

It is with pleasure that I am here today to launch ExportVision '92.

As part of ExportVision, a hundred or more Trade Commissioners will be fanning out across Canada in the days to come. They will be visiting some forty cities and towns, bringing fresh market intelligence to companies that are exporting or export-ready.

Yesterday, in Ottawa, I met with these trade officials to discuss the needs of Canada's export community and how External Affairs and International Trade Canada can best continue to meet them.

Let me tell you that we are all seized with the critical need to succeed in this effort. Put simply, international trade is Canada's bread and butter. One in three jobs depends on it. Our standard of living -- the envy of the world -- depends on it. Thanks in large part to our success as a trading nation, we've racked up a per-capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of more than \$22,000 -- in real terms, twice as high as it was in the mid-1960s.

Yes, the competition is brutal. It is tough, but we can and must keep reaching out to export markets. It is the export sector, after all, that is leading us out of this recession.

That's why I'm here to give my personal push for this ExportVision initiative. I believe that, by working together, we can maintain our export momentum.

Here in Toronto, our trade experts are available for meetings with the experts in making things happen: you, the exporters and soon-to-be exporters who show every day that Canadians can compete with the best in the world.

Your success in making the most of market opportunities has helped make the export sector the most vital and vigorous component of the economy. The competitiveness of our exporters is a key reason why the International Monetary Fund predicts that Canada's real GDP will rise by 4.5 per cent next year -- faster than that of any other industrialized nation.

For their part, International Trade Canada's officials know where the market opportunities are. They also know how to go about turning these very real prospects into solid sales.

My role as Minister for International Trade is to help open markets through negotiations, then work with our Trade Commissioners to help close deals for Canadians. These two tasks are complementary, and exploring the important linkages that exist between them will be the focus of my remarks today.