

I am pleased to provide you today with the first release of the third version of the *Action Plan*. The revision reflects the fact that this is a living, not a static document; we are constantly refining it as we adjust strategies and practices to the changing conditions in Japan.

The revision also reflects our efforts to make the plan industry-driven, with active involvement from private sector groups and individual companies. This is Canada's Action Plan for Japan, not just that of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. It is the embodiment of extensive collaboration, consultation and co-operation involving my department, other federal departments, the provinces and, most importantly, the private sector.

Collectively we have identified seven priority sectors for trade development in Japan — building products, food products, fish and seafood products, the automotive sector, information technologies, tourism and aerospace — built around three principles of action:

- first, to build awareness of changes and market opportunities through the provision of timely and accurate market intelligence;
- second, to foster the necessary adaptation of products for the Japanese market; and
- third, to promote products more effectively in the marketplace.

The *Action Plan* is not an exclusive list; it represents a good first effort to think strategically and to bring our collective resources to bear on shared goals.

Canada is strongly committed to furthering its trade and economic relations with the countries of Asia-Pacific — a commitment confirmed by our active membership in APEC. We are determined to be part of the profound transformation taking place.

But of all the countries of the region, Japan represents not only our oldest and most important partner, but in many ways the key to new partnerships throughout the region. Canadian business must understand the sweeping changes taking place in the Japanese market and must capitalize on the opportunities that those changes provide.

Many Canadian firms are already doing just that, but many more are scarcely scratching the surface of the tremendous potential that exists. What is at stake is not only our presence in Japan, but our presence in Asia as a whole.

Thank you.