

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

I am pleased to present the 2004 edition of *Opening Doors to the World: Canada's International Market Access Priorities*. This document outlines Canada's market access objectives for 2004 and highlights the successes achieved during the previous year.

Canada's economic prosperity is highly correlated with its success as a trading nation: an estimated one out of every four jobs in Canada is linked to our export success in global markets. As part of the government's agenda to build a strong 21st century economy and to secure Canada's place in the world, a separate Department of International Trade has been created to ensure that trade and investment activities support these priorities. This will enable us to more effectively contribute to enhancing Canada's economic prosperity, including the building of a knowledge-based economy, and will permit better synergies among our trade, investment and innovation objectives. To further this broad vision, the Government of Canada remains committed to reducing and eliminating barriers to trade in key foreign markets.

In 2004, the government will continue to focus on Canada's trade relationship with its number-one market, the United States. Through the Smart Border Action Plan, we are developing a facilitative border that has helped to ensure the secure but business-friendly frontier required to accommodate the world's most comprehensive trade relationship. In addition, the government is implementing its plan to open seven new consulates in the United States, upgrade two consulates to consulates general and appoint 20 honorary consuls as part of the Enhanced Representation Initiative. This initiative is designed to improve our ability to operate with increased effectiveness in the U.S. market. Canada will continue, as a top priority, to dedicate its efforts to managing the trade relationship with the United States, with a view to ensuring cooperation on trade policy issues of mutual interest and the resolution of bilateral trade issues. In particular, Canada will continue to pursue a long-term solution on softwood



lumber, and it will work to secure a science-based reopening of the border to trade in live animals—the border was closed due to a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (or BSE) in Canada.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) provides us with a framework for managing and enhancing our trade relationship with the United States and Mexico. There is no doubt that NAFTA, which marked its 10th anniversary on January 1, 2004, has served Canada exceedingly well. It has created new opportunities for Canadian exporters and has made all three parties more competitive. According to the 2004 KPMG report *Competitive Alternatives*, Canada now ranks as the lowest-cost country for doing business among all of the G7 countries. In addition, NAFTA has contributed to a decade of significant economic growth for Canadians. Canada is committed to further expanding its trade and investment opportunities with the United States and Mexico through the NAFTA work plan.

Canada remains committed to seeking an ambitious outcome in the current World Trade Organization negotiations, as outlined by the Doha Development Agenda. Canada's key objectives are reforming world agricultural trade, increasing access to foreign markets for Canadian goods and services, and strengthening the rules governing trade. The World Trade