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Prime Minister Jean Chrétien officially launched Canada's Year of Asia Pacific (CYAP) on January 8, 1997, the day he departed for the third Team Canada trade mission to the Asia Pacific region. This event was an appropriate beginning for CYAP, which shared many objectives in common with the Team Canada concept.

The Prime Minister was often overwhelmed by the enthusiasm that Canadians showed for this initiative. In cities and towns from coast to coast, they were eager to learn more about the Asia Pacific region, and connect with people who live there.

Our goal was to redirect Canada's overall focus to Asia Pacific in a manner that reflects our economic and political interests, the region's growing influence in global affairs, and the shifts in population that have occurred in Canada over the past twenty years.

The financial crisis of this fall has only strengthened our commitment to the region, as it has helped illustrate to all Canadians just how interdependent our modern economies have become. Canada remains committed to the region because we believe in its long-term prospects.

This was also a year to re-examine the contribution that Asian Canadians have made to Canada's history, as well as the contribution they can make to our current efforts to expand Canada's influence in the region. CYAP's activities were designed to help draw attention to Canada's Asian heritage and further expand our ties with the Asia Pacific region. It brought together in partnership our respective business, cultural, and artistic communities to produce some 600 events across Canada.

Our message appealed to a wide national audience, while also reaching more specific segments, such as our youth, small business, and Canadians of Asian descent. If Canada is to participate fully in the Asia Pacific of the new millennium, these groups must be on board.

This report will examine the impact of Canada's Year of Asia Pacific by identifying some of the key events and how they contributed to CYAP's overall objectives. We are confident that the events of CYAP have helped build stronger ties to the Asia Pacific region and, in so doing, helped promote future job creation and economic growth on both sides of the Pacific.

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