



Canada 1997



CANADA'S YEAR
OF ASIA PACIFIC
1997 L'ANNÉE
CANADIENNE DE
L'ASIE-PACIFIQUE

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APEC AND BUSINESS

APEC's mandate can be summed up in a single phrase: "APEC means business". Although APEC is an official dialogue between Asia-Pacific economies, it has been driven by the needs and interests of the private sector from the start. Organizations such as the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC), the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), specialist regional bodies and individual business representatives provide expert advice to governments and to meetings and conferences throughout the APEC network. Continual dialogue and feedback, from working-level officials up to APEC Leaders, ensures that governments in the region know how to make Asia Pacific an easier place in which to conduct business.

In 1995, APEC Leaders established a permanent body, the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC), to be the channel for private-sector ideas on key areas for attention and cooperation among governments. The Council plays an important role in ensuring that APEC remains centred on the aspirations and interests of the private sector, to help ensure prosperity for the citizens of the region. It produces advice in the form of an annual report to Leaders, and its members participate in a dialogue with the Leaders as they plan for the November meeting. Mr. Paul Gobeil, Vice-Chairman of Métro-Richelieu in Montreal, chairs the Council in 1997, supported by two other Canadian ABAC team members: Mr. Terry Hui, President and CEO of Concord Pacific Developments Inc., and Dr. Dorothy Riddle, President and CEO of Service Growth Consultants Inc. Throughout the year, Mr. Gobeil will advise The Honourable Art Eggleton, Minister for International Trade, and Prime Minister Chrétien on directions for APEC trade and economic policy over the coming months.

In 1996, APEC Leaders stated their intention to ensure that the needs of small- and medium-sized businesses receive special attention, given their challenges of limited resources and time to develop business networks across the Pacific. For example, small business operators identify trade facilitation (that is, making trade more straightforward) as a useful area of focus for APEC's work. Canadian Industry Minister John Manley will chair a meeting of Ministers responsible for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ottawa from September 18-19. The SME Business Forum and Exposition, on September 17-18, will provide a built-in opportunity for small business operators and entrepreneurs to develop networking opportunities and to inform Ministers about their needs and interests.

