

In addition to trading in the traditional items, Canadians are ready to work with South Africans in the areas of education and training, transportation, telecommunications and other related high-technology fields to help you attain your goal of a strong and vibrant South African economy. We anticipate that with very active Canadian and South African business communities, our two-way trade can quickly attain its pre-sanctions 1986 level of almost C\$500 million.

Already we have seen both in Canada and here in South Africa the establishment of several Canada-South Africa chambers of commerce and business with the objective of promoting mutual business interests. The Canadian Exporters' Association is also planning a franchising mission to South Africa later this year. Its goal will be to seek potential franchising partners and the focus will be on small- to medium-sized businesses.

Which brings me to another point, the future role of South Africa in Southern Africa. Many Canadian exporters and investors visualize a future in which South Africa will be a regional centre of distribution for goods and services to most parts of sub-Saharan Africa. This will likely be the case regardless of the type of economic relationships South Africa finally evolves in regional institutions such as the Southern African Development Community, the Preferential Trade Area, or the Southern African Customs Union.

My government's role is to ensure that the appropriate structures and agreements are in place to foster trade and investment initiatives. In these days of mounting government debt and declining flexibility of governments to undertake infrastructure and other initiatives, we are very supportive of private-sector initiatives that encourage trade and investment as a means of achieving growth.

Recognizing the key role that a new South African government must play in addressing the many inequalities left by the system of apartheid, Canada will remain flexible in support of those programs that can help the new administration attain its goals.

In closing, I want to thank you again for your time. I strongly encourage you to come and visit us in Canada and learn more about what we have to offer. I have no doubt that you will be seeing an increasing number of Canadians seeking to learn more about opportunities for mutual co-operation.