

Canada's Market Access Priorities for 2000

- monitor both intellectual property (IP) legislation, newly implemented to assist in the development of the Multimedia Super Corridor (problems still exist in terms of enforcement of copyright and IP laws), and foreign-exchange control measures, implemented in September 1998, for their impact on Canadian companies;
- advocate restructuring and recapitalization of Malaysian financial institutions, which may open up opportunities for Canadian financial institutions; and
- press for an end to the new Buy Malaysian policies of the Government.

SINGAPORE

Overview

With one of the world's freest economies, Singapore presents few barriers to Canadian exporters. In 1999, Canadian exports of goods to Singapore were down 10 percent to \$339 million, and imports from Singapore were up 6.2 percent to \$1.25 billion. Singapore continues to offer significant opportunities for Canadian exports of goods, services and technologies. Already the region's premier transportation hub, Singapore is investing heavily in positioning itself as a telecommunications and financial hub, and is devoting a large part of its budget to health and education.

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- encourage joint ventures with Singaporean firms in the information, communications and manufacturing technology sectors; and
- consider renewing negotiations for air services links with Singapore, with a view to expanding business and tourism travel between our countries (Canadian airline industry developments permitting).

Investment

Inward FDI to Canada from Singapore increased substantially from a total of \$213 million in 1997 to \$471 million in 1998. Canadian direct investment in Singapore remained relatively stable over the same time period at \$2.24 billion in 1997 and \$2.20 billion in 1998. Most of the Canadian direct investment in Singapore is in the form of regional offices, primarily in services sectors, such as banking and other finan-

cial services. Singapore has set up a US\$1-billion technology fund, which private sector firms can access for the development of new products, as long as 30 percent of the company ownership is Singaporean.

THE PHILIPPINES

Overview

In 1999, Canadian merchandise trade with the Philippines recovered somewhat from 1998's downturn, following the Asia economic crisis, with exports increasing 15.6 percent to \$287 million. Imports were up 9 percent, totalling \$1.04 billion. The peso has stabilized; GDP growth is forecast to be between 1 percent and 3 percent for 1999; inflation is expected to decline to 7.5 percent by the end of the year.

Over the course of recent years, the Philippines has become a market for a wide range of Canadian goods and services, including agri-food items, machinery and equipment, fertilizers and other commodity products, financial, engineering and other business and professional services. During the administration of President Ramos (which ended mid-year 1998), a program of deliberate and widespread trade and economic liberalization was pursued. This is being continued, perhaps less vigorously, under the administration of President Estrada.

Market Access Results in 1999

- The Estrada administration demonstrated a commitment to economic liberalization by lowering tariff barriers, eliminating non-tariff barriers and deregulating key sectors, such as telecommunications.

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- urge continued commitment to economic liberalization, including enactment of stated plans to allow foreign investment in the retail sector and privatization of the energy sector;
- reduction of new tariffs imposed as protection for certain industries in the wake of the Asian economic crisis; and
- move forward on specific questions concerning IP rights, duty administration, customs valuations and government procurement in the Philippines.