

I should point out that this is a pilot project, which, if successful, could be replicated in other key markets.

These are all valuable programs to help companies be more successful in global markets. But despite these efforts, nothing is of more critical importance than getting out there to these markets and doing what the private sector does best — and that is signing up new business.

As Trade Minister, I have lead business delegations to a number of markets. I have just returned from a successful trade mission to India where I was accompanied by a business delegation of over 50 participants.

However, what will probably be the biggest trade mission in Canadian history is yet to come. In a matter of weeks, I shall accompany the Prime Minister in a Team Canada trade mission to China. Over 200 companies have enlisted, and so far nine premiers have indicated their intention to participate in this mission to one of the largest emerging markets in the world.

Trade policy and trade development initiatives are crucial to the achievements of Canada's economic and social goals. In fact, I would go further. Little of what we do domestically to enhance our economic performance makes sense unless it is focused directly on the imperative of Canada's international competitiveness.

Every effort we make — both government and business — to penetrate world markets by meeting new customers, promoting our products and services, and making sales, will lead to new jobs for Canadians and growth for Canada.

Jobs and growth are about finding customers. I recall that Stephen Van Houten [President of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association] pointed out to me once that government doesn't create jobs, business doesn't create jobs — customers create jobs. It is in the international marketplace that we will find those customers.

Thank you.