

and membership in the G8 and G20 are valued by its neighbours. Indeed, Canada's economic model, based on open markets, prudent and appropriate regulation, and responsive and equitable social policies, is attracting significant attention from other countries in

the region and beyond. Regional solidarity and collaboration during this difficult period will help the region weather the downturn, but ongoing efforts are also required for the long term. This is a message Prime Minister Harper brought to his meetings with

hemispheric leaders at the Fifth Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago in April 2009.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of priorities and progress to date in achieving Canada's vision for the Americas.

Why the Americas matter to Canadians

Canada is a country of the Americas. By geography, history and multi-faceted relationships between states, in terms of trade, immigration and cultural and social exchanges, the Americas is a region of strategic domestic and international interest for Canada.

An important segment of Canadians come from the region. As a country of refuge, Canada has welcomed new immigrants during periods of civil unrest in Latin America, from Chile in the 1970s to Central America in the

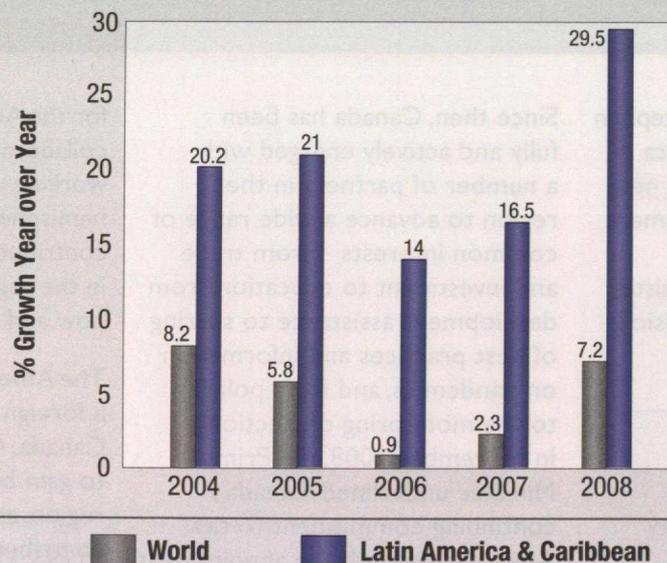
1980s. Today, over 11 percent of Canadian immigrants come from Latin America and the Caribbean, including Mexico. Indeed, there are over 70 Latin America and Caribbean diaspora organizations across Canada. The three largest diaspora communities are from Jamaica, El Salvador and Haiti.

But Canada's ties to the region are broader and deeper than these recent migratory flows. Through a long history of commerce, investment, development, military assistance, immigration and

the promotion of democratic values, Canada has established a reputation as a reliable partner and a principled participant whose voice and influence count.

Canada's interests and relations in the region align with three main objectives which form the basis of Canada's vision and engagement in the Americas: democratic governance, prosperity and security.

Annual growth in Canadian merchandise exports, 2004-2008*



*Excludes Mexico

Source: Statistics Canada (Preliminary data subject to revision)