

As the relationship grows, the number of participants grows too. Quite aside from the major events and visits I have referred to, Canadian businesses of all sizes are active in the Japanese market. Our Embassy in Tokyo and Consulate General in Osaka reported that they attended to over 2,000 business visitors and responded to more than 6,000 trade enquiries from Canadian companies last year. We know many more came and did business on their own.

Nothing perhaps symbolizes Canada's commitment to building a partnership with Japan, and the potential for growth in our relationship, better than the opening of the new Canadian Embassy this spring. In the six months since the new Chancery opened, more than 60,000 people, mostly Japanese, have come to the Embassy to participate in many different business and cultural programs.

I am also very much looking forward to going down to Fukuoka on Friday to open our new trade office there. This will be followed next year by the opening of a trade office in Nagoya. Much more, however, remains to be done if we are to achieve the full potential of our relationship. That is why we have undertaken, through our Pacific 2000 initiative, an intensive program to enhance our capability in the Japanese language and to promote awareness of Japanese culture and ways of doing business through course offerings at Canadian universities and community colleges. There are some 7,000 Canadians currently studying Japanese in high schools and universities. Other programs, some delivered through organizations such as the Asia Pacific Foundation, established personal linkages in Japan and offer seminars and courses to educate Canadian businesses about Japan.

These important bilateral activities, as you are well aware, are taking place against a backdrop of extremely important developments in the area of global trade liberalization.

Few countries in the world are as dependent as Canada is on foreign trade. Over one quarter of our gross national product is derived from trade. This means that roughly one job in three is dependant on exports.

Since coming to power in 1984, our government has made the removal of trade barriers a top priority. And doing so has always been a two-track affair. We have always considered the multilateral negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and any bilateral arrangements we might conclude as complementary rather than competing avenues to the same important goal.

Our number one trade priority today is a successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTN). We believe that there is a window of opportunity now to complete