

That is not to say that our performance cannot be improved. It can be and it must be, and that improvement must include the operations of federal departments.

Helping us in this latter regard is a group of business people who have been examining various ways in which my Department's business development activities can be made more effective, at less cost. This task force is known as Red Wilson's committee, after the Chairman of Bell Canada Enterprises Incorporated, its leader.

The Task Force's report challenges us to better focus our efforts: are we really doing enough to promote promising sectors, or are we spreading ourselves too thinly and too generally? Should we be specializing in priority areas, or even in geographic regions?

Without a doubt this International Business Development Review can be a catalyst for further improvement in the government's service function, particularly as it applies to the smaller and medium-sized businesses that need all the help they can get.

As Prime Minister Chrétien told the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Québec City recently, the federal government's focus is on jobs and economic growth — and on working together with all our partners — provincial governments, business, labour, voluntary groups and concerned Canadians.

Fortified by your loyal co-operation, your enthusiasm and dedication, Canada is recapturing the momentum and prosperity that it had been lacking for far too long.

Thank you.