

IT IS CLEAR OF COURSE THAT THE CANADIAN OBJECTIVE OF CONSCIOUSLY ENHANCING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CANADA AND JAPAN COULD NOT BE FULFILLED UNLESS IT RECEIVED A POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM THE JAPANESE. IN THIS REGARD I THINK IT CAN BE CLEARLY STATED THAT THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT FULLY SHARES THIS OBJECTIVE AND HAS EXPRESSED ITS OWN COMMITMENT TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE TIES BETWEEN US.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND I WANT TO REVIEW BRIEFLY THE PROGRESS WHICH HAS BEEN MADE TO DATE TOWARD ACHIEVING CANADIAN OBJECTIVES WITH JAPAN AND TO OFFER SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW WE TOGETHER CAN TAKE PART IN ENHANCING THE RELATIONSHIP IN A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL AND COOPERATIVE MANNER.

ONE MAJOR REQUIREMENT HAS BEEN TO INCREASE GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE TO OBTAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF CANADA AND CANADIANS. WE HAVE ALSO TRIED TO CREATE A MORE SYSTEMATIC FRAMEWORK IN WHICH THESE DISCUSSIONS CAN TAKE PLACE. ONE EXAMPLE OF THIS HAS BEEN A NOTICEABLE INCREASE IN THE FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS BETWEEN OUR POLITICAL LEADERS THROUGH BILATERAL VISITS, SUCH AS THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO JAPAN LAST OCTOBER AND THE PRESENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTER HATOYAMA IN VANCOUVER TODAY. INDEED, SINCE ASSUMING MY PRESENT PORTFOLIO LAST SEPTEMBER, THIS IS THE THIRD OCCASION ON WHICH I HAVE HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH MY JAPANESE COUNTERPART — HAVING ALREADY MET WITH MR. HATOYAMA DURING THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT IN LONDON LAST MONTH AND WITH HIS PREDECESSOR