

learn and innovate. We must choose co-operation, not confrontation -- action, not argument.

The talking is over. Now, speaking for Canadians, the Prosperity Steering Group has given us a plan for action, "Inventing Our Future: An Action Plan for Canada's Prosperity."

Your industry joined in the Prosperity Initiative. In November 1991, you participated in National Services Conferences held in six cities across Canada. And your Business Services Consultation Group, under the leadership of Robert Ferchat -- who I'm pleased to see here today -- issued its report in May 1992. It called for private and public sector co-operation for action in seven key areas: people, government, trade, finance, information, innovation, and partnership.

The consultations brought together owners, managers, workers, customers, suppliers, educational institutions and governments. That team effort resolved problems and suggested solutions. It was the kind of team effort the new global business climate values. We can't become -- or stay -- competitive by relying only on individual firms acting independently. Co-operation and collaboration can solve problems and create opportunities.

This government is a partner with you. Let me tell you how, as a partner, we are acting on your industry's recommendations to solve problems and create solutions. And I want to challenge you to act, to be more aggressive in creating a new competitiveness for Canada.

The simple fact is that you are the key to Canada's economic competitiveness. Your sector creates wealth and more than two thirds of Canada's jobs. Your services are vital to the success of the goods-producing sector. Your competitiveness is essential to making Canada's future prosperous. So it is no surprise that our Prosperity response focuses on your concerns. It is the reason your sector is one of the ten getting priority for export development.

We have negotiated more open international trade for Canadian business. We are continuing to press for increased open access in international markets through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Uruguay Round. And we have already won freer access for Canadian services under the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and further expanded this access under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which includes Mexico.

The NAFTA opens a door to unlimited trade and investment opportunities. Access North America is a \$27-million, four-year