

In short, exports create jobs, and jobs create wealth for Canadians, thus helping to reduce the deficit and to maintain many of those programs, such as health care, that have made our country the envy of the world.

As Mr. Chrétien and the premiers showed on the Team Canada trip, our government's commitment to the Asia-Pacific region can address some of our concerns on the national unity issue. Indeed, support for national unity can be enhanced through the pursuit of co-operative working relationships with the provinces, and through federal leverage and access in the Asia-Pacific when key contracts are at stake and major issues must be dealt with. National unity is most obviously relevant for the Quebec dimension, but it is also significant in mediating lingering divides between Eastern and Western Canada. We see our efforts in the Asia-Pacific as a unifying force - something we can all agree upon.

The expansion of business ties across the Pacific and throughout Asia will take persistent efforts, but I am confident those efforts will succeed. I believe we can build on improved market access resulting from the Uruguay round and the progress made bilaterally with a number of individual countries. As Mr. MacLaren mentioned last night, it will take well-targeted trade, investment and tourism promotion efforts. It also will benefit by our enthusiastic participation in regional institutions, above all APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation].

These efforts in turn can be strengthened by complementary measures that will contribute to a much-needed maturity in our bilateral relationships as well as our regional role. Activities should advance a diversity of objectives and engage a cross-section of our people and talent. They should portray Canada as a partner of quality and value, who is in the game for the long haul, rather than the quick fix.

I say this because success in the Asia-Pacific means a commitment not only over time but across many fields of human endeavour. It covers personal ties between leaders; acceptance of certain responsibilities in areas such as peace, human rights and democratic development; recognition of the value of educational and cultural links; and sharing of experience in specific areas such as research and development, environmental preservation, or other challenges of public policy.

For me, there is a special meaning to the engagement, indeed the mobilization, of Canadians of Asian origin in the building of our Asia-Pacific partnerships. As I mentioned to our heads of mission yesterday morning, Canadians of Asian origin, whether representatives of big companies or entrepreneurs from our dynamic small and medium-sized firms, can contribute to the national effort we need.