

in Canada. I am confident that the demand is sufficiently large to benefit both our countries.

An increasingly important element in Canada's trade and economic relations with the Asia-Pacific is the development and evolution of government and private sector linkages, the most important of which is APEC [the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum].

The Australian government, past and present, deserves great credit for its initiative in getting APEC launched as well as for maintaining the momentum of the APEC process.

Canada has been one of the most active players in the APEC process and we will continue to be active in helping to make APEC the primary framework for regional trade and economic co-operation.

Indeed, Prime Minister Chrétien's first visit outside of Canada after the election last year was to the APEC leaders meetings in Seattle. More recently, Mr. Chrétien and Prime Minister Keating have exchanged views on APEC issues both by telephone and when they met during the D-Day commemoration ceremonies in London.

In short, Canada and Australia are very much at one about the value of APEC to all the countries of the region. Yet we are also very much aware that much remains to be done to achieve APEC's potential. The central issue of how best to proceed down the trade liberalization track will require concerted thought and commitment if it is to be given a good launch by the APEC leaders meeting in Indonesia in November.

Being a middle power like Australia, Canada has always been conscious of the importance of dialogue, institution building, and multilateralism. This has been fundamental to Canada's approach to the question of regional security.

As some of you may know, we sponsored a North Pacific Co-operation Security dialogue and have been a significant player in the so-called Track Two Security dialogue in the region. Canada has played an active role in support of regional institutions like ASEAN [the Association of Southeast Asian Nations], both on the political and economic fronts, and now with respect to the newly created ASEAN Regional Forum. Like Australia, we have been working to create a regional security comfort level among the Forum countries and to bring about a focus on substantive issues, such as preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and non-proliferation.

We have been ASEAN dialogue partners since 1977, and my colleague our Foreign Affairs Minister, André Ouellet, has just finished participating in the annual ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference and Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum. He also had an