

Asia and the Pacific

Canada's relations with the countries of Asia and the Pacific are marked by diversity. This is not surprising, since this huge region contains some of the oldest and most varied civilizations in the world, some of the most highly-industrialized nations, and some of the least-developed economies. Together these countries contain over half the world's population and many of their governments are faced with the daunting administrative and political problems to which that condition gives rise. It is worthwhile recalling that some of Canada's earliest initiatives in the field of external relations were taken with countries of the region. Canada's Commonwealth ties with many of the countries of Asia and the Pacific have remained important. Commercial links go back many years. Several generations of Canadians have lived and worked in the area. In turn, over the past decades Canada has become the new home of many who were born in the region.

Canada's development-assistance programs in co-operation with some of the countries of the Asian and Pacific region are the oldest and the largest in which it has engaged. Some of Canada's best customers are in the region and Canadian imports from it have increased steadily. Consciousness that Canada is a Pacific nation is growing among Canadians. It is not surprising, therefore, that most Canadian foreign-policy themes find expression in relations with one or another of the countries of the region. Canada's heightened awareness in 1977 of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a good example of Canadian recognition of the desirability of intensifying political, economic and social relations with countries of Asia and the Pacific.

Northeast Asia

Japan

Canada's relations with Japan continued to expand over the past year, reflecting the growing importance of the association to both countries.

A highlight was the first meeting of the Canada-Japan Joint Economic Committee, held in Vancouver in June. The participation of the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the then Japanese Foreign Minister, Ichiro Hatoyama, indicated the importance each country attached to this committee. Western Canada was selected as the site for the meeting to emphasize its particular significance in Canada's economic ties with Japan. The committee, established under the terms of the "Framework for Economic Co-operation" signed by Prime Minister Trudeau and the then Japanese Prime Minister Miki in Tokyo the previous year, brought together senior officials of both governments to promote co-operative economic activities and to discuss multilateral economic issues of mutual interest. Separate discussion groups were established to review progress in the specific sectors of energy and resources, secondary manufacturing, agriculture and forestry, and housing.

During this official visit to Canada, Messrs Hatoyama and Jamieson discussed a wide range of issues, with emphasis on reviewing the continuing negotiations towards revision of the Canada-Japan Nuclear Co-operation Agreement (1959). In addition, Mr Jamieson and Mr Hatoyama also took advantage of their presence at the London "summit" meeting in May and the Conference on International Economic Co-operation in Paris at the end of June to discuss nuclear co-operation and other subjects of bilateral interest.

Japan continues to be Canada's second-largest trading partner and trade and economic issues remain the primary consideration in the relation. Two-way trade has continued to expand, even in the face of the general economic recession that has affected both countries. Canadian exports to