Narrowing the gap between the rich and poor

Canada is committed to reducing the growing divide between rich and poor by helping developing countries get better access to the multilateral trading system. Often developing countries cannot benefit from more liberalized trade or advances in information and communications technologies because they do not have the infrastructure or technical expertise to take advantage of such developments. At the leaders' meeting, Canada would like to see further commitment to APEC's economic and technical co-operation agenda, with a particular focus on this need for access to trade, and on helping more people gain access to the Internet, improving health conditions, promoting gender equality, and supporting small business.

In 2002, through the Canadian International Development Agency, Canada developed and is administering a multi-million dollar, multi-year program to support APEC initiatives to help developing countries build the capacity to participate fully in the world trading system. Canada has also developed a Web site listing the programs that APEC economies offer as part of these initiatives. As well, Canada and Japan are co-chairing an APEC group working to better co-ordinate this work.

Consulting civil society

The complexity of today's global challenges requires solutions developed and implemented by a diverse range of international stakeholders working together. This includes states, multilateral organizations, and civil society groups. Canada believes that connecting APEC on a more routine basis with other international economic institutions, academia, business, and voluntary non-governmental groups will help APEC produce high-quality policy research. Thus, Canada will support increased APEC interaction with civil society at the leaders' meeting. To advance this priority within the organization, Canada has helped lead efforts in 2002 to make APEC's guidelines on non-member participation more welcoming of interaction with civil society, academics and business.