

In Canada we are very much aware of the tremendous growth of the Asian economies over the past decade, particularly here in Vancouver, which is our main gateway to Pacific markets. Many countries in Asia, both those that are developing and those that have attained the status of "Newly Industrialized Countries" have huge projects involving power generation, transportation, communications, the provision of adequate clean water, the disposal of sewage and industrial wastes, etc. These are areas of considerable Canadian expertise, but often Canadian companies have been frustrated in their efforts to do business in these sectors and in these regions. They are frustrated not for technical reasons, but for reasons related to project financing and unfamiliarity with business procedures. These procedures are often very different from those in Canada or the more familiar territory of the United States, or Europe, or even Japan itself.

And so, this series of seminars was arranged in order to help Canadian business unravel some of the complexities of doing business in Asia. We are encouraging Canadian business to work with those Japanese firms, particularly the general trading companies, that have expertise in Asia complementing their own.

In sum, the Japanese are unparalleled in their knowledge of Asia, their involvement in projects, and their access to commercial and government financing. The Japanese have a way of being the first in to new markets. Japanese firms are involved in the whole spectrum of business in a country, beginning with infrastructure projects and trade, then making investments in manufacturing and services, as a country develops and the needs and aspirations of its people become more sophisticated. These are some of the many reasons why we are inviting you to do business in Asia in partnership with Japan.

Thank you. Domo arigato gozaimashita.