

program to get Canadian business started through that door with:

- the New Exporters to Mexico (NEWMEX) program;
- support for a Canadian business centre in Mexico City;
- an expanded trade fairs and missions program; and,
- extensive market information and export education projects.

Freer access doesn't make sales. It creates the potential for trade. To turn potential into sales, more Canadians need global trading knowledge and skills. We can create that knowledge and skill. Working with the private sector, we are doing just that. We joined the Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Federation of Labour, the Canadian Exporters Association and others, to form FITT -- the Forum for International Trade Training. FITT graduates will have the know-how to get through the doors we are opening, in order for you to close Canadian sales.

In a minute, I'll talk about another partnership to develop successful international traders in the services sector.

The federal government is doing its part to develop exports. Industry associations can also develop exports. Services industries account for 70 per cent of our gross domestic product (GDP) -- but only 20 per cent of exports. We must confront the imbalance -- and we are.

I am particularly pleased to see Lynn Haight here. She is the newly appointed chair of the Sectoral Advisory Group on International Trade (SAGIT). The rejuvenated SAGIT will focus on closing this critical gap in our trade in services. Recognizing the vital role your associations can play in developing new markets abroad, we have included them in the Program for Export Market Development (PEMD).

We are using competitiveness frameworks, a new tool, to find where Canadian industries fit in the competitive global framework of their sectors. We will work with business and provincial governments to prepare competitiveness frameworks for several services sectors. The sectors include consulting engineering, geomatics, environmental services, distribution services, and commercial education and training services.

To improve your competitiveness -- and the general competitiveness of Canadian industry -- your consultation group wants stronger industry associations. So do I. Strong industry associations are, like partnerships and strategic alliances, essential tools for building a strong, competitive industry. Canadians know this. Throughout the Prosperity consultations, Canadians repeatedly urged a new co-operation and collaboration for competitiveness.