

closely with the private sector to ensure that Canadian business, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), can take advantage of this more open trading environment," Mr. MacLaren said.

Mr. Manley said: "Canada's strategy for economic growth and job creation must focus on fostering innovation and seizing the opportunities of the new, ideas-based economy. We are paying special attention to small business because these firms hold the most potential for job creation." He added that he is looking forward to discussing the infrastructure needed for the new economy, including the "information highway."

Mr. Martin said that the recent federal budget took a balanced approach to controlling government debt and creating jobs. "Restoring fiscal responsibility is an integral part of economic renewal and job creation," he said. "At the same time, the Government's infrastructure program and support for small business, technological innovation and training are helping Canadians to find new jobs and build their futures."

The G-7 ministers will meet United States President Bill Clinton at the beginning of the conference. Mr. Axworthy said he welcomed the attention that the President has devoted to the employment issue, and the conference will be a constructive contribution to further examination of the issue at the G-7 leaders meeting in Naples in July.

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