

of activities needed to build further our ties with the country concerned - a kind of "Canada House" or "Place Canada" concept.

Our development assistance efforts in Asia over the past four decades are something of which all Canadians can be proud and we must not lose sight of the fact that, unfortunately, Asia remains home to the largest number of people still living in poverty.

At the same time, the challenge of development is shifting. Structural change in Asian economies suggests it is time to consider a transition from conventional resource transfer to genuine development co-operation. Our aid should reflect and encourage the greater maturity in our bilateral relationships and respond to the mutual interests that draw us together. One obvious way is to strengthen and expand our education centres in our missions in Asia, centres that provide students with information about education facilities in Canada and help to build thereby the links that can be so important in the future.

If I am right, Asia is entering a dramatic and far-reaching process of "opening" to the world. But Canadian business needs to be present and to maintain a presence if it wishes to steal the march on our competition. We need to seek long-term strategic investments and partnerships in key markets in order to weave the webs of production and technology that are so central a feature of today's trade landscape. In short, we cannot succeed as part-time players.

A failure to build stronger links with an increasingly confident Asia will have costs for the Canadian economy extending well beyond issues of market share. In many ways, our economic relations with the Asia-Pacific region will increasingly help to define our global competitiveness and, by extension, our own domestic development. Our success in building strategic partnerships with Asian firms, or in penetrating new markets for Canadian energy, infrastructure, services and manufactured products will help to reinforce - indeed define - our competitive edge in global markets. In the same way, our ability to sustain valued markets for traditional agricultural and natural resource sectors in Asia-Pacific will help to strengthen these Canadian mainstays in the world at large.

Although until now a significant Canadian presence in some of the markets of Asia has remained elusive, I am convinced that the winds of change are blowing throughout the region. We must be well prepared to participate in the free trade and investment that is not far over the horizon.

Thank you.