



MAY 11 2004

Central America trade mission a success

Gar Knutson, Minister of State (New and Emerging Markets), visited Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Panama with the largest Canadian business delegation ever led by a minister to the region. **Central America Circuit 2004** included 36 business participants from 25 companies in the agri-food and beverages, construction and building products, and environmental services and technologies sectors.

Circuit participants engaged in a six-day program that featured one-on-one meetings and presentations by officials and local partners. Networking events were also organized to highlight Canada's interest in strengthening trade and investment ties and open new doors for Canadian exporters, particularly small and medium-sized firms.

With a free trade agreement in place with Costa Rica since November 2002, and one under negotiation with Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua—the Canada-CA 4 Free Trade



Minister of State (New and Emerging Markets) Gar Knutson, and Deputy Administrator of the Panama Canal Dr. Ricaurte Vasquez, during a visit to the Canal's Miraflores Locks. The multi-billion dollar expansion of the Canal will likely create opportunities for Canadian companies.

Agreement—Central America Circuit 2004 helped set the foundations for stronger partnerships in the future.

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Franchising in Africa:

Opportunities abound for Canadian business

A new African Development Bank (AfDB) strategy for private-sector growth in Africa is opening up a range of opportunities for Canadian businesses through franchising. The strategy was adopted as a result of a study carried out by Mississauga, Ontario-based management consulting firm **Northern Lights Franchise Consultants Corp.**

Opportunities in Africa go well beyond the traditional industries associated with franchising,

like the retail and restaurant sectors, to ones such as education, transportation, oil and gas, health care and telecommunications. Any sector, in fact, in which Canadians excel at the transfer of know-how. The possibilities, in other words, are almost limitless.

The AfDB promotes the economic development and social progress of African countries through, among other initiatives, the development of the private sector, 90% of which is made up of small

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