

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to speak on APEC's multifaceted work program. By exploring avenues for practical economic co-operation among our economies in areas of mutual interest, APEC's work program has the potential to play a substantial role in facilitating economic exchange and increasing prosperity throughout our region.

I would like to express Canada's appreciation to Thailand for producing the consolidated report on the work program. While significant progress has been made, it is equally clear that this progress has been uneven. I understand that most groups have, to some extent, experienced shortcomings in the areas of organization and co-ordination. I am hopeful, however, that our agreement to create a secretariat for APEC will make an enormous difference in this respect.

Canada believes that there may be areas where we can sharpen the focus and direction of the work program by rationalizing some of the projects that have been initiated. We therefore place a high priority on the discussions that are currently under way to explore opportunities for streamlining the work program. I would hope that we will receive practical and specific recommendations in this regard at our next meeting in the United States.

Canada also believes, Mr. Chairman, that to enhance the credibility and relevance of our work program, we must take steps to encourage greater involvement of our respective private sectors. We therefore urge all working group "shepherds" to explore and maximize opportunities for integrating private sector participation in their workplans. Sometime down the road, when the individual work projects are more advanced, we may wish to consider more formal, institutional mechanisms for private sector participation in APEC activities.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, Canada shepherds the Working Group on Marine Resource Conservation and is one of a number of co-shepherds of the Human Resources Development Working Group. Although there are numerous noteworthy activities and developments under way in each of the ten working groups, in the interests of time I will focus my remarks on just these two.

Canada's particularly active interest in marine resource conservation stems from the priority that we attach to developing sound environmental policies including sustainable development.

Canada appreciates the active participation of all members who have participated in the work of this group and, in particular, Indonesia, which hosted the most recent meeting of the working group. I understand that some very useful recommendations were developed to help participants address the red tide problem.

Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that, as our populations and industries grow, pollution in the marine environment becomes a matter of very serious concern for all our coastal states,