

benefits they derive from it. This must change. Canada will work actively to encourage the necessary commitment, including by pursuing the free trade vision adopted by APEC's leaders during their summit last November in Indonesia.

And then there is Europe, Mr. Speaker. Although our ties of trade are proportionately somewhat less than a generation ago, they remain important. We also enjoy stronger-than-ever investment links across the Atlantic. How, then, do we re-energize the transatlantic economic relationship, building on progress in regional agreements to maintain the dynamic of global trade liberalization? This is a question worth pursuing, whatever the precise answer or mechanism eventually developed to recharge our European links.

Mr. Speaker, while I have briefly outlined several of the key elements comprising the Government's commitment to widening and deepening our network of rules-based freer trade, this effort will have a considerably diminished impact for Canada unless Canadians take full advantage of the access secured through international negotiations.

Rules help to open the door to prosperity and to keep it open. However, rules do not trade. It is companies that trade. Consequently, the Government's third trade-related objective is to rationalize and energize our international business development programs, in light of the foreign policy review and extensive parallel consultations with the private sector and the provinces over the past year.

We shall redouble our efforts abroad to ensure that all our firms receive timely, relevant market information, access to foreign decision makers, and the effective defence of their interests when authorities in other countries do not comply with their international trade obligations.

Domestically, we are committed to extending the "Team Canada" concept to include a more coherent, integrated approach toward co-operation with the provinces in order to help increase the export readiness of Canadian firms.

We are also refocussing federal government assistance to encourage job-rich small and medium-sized companies to enter export markets, while improving their access to export financing by launching greater collaboration between the private banks and the Export Development Corporation.

To facilitate Canada's full involvement in the global, increasingly knowledge-intensive economy, the Government will also foster the acquisition and development of technology by Canadian businesses, in part through their greater participation in international research and development alliances. We shall