

territorial trade ministers two days from now. I am certain that we can all agree that governments must take a Team Canada approach to export promotion. Canadians expect nothing less.

Mr. Chairman, we will continue to pursue export opportunities in the United States and Western Europe. The U.S. market and the successful management of our trade relations with our neighbour are fundamental to Canada's economic prosperity. As you know, through the NAFTA working groups we fought to establish, we place special emphasis on reforming U.S. practices related to the inappropriate use of anti-dumping and countervailing duties.

In addition, I believe that we should also focus greater attention on the highest growth potential regions: the Pacific Rim and Latin America. For example, we will soon open the Canadian Business Centre in Mexico City where Canadian exporters can meet Mexican contacts, hold market access training sessions, and make sales presentations to larger audiences on a cost-recovery basis.

Across the Pacific, to take another example, we are planning to move quickly to strengthen our presence in Viet Nam and South China to ensure that Canadian exporters receive the best on-the-ground assistance and guidance in pursuing business opportunities in those very promising markets.

I am particularly interested in exploring ways of enhancing the export readiness of Canada's small and medium-sized enterprises. In co-operation with my colleague, the Minister of Industry [the Honourable John Manley], I have instituted a full review of this matter with the aim of ensuring that our small and medium-sized firms have access to the tools and the environment needed to compete and win internationally.

Mr. Chairman, we have a clear trade and overseas business development focus. But we can and must do more to expand current opportunities further. I believe that improved access can be sought in two, mutually reinforcing ways.

I believe that we should focus on expanding our access into high growth regions, particularly Latin America and the Pacific Rim. The extension of the NAFTA to other countries in this hemisphere will not only introduce several new and dynamic partners to help us to balance the very large presence of the United States in the NAFTA, but new accessions will also lead to improved and more secure access for Canadian exports to a number of rapidly growing regional markets.

Moreover, I am determined to explore a range of formal mechanisms for building stronger trade and investment linkages across the Pacific. Important work can be done in this regard through active participation in the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation