

Australia has tended to concentrate most of its attention on its nearby Asia-Pacific neighbours. It seems to me that there would appear to be some truth in this.

Whatever the case, Canada continues to value and hold its relationship with Australia in high regard. Hopefully, the centenary of trade relations next year will offer a unique and historic opportunity to recommit ourselves to working together to our mutual advantage, particularly, though not exclusively, in the Asia-Pacific arena.

One important aspect of our bilateral relationship should be what I might call "inclusiveness." Too often when we in Canada talk about the "Asia-Pacific" we do not consciously include Australia in this geographic definition. The tendency is to think of Asian countries only, and I suspect the reverse is true in Australia where Canada does not immediately leap to mind in the Asia-Pacific context.

In both Canada and Australia, I hope we can amend our conception of Asia-Pacific and demonstrate a greater inclusiveness on both sides. This will be particularly apt as we have similar objectives in the development of important initiatives such as APEC and in moving forward on the regional security agenda. Given our similarity in our thinking on the APEC agenda, it makes sense for us to work closely together.

This should not be the only area for closer collaboration. Both our middle power countries have, over the years, made disproportionately large contributions to debates on international issues. Rarely, on fundamentals, have we not seen eye to eye. I therefore suggest that both our countries, as well as the international community, will benefit from a renewed Canadian-Australian commitment to bilateral and multilateral co-operation.

Thank you.