

**FINAL REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR
THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
SUBMITTED TO THE HONOURABLE ROY MACLAREN,
MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

As business people representing small, medium and large businesses from across Canada in many different sectors, you asked us to provide our collective perspective on what international business development assistance Canadian businesses require from government to be competitive and succeed internationally. To this end, you asked that we review existing support, including any gaps in programming or services, and to suggest how government could deliver programs and services more efficiently and effectively, keeping in mind budgetary constraints.

We believe that government support for international business development is more important to the future economic health and well being of Canada than programs in many other areas. However, the Steering Committee feels that business must first address programs which directly affect its activities before commenting on expenditures in other government programs. Moreover, we believe that the changes recommended, even though involving expenditure cuts, will provide more effective overall support to the international development of Canadian business. The government would be well advised to subject other government departments to a similar review. We caution, however, that the government will be unable to make the necessary reductions without the ability to reduce the size of the public service.

In examining the totality of government expenditures in support of business both federally and provincially, we noted a number of programs that did not fall under your mandate, but which were important to the international business development effort. We have raised these for your consideration and the Committee hopes that you, in turn, will address these issues with your Cabinet colleagues and your provincial counterparts.

Some of our recommendations are necessarily general and deal with the overall strategic direction of international business development support. We recognize that in many cases, the government will need to examine in greater detail the implications of our recommendations before taking action.

Our recommendations focus on five main areas: the government's international business development focus and structure, international business development programs and services, the Trade Commissioner Service, export financing and, aid and trade. We believe these recommendations offer the possibility of a renewed, more streamlined international business support framework that is both efficient and cost effective.