

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Trade is a good news story for Canada. Recognizing its vital importance to Canada's continuing prosperity, over 84 percent of Canadians support government action to bolster trade and investment. They believe that the government's top trade priority should be to offer Canadian business, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), services and advice to help them export¹.

Canadians also recognize that we live in a global economy where each day brings more economic change, sweeping environmental and demographic challenges, opportunity for the well-off and risk for the marginalized. Clearly, we must find new ways to exploit the opportunities and manage the demands of globalization.

While the Government of Canada is advancing Canada's trade and economic interests in such multilateral fora as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the advancement of Canada-U.S. relations is a key priority. Exchanging close to \$2 billion in goods and services each day, our nations are each other's largest customers and biggest suppliers. We are joint stewards of our environment and partners in the defence and security of North America and the world.

The recently announced Enhanced Representation Initiative will greatly strengthen Canada's capacity to advocate its interests in vital economic, political and security matters. It will see Canada open seven new consulates and upgrade two existing consulates to consulates general. Through the appointment of 20 honorary consuls in key U.S. cities, the Initiative will pave the way for innovative, strategic partnerships in emerging power



centres. Having more resources on the ground will also enable us to build effective market intelligence networks and relationships with important players across the United States.

Team Canada Inc (TCI) has an important role to play in building a 21st century economy for Canada. As a highly successful collaboration across 20 federal departments and agencies and hundreds of private sector partners, TCI brings a breadth of experience and expertise essential to enhancing Canada's competitiveness and place in the world.

On behalf of my TCI ministerial colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate Team Canada Inc for another outstanding year of helping Canadian exporters succeed in global markets. I encourage TCI and its partners across Canada to continue to strengthen their collective work in support of the Canadian business community.

James Scott Peterson
Minister of International Trade

¹ See *Canadian Attitudes Towards International Trade*, an Ekos Research Associates survey released May 13, 2003.