

FIFTH, I BELIEVE, AS MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE, THAT THERE IS A NEED TO DEVELOP NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN ASIA PACIFIC. I BELIEVE THAT SUCH ARRANGEMENTS COULD FACILITATE REGULAR HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIONS AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS AND PROMOTE GREATER ECONOMIC GROWTH IN ASIA PACIFIC. IT COULD ALSO ASSIST THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF THE AREA AND ENSURE THAT TRADE EXPANSION IN THE REGION IS BROADLY-BASED. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR MIDDLE AND SMALLER POWERS TO BELONG TO SUCH AN ORGANIZATION. THE TRUTH OF THIS STATEMENT IS SELF EVIDENT TO A CANADIAN OR TO A NEW ZEALANDER.

I WELCOME THE SEARCH FOR NEW LINKS IN ASIA PACIFIC. IT REFLECTS THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN AN INCREASINGLY INTERDEPENDENT WORLD. IT ALSO REFLECTS A GROWING AWARENESS OF THE REMARKABLE ECONOMIC VITALITY OF THE REGION AND ITS IMMENSE POTENTIAL FOR EVEN MORE RAPID EXPANSION. I WELCOME PROPOSALS THAT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ARRANGEMENT FOR STRENGTHENING TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE PACIFIC AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO PARTICIPATING IN THE EXPLORATORY PROCESS LEADING TO THIS GOAL.

THANK YOU.