

Thank you, John, for your kind introduction, and thank you for this opportunity to join your winter meeting.

I am pleased that you have already had the opportunity to meet with some of the most senior officials, from Industry, Science and Technology Canada and International Trade Canada, and from Energy, Mines and Resources Canada.

I look forward to hearing more about these issues following your meeting today. I would like to reiterate the message that Tony Eyton gave you this morning. The Prosperity Initiative provides you with a chance to give input and advice. We have begun sectoral consultations, and, as you know, Bob Ferchat, Chairman of the Board of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) has agreed to chair the study on the services industry. I urge you to get involved in these sectoral consultations, which affect your industry, or send submissions to the Steering Group.

The nuclear industry has a large stake in Canada's ability to improve learning, science and technology, financing and investment, domestic markets and international trade. These are the five areas covered in the discussion paper the government released to help focus dialogue during consultations. These are the key areas where we must improve our performance. Your experience in addressing these challenges will be extremely valuable to a process to help steer Canada's economy into the 21st century. I am confident in Canada's ability to build a dynamic economy for the future. We have the ability to face the challenge of global competitiveness.

I was forcefully reminded of Canada's achievement and our potential in the high technology field just two weeks ago, when Dr. Roberta Bondar made her flight in the International Microgravity Laboratory. This was a proud accomplishment for Canadians everywhere. It was an especially proud achievement for Canadian science and for the Canadian Space Program in particular. From this success, I think we can draw three lessons that apply to the nuclear industry in this country as they apply to the space industry:

1. Canada has world-class expertise in one of the leading-edge areas of science and technology.
2. Canada has used that expertise to enhance its industrial base and seize new trade and investment opportunities.
3. These accomplishments are the result of a vibrant partnership among the federal government, the private sector and the scientific community.

In space, Canada has carved niches of expertise in such areas as space science, robotics, remote sensing, telecommunications and the astronaut program. In the nuclear industry, Canada has secured a solid reputation for the safety and dependability of the Canadian Deuterium Uranium (CANDU) reactor. When the world thinks of Canadian technology, it thinks of CANDU. But Canada's reputation does not end there. Building on the strengths and achievements of our nuclear energy program, Canadians have applied nuclear technology to a wide range of purposes.