



*by John Gero
Assistant Deputy Minister,
International Business,
and Chief Trade
Commissioner*

**Happy
Canadian
New
Year!**

I hope you have all had a pleasant holiday season and a chance to rest and enjoy your families. I also hope you are gladly back at work and eagerly anticipating another year of new challenges.

I look forward to working on these challenges with you, because you are my number one priority. From my perspective, the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service is only as good as its people, so we will be focussing on our people. Here are a number of ways we intend to do this.

I am committed to listening to what you have to say, and I will use every opportunity to do so. I've already held, at the beginning of my mandate, a series of very useful conference calls with all program managers. I had the chance to hear your opinions about the changes to the Trade Commissioner Service when I met a number of you at the Trade InfoFair here in Ottawa in September, during my trip to Latin America, at the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters meeting and at Softworld in Halifax in October, and at Construct Canada in Toronto in November. I hope to hear from more of you during the coming year.

I am also committed to responding to your answers to the 2000 TCS Employee Survey. I am awaiting the report currently being compiled by our consultants. It will be the basis of our second TCS Employee Action Plan,

just as the results of the first employee survey led to our first action plan.

Since you identified it as your main priority, a further learning and outreach package has been instituted. It includes courses for new locally-engaged staff to improve their knowledge of Canada. Launched in October, this package also provides opportunities for you to enhance your knowledge of your industry sectors and of Canadian businesses operating in these sectors. Finally, there are provisions for further learning opportunities within your region and at your location.

But we must continue our efforts to consolidate and build on our New Approach. We will be moving forward with the next steps. The focus will be our colleagues outside Canada who are on the front lines of providing our core services. Kathryn Aleong provides more details on this initiative on page 1 of this issue. By improving the technological tools at your disposal, we hope to facilitate your work. The Export Development Division (TCE) is moving ahead with changes to WIN, which you can read about on pages 14 and 15. Upgrades to InfoExport will let your clients access your services more easily. Find out how on page 16. I am also committed to providing you with remote access as soon as it is feasible.

This is a cooperative effort. Your voice counts. Use it!