

strengthen the global economic system. The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement achieved a deeper degree of trade liberalization than would have been possible multilaterally. Not only did NAFTA extend this structure to Mexico, it also helped catalyze the movement towards free trade in APEC as well as in the Western Hemisphere. A stronger trade relationship with Europe may also result. We are building an architecture of overlapping circles of free trade which, at some point, might even lead to a new trade arrangement that bridges all the blocs - a kind of WTO-plus. In fact, both recent and potential developments in the world trading environment illustrate the momentum currently behind global trade and investment liberalization. How do we maintain this momentum? How do we ensure that the blocs grow in parallel and eventually converge?

Canada, Australia and other like-minded countries have an important role to play. Our policies and actions must promote trade between the blocs and discourage the "us-versus-them" mentality often associated with regional groupings. We must strive for a consensus, one premised on the need for trade liberalization, to advance on an inter-regional - as much as an intra-regional - basis.

Canada and Australia understand from our own bilateral experience the benefits of open and free trade. Canadian and Australian businesses are well positioned to capitalize on the opportunities offered by the reduction or elimination of trade and investment barriers worldwide. I need not to remind this audience of the importance for every business to be ahead of its competition. Today, the challenge is to seek long-term strategic investments and partnerships in key markets in order to weave the webs of production and technology that are so central a feature of the global economic landscape.

I invite you - just as I invite your Canadian counterparts - to explore new methods of enhancing our linkages, to seek innovative ways to develop connections that more effectively and competitively bring our products and technologies into the international marketplace. Canadian companies should take a hard look at Australia as a regional base for success in the western Pacific and southern Asia region. By the same token, their Australian counterparts should take the same good, hard look at Canada as the base for success in the Americas. Let's share in the risks and profits of partnership in the Pacific and in the world. This is the challenge and opportunity facing us as we move into our second century together.

Thank you.