

Showcasing Canada

With the magic of Cirque du Soleil, some Canadian comfort food and the entertainment of Canada's "Dashan," the Canada Pavilion at Expo 2010 Shanghai opened its doors on May 1, putting the spotlight on our economic, political and cultural ties with China. The pavilion, among the largest and most imaginative at what is the biggest universal exposition ever, is expected to draw some 30,000 visitors a day. Along with cultural, business promotion, communications, public affairs and culinary programming, it presents Canada as an attractive place to invest, visit and study.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to showcase Canada to the world," says Nadir Patel, Canada's Consul General in Shanghai. "Participants at our events are impressed with the business programs, the cultural activities, the high-quality speakers—and of course they're blown away by our pavilion."

Patel says the ministerial, provincial and private-sector business-delegation visits that are taking place during the fair are keeping the mission busy. The Expo, he adds, is the perfect launching pad for DFAIT's Invest in Canada program, which includes panel discussions with Chinese and Canadian business representatives to promote Canada's economic strengths, competitive advantages and innovative spirit.

With a theme of Better City, Better Life, the Expo, which runs until October 31, features more than 230 pavilions from some 180 participating nations. Among them are pavilions from the cities of Vancouver and Montreal. The event is expected to attract some 90 million visitors from around the world. The theme of the Canada Pavilion is The Living City: Inclusive, Sustainable, Creative. Designed by Cirque du Soleil, the pavilion has many environmentally sustainable features, including "green walls" (covered in evergreen tree seedlings), which help filter the air, collect rainwater and keep the environment and building cool. The pavilion features interactive multimedia displays about Canada, as well as Cirque buskers and a restaurant serving Canadian cuisine.



Mark Rowswell, known in China as "Dashan," welcomes the world to the Canada Pavilion.

Andrea Clark-Grignon, a public affairs officer working at the Consulate General in Shanghai, says that the pavilion is not only about fun and play, it is about business, innovation, expertise and leadership in technology. A number of workshops and presentations will take place at the pavilion and in the surrounding area. Part of Clark-Grignon's job includes planning for high-level visits by Canadian representatives, which has been complicated, given the size and scope of the event. "It's a challenge to arrange appropriate treatment for our VIP delegations, because here at Expo it seems as though everyone is a VIP!"

Ottawa-born comedian and television commentator Mark Rowswell, famous throughout China as "Dashan" ("Big Mountain"), is Canada's Commissioner General for the Shanghai Expo. Rowswell, China's most famous foreigner (and the brother of DFAIT's Ben Rowswell, deputy head of mission in Kabul), is helping welcome the world to the Canada Pavilion.



photos: Gary Gao/DFAIT

The Canada Pavilion features interactive multimedia displays and Cirque du Soleil performances.

Expo 2010 Shanghai by the numbers

- ▶ 6 months
- ▶ 230-plus pavilions
- ▶ More than 180 participating nations
- ▶ 5.3 km²
- ▶ 90 million visitors expected overall
- ▶ 5.5 million visitors expected at Canada Pavilion

Canada at World Fairs

- ▶ Canada's presence at international expositions has been almost unbroken since 1851, and includes hosting Expo '67 in Montreal and Expo '86 in Vancouver.
- ▶ Canada's participation is managed by Canadian Heritage, in partnership with Canadian public, private and non-governmental organizations.
- ▶ World fairs allow Canada to showcase the best of what we have to offer in ingenuity and innovation.