

Canada's commitment to maintaining this record is demonstrated by the recent opening of the Canadian Wheat Board office here in Beijing. This new office will make it easier for Canada and China to continue doing their long-standing business in grains, and to exploit new opportunities and new markets. Related opportunities exist in grain handling equipment and in potash. But, regardless of the product, whether in commodity or in high technology, whether in telecommunications and energy or in transport, doing business in China can be as challenging as it is rewarding. Thousands of Canadian companies including small and medium-sized enterprises have been active in various Chinese regional markets. Many Canadian companies have established offices in the provinces of China to pursue new opportunities and to service their clients. Presence and positioning are keys to success in this huge country.

We have welcomed the increasing number of joint ventures between Canadian and Chinese companies to produce quality goods for China, and for the rest of the world. Such ventures, frequently involving small and medium-sized enterprises, also provide good market distribution channels for increased Canadian exports to China.

China is undergoing a remarkable transformation. Industrialization and modernization are evidenced by the thousands of factories, skyscrapers, roads, telephone networks, harbours and dams, that are being built at an almost frenetic pace. China is now beginning to reap the benefits of trade and investment liberalization which is fuelling one of the world's highest and most sustained rates of economic growth.

The Canadian response increasingly requires an approach which goes beyond traditional trade and involves direct investment, joint ventures, transfer of technology and the establishment of a permanent presence in the Chinese market.

Many Canadian companies have responded to this challenge. We are proud of their achievements.

The signing of dozens of commercial deals this afternoon will further illustrate the wealth, variety, complexity and maturity of our growing business relationship. New challenges exist also in the area of export financing, challenges which I am sure the combined efforts of our commercial banks and the Export Development Corporation will meet.

We must sustain our momentum. One of the key ways to achieve this is through high level visits. The Team Canada mission is the culmination of the many significant exchanges that have taken place in the last year. It also gives an impetus to many high level exchanges that will follow in the years to come.