

APEC is the principal intergovernmental vehicle for economic co-operation in the Asia-Pacific region. Its emergence in 1989 — built on the careful community-building efforts of governments, business and academics over the previous two decades — represents a significant change from the deep-seated intra-regional differences of the past. It is evolving into a key agenda-setting body for the region, helping to define priorities for member countries. It also provides an opportunity for directly advancing Canadian interests in the region.

Until 1993, the work of APEC was primarily a ministerial process, with annual meetings of foreign affairs and trade ministers and meetings of senior officials three to five times a year. The first APEC heads of government meeting took place in Seattle, United States, in 1993; the second was held in Bogor, Indonesia in 1994. Canada looks forward to hosting the ninth ministerial meeting and the fifth summit of leaders in 1997.

Membership in APEC allows Canada to participate in developments in the Asia-Pacific region and to benefit from the extraordinary economic opportunities it offers. Equally important is to inform Canadians about opportunities in the region and to prompt citizens of other countries to consider Canada when making decisions about everything from business to tourism.

APEC also enables Canada to pursue more specific objectives, such as expanding trade opportunities, promoting investment and trade liberalization and protecting the environment. It provides an opportunity to match the region's needs to Canadian capabilities and improve co-operation in sectors of key interest to Canada, including energy, fisheries, telecommunications, transportation and tourism.

Participation in APEC complements work in other regional and international bodies such as the OECD, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Group of Seven leading industrial economies (G-7) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum.