

Overview

As Chair of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in 1997, Canada was the focal point for APEC activities. However, it is important to note that CYAP included all countries of the region, such as India or Pakistan, who are not APEC members.

CYAP helped to present over 600 events across the country, including business and youth events, cultural activities, media conferences and conferences on human rights. Some were initiated by government, many more were initiated by the groups themselves. While the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade acted as the catalyst, CYAP was a truly national effort, involving federal departments, provincial governments, the private sector, universities, institutions, non-governmental organizations, as well as a significant number of cultural and ethnocultural groups.

Taken together, bilateral business associations, industry groups, chambers of commerce, government, and other partners organized over fifty events where business people, especially those representing small and medium-sized firms, could explore Asia Pacific opportunities. There was modest funding for some business events, although most were self-funded through the fees of participating companies.

For the cultural component, Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced \$1.9 million in funding to provide grants of between \$5,000 and \$10,000. Harbourfront Centre, based in Toronto, one of Canada's leading multidisciplinary arts organizations managed and delivered CYAP's cultural component, with the help of five regional coordinators located across Canada. Regional advisory boards were also established in every province. Composed of volunteers active in the arts and ethno-cultural organizations in their communities, they ensured a transparent, decentralized, project selection process with grass roots involvement. In total, CYAP helped to present 439 Canadian projects, nine special collective projects with contribution from various Asia Pacific cultures, and seventeen country specific projects.

Asian and Canadian youth were also invited to play a leading role in Canada's Year of Asia Pacific. As Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy noted, "young people are keen to learn more about opportunities in Asia Pacific and want information on Canada's links with the region." Human Resources Development Canada set up the APEC Youth Coordination Bureau staffed by seven young Canadians. The Bureau was responsible for bringing a strong youth component to the APEC ministerials, the leaders' meeting, as well as assisting with *Asia Connects* - the centerpiece of CYAP's youth component.

A small Secretariat within the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, headed by John Bell, Ambassador for Canada's Year of Asia Pacific, coordinated the government's role in CYAP. The secretariat made every effort to weave together CYAP's major components - culture, business and youth - so that cultural activities often coincided with business events, and many of the year's cultural exhibits included programs and outreach materials for young people. This type of synergy created many of the year's most successful and engaging events.