

Second, what will you do to make Canadian free trade a reality? What will you do to make it a priority for every business person you know or meet?

Third, how will you and your association keep constant pressure on governments to establish a single Canadian market? They will respond to your suggestions -- but only if you keep making them!

Fourth, how can we work together to ensure that new barriers aren't created? Also what mechanisms are needed to resolve disputes about barriers? Canada will need a mechanism to maintain the integrity of the market. The private sector is essential to this process. We rely on you to serve as an early warning system in case new legislation hurts the objectives of free trade within Canada.

Fifth, how are you going to demonstrate your commitment to open markets? I believe that business has a responsibility to lead by example.

You, your employees, customers and suppliers are the beneficiaries of open markets. That is why I think you have a critical role to play in developing alliances, strategies and practices, which adjust to the new open market realities without demanding new barriers.

This is not a simple problem with a quick and obvious fix. Barriers are often hidden and sometimes unintended consequences of well-intentioned policy-making. But whatever their cause, barriers to internal trade reduce efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. They restrict markets and constrain opportunities, especially for small and medium businesses who have neither the time nor the resources to find ways of overcoming them. We need to be vigilant in not only rooting out existing barriers but also in not erecting new ones.

We must also have diligent oversight of the legislative and regulatory process by concerned businesses and a commitment of political will to ensure that new barriers are not erected.

I am looking forward to seeing a report of your deliberation on these issues and any other you want to bring to my attention. We must work together. Canada needs a more open internal market to ensure our ability to compete abroad. But we must also not forget that Canada's most important market is Canada. Canada's most important customers are Canadians.

I need your help to ensure that the dream of free trade within Canada that has eluded us for generations will become a reality within three years.

Thank you.