

We also provided members of the Sectoral Advisory Groups on International Trade -- or SAGITs -- with draft copies of their relevant sector strategies. These were reviewed and discussed at SAGIT meetings.

However, the involvement of the private sector does not stop with the publication of this document. What I envisage is an ongoing working relationship among the private sector, myself and officials to improve upon the Plan and the policies and programs it covers.

For future versions of the *International Trade Business Plan*, we plan to work with the private sector to identify goals and signposts for each of the sector strategies. In so doing, two or three years down the road we will have a means to measure the success of our strategies.

We cannot afford to see money being spent in areas that do not meet Canadian competitiveness objectives. Neither can we afford the duplication and overlap of trade development programs either between federal departments or between the federal government and other levels of government. With the scarce financial resources available to us, we must use what we have more effectively.

That brings me to the second goal. The *International Trade Business Plan*, I believe, makes its greatest contribution in this area. The extensive interdepartmental consultations, which form the basis of the Plan, have ensured more efficiency and reduced duplication.

For example, by consolidating the list of proposed activities for each sector, we were able to reduce planned events from about 1,200 to 900 -- simply by eliminating duplication and overscheduling.

The result of this interdepartmental exercise also ensures that all federal government departments are now working toward common international trade objectives.

The Plan will also be useful for the priority setting of the whole range of trade development initiatives. What I mean by this is that the Plan will help us make difficult decisions on where and how to spend federal government money on trade development.

Finally, with respect to the third goal, we have developed a document that is a key component of the Government's trade priorities, both in the areas of trade policy and trade development.

Let me first turn to trade policy.