

CANADA-ISRAEL BILATERAL RELATIONS

Canada has supported strongly the state of Israel since its foundation in 1948 and is firmly committed to that country's well-being as an independent state in the Middle East, within secure and recognized boundaries.

Over the years we have developed a broad framework of agreements and understandings with Israel on such diverse matters as cultural relations, agriculture, trade, industrial research and development, health, and Canadian studies.

The depth of our relationship is exemplified by the numerous official links and vast range of private contacts. The number of visitors has doubled since 1977, reaching almost 40,000 annually in each direction. There have also been frequent exchanges of official visits by federal and provincial cabinet ministers and Members of Parliament.

Trade remains an important aspect of the relationship. Israel is Canada's second largest trading partner in the Middle East and its largest source of imports from the region. Two-way trade for 1988 exceeded \$250 million, evenly balanced at \$125 million in each direction. Canada and Israel both actively promote their exports and have signed a number of agreements, memoranda of understanding and a taxation treaty to encourage further trade. The composition of Canadian exports reflects a balanced mix of agricultural products, industrial raw materials and fully manufactured goods. Leading Canadian exports include barley and wheat, crude and refined sulphur, computers, aircraft engines, lumber, motor vehicles and copper and zinc products. One of Israel's largest exports to Canada is fresh citrus fruit.