using biological organisms in managing waste and determining the most efficient way to produce forest products, such as paper. These are all essential for maintaining the competitiveness of Canada's forest product industries.

Fisheries

In the fishery sector, the use of genetics and biotechnology has assisted in identifying and producing vaccines to control diseases in aquaculture stocks. DNA technology is being applied to define the population structure of commercially important fish and shellfish and to develop molecular markers for stock identification, assisting in enforcement efforts and conservation.

While the number of trade opportunities presented by Canadian biotechnology expertise is increasing, so too are the number of market access issues. The success of Canadian biotechnology products will rely, in part, on a sound regulatory system, both domestically and internationally. International efforts are underway to examine the unique situation of products of biotechnology – especially the most controversial – genetically modified organisms – recognizing the risks, while at the same time, ensuring that benefits can be enjoyed by all. Canada is an active participant in these international efforts. Canada has much to offer to these discussions. As a country that is fortunate to have a strong regulatory system, Canada is often looked to as a model for other countries. The Canadian system is strong and effective; it is flexible enough to address new challenges posed by biotechnology.

The World Trade Organization (WTO)

Biotechnology discussions within the World Trade Organization are confined to the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Committee), the Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Committee) and the Council for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs Council). Within the TBT and SPS Committees, the discussion has focussed on notifications that various WTO Members have made with respect to measures and technical regulations regarding genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and whether these measures and technical regulations are consistent with the rights and obligations of the WTO Agreements. These discussions will continue until more consensus on the issue of GMOs emerges or until WTO jurisprudence emerges from possible trade disputes involving GMOs.

With respect to the WTO TRIPs Agreement, Canada is participating in the built-in review of Article 27.3(b) of the TRIPs Agreement. This provision allows WTO Members to exclude from patentability plants and animals other than micro-organisms (e.g. bacteria, yeast, algae, fungi, cell, etc.), provided that protection for new plant varieties is available (many Members, including Canada, have chosen to adopt the UPOV system for plant variety protection). It also permits WTO Members to exclude from patentability essentially biological processes for the production of plants and animals (e.g. cross-fertilization of plants) other than microbiological processes.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

In January 2000, Canada participated in the negotiation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB). Canada is an active participant in the post-negotiation process, including consultations on signing, ratifying and implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and intends to sign the Protocol in the near future.

Focus on Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba

This year, *Canada's International Market Access Priorities* (CIMAP) report, turns its attention to the Prairies and reviews the significance for these provinces – Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba – of opening markets to Canadian products.

All three provinces registered higher economic growth rates in 2000 than in 1999: continuing high oil and gas prices and strong growth in service-provision sectors stimulated increased economic activity in Alberta and Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan benefited from increased output in the agri-food, chemical and electronic products sectors; and, Manitoba realized a strong recovery in the agricultural sector, supported by strong growth in its mining and manufacturing sectors.