

Canada to Contribute to APEC Y2K Preparations

On November 15, 1998, International Trade Minister Sergio Marchi and Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced a \$150,000-contribution for the development of an expert's symposium on Year 2000 (Y2K) computer readiness, to be held by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

The Canadian contribution will be used to organize a forum that will bring together experts from APEC member economies. The aim is to take stock of Y2K preparations, raise awareness, compare experiences and best practices, and mobilize action. APEC trade ministers will review the state of preparations at their next meeting.

"Nowhere is the trend toward interdependency more evident today than among the economies of Asia Pacific," said Minister Marchi. "Co-ordination on Y2K will help ensure that the technology and infrastructure that supports the essential trade between our economies will not be affected. This initiative is part of Canada's

approach of working bilaterally and multilaterally with other partners. We firmly believe that we all can accomplish much more by working together, rather than in isolation."

As part of Canada's Year 2000 efforts, Canada hosted the Ottawa Ministerial Conference on Electronic Commerce, October 7-9, where the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, *The Year 2000 Problem: Impacts and Actions*, was presented. The conference brought together representatives of 41 countries, 14 international organizations such as the World Trade Organization and the World Intellectual Property Organization,

business and public interest groups. Seven APEC economies participated in the conference, and six others attended as observers.

At the May 1998 Birmingham Summit, leaders also agreed to take further urgent action to share information within the G-8 and with other organizations such as the World Bank and OECD, as well as with the private sector and public interest organizations.

For more information on Year 2000 activities, contact the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's Y2K Co-ordination Secretariat at (613) 944-3000, or visit the Department's Internet site at: <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca>

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United Arab Emirates, a four-fold increase since 1992.

Mr. Marchi will also review the two-year-old Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) and explore ways to further improve and liberalize trade with Israel. Under the CIFTA, two-way trade has increased 17 per cent both years, with exports to Israel surpassing \$243 million in 1997.

In his first visit to Ramallah in the West Bank, the Minister will seek to expand economic and trade relations between Canadian and Palestinian partners on a more formal basis. He will also officially open the Canadian Representatives Office in Ramallah.

"The Middle East is an excellent customer of Canadian engineering, consulting and infrastructure expertise," said Mr. Marchi. "Recent years also demonstrate that Canadian institutions can match the educa-

tional needs in the fast-growing population in Middle Eastern countries."

For more information on the visit, contact Peter McGovern, Director, Team Canada Division, DFAIT, tel.: (613) 944-2520, fax: (613) 996-3406.

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