

The relative absence of Pacific institutions and the predominance of bilateralism in this region was understandable in a period when economic power was concentrated in the hands of the United States, and laterally Japan, and when military power was governed by the superpower competition. But this period is coming to an end. Military power is increasingly dispersed. Conflicts are increasingly local in nature. And as the Japanese economic miracle becomes the Asian miracle, economic power is becoming increasingly multipolar.

The Pacific region must adapt its institutions and its behaviour to that new world, which increases the possibilities of conflict between States and reduces the ability of states to secure their interests through unilateral or bilateral means. This new era demands a co-operative search for solutions to pressing problems - military, political, economic, developmental or environmental.

A stronger and more structured Pacific community will help master and manage that new world. Asia has shown immense capacities to adapt, to grow and to lead. Canada is confident that together as a Pacific community, we can do that in the future. Canada will meet the challenge in the future.