadian and Japanese industries to triple the number of Japanese visiting Canada annually from approximately 500,000 to 1.5 million. This "1.5 Million Challenge" will impose significant implications on the Canadian