

A Pacific 2000 Project Fund will support special activities aimed at improving Canada's visibility in this region. For example, the Young Leaders component will provide funding for visits to Canada by young Asian leaders and media. The International Education component will encourage joint ventures with Asian educational institutions.

I have not reviewed all of the initiatives to be undertaken in our Pacific 2000 program, but I am sure you will recognize from the example I have given that the federal government is genuinely interested in assisting Canadian business in this region.

Asia Pacific, including East Asia, North America and Australasia, now accounts for nearly 40 per cent of world trade, and is growing fast. For Canada, trans-Pacific trade now surpasses our trade with Europe. This trade is an important source of economic growth for all the countries of the region, and it is vital for countries like Canada and Thailand which derive a large portion of the Gross National Products from trade.

To keep the engine of trade turning, it is absolutely necessary that the world trading environment is open and operating under fair rules. Those are the goals that members of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade have set for themselves, and it is what brings me to Thailand.

This afternoon, I leave for Chiang Mai for a meeting with 13 other Ministers from the Cairns Group of Agricultural exporting countries. This is the last of four Ministerial meetings I have attended in the past 15 days.

First, in Canberra, I joined representatives from 11 other countries, including Thailand, for the first Ministerial level meeting on the subject of Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation.

This was an initiative of Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke. His idea, which became a reality at the meeting, was to develop a process for improving the level of knowledge, co-operation and consensus on economic and trade-related issues within the region. That was achieved.

We agreed to hold a series of Ministerial meetings, starting with Singapore next year. Officials