

We urge all nations in the region to follow the strong lead of Singapore and to convey a clear and consistent message that continued intransigence is unacceptable.

Economic

We have all seen a great change in the economic and trade patterns developing across the Pacific. Our economies are becoming increasingly interdependent, and we have a very real sense of partnership, which allows our business communities to engage in joint ventures and equity arrangements that benefit millions of people on both sides of the Pacific.

Before making this trip, I spent some time speaking with a number of prominent Canadians who do business in this region. The message I heard was very clear: the best environment for any business is one of reliability and transparency. Business must know the rules of the game, and be confident that the rules will not be subject to arbitrary, unpredictable change. It is the job of our respective governments to create such a climate.

The very same point was made at a recent meeting of the Canada-ASEAN Joint Co-operative Committee, which brought together private-sector representatives from our respective nations. While such endeavours indicate just how much our economic partnership has grown and thrived, we cannot take this growth for granted.

We see an exciting future for APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation], building a transpacific community committed to transparency and fair and open trading throughout the region, in which business can expand and natural economies can prosper.

This transpacific community will best thrive in a world where global disciplines and trade liberalization have been assured through a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round [of multilateral trade negotiations]. But beyond the Round, it is only logical that countries of this most dynamic region enhance and extend understandings achieved globally. It may also be via APEC that we help build better understanding about sub-regional arrangements like the NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement] and AFTA [ASEAN Free Trade Area], and ensure that they are consistent with both the GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] and with the open regional community we are trying to build.

To underline our commitment to this regional prosperity, on Wednesday I will sign with my ASEAN colleagues a revised Canada-ASEAN Economic Co-operation Agreement. This new agreement will be the basis for our economic and commercial relations, and highlights the commitment of Canada and ASEAN to a more active