

I am pleased to announce today that on the Canadian side, we have established funding to facilitate business exchanges at the mid-management level. I have asked our embassy to pursue this matter vigorously with appropriate Japanese authorities so that we can quickly put a program in place.

A group of distinguished Canadians has joined me in Japan. My parliamentary colleague, Bill Kempling, veteran member of the House of Commons has a long background in business and is Chairman of the Canada Japan Parliamentary Group.

Because coal and lumber are among the largest of Canada's resource exports to Japan, two industry leaders have joined me. They are Giacomo Capobianco, Vice President (Coal), ESSO Resources, President of Byron Creek Collieries and Chairman of the Canadian Coal Association, along with Clive Roberts, President of Seaboard Lumber.

Robert Blanchard, First Vice President of the International Woodworkers of America represents Canadian labour, particularly in the forest sector.

Vancouver's International Geosystems Corporation is represented by its President, Hugh Mah. His company specializes in software systems for the petroleum industry and is a world leader in the development of text processing systems in Mandarin and is developing a Japanese system.

Also with me from Vancouver, is Arthur Hara, Chairman of the Board of Mitsubishi Canada, one of the major Japanese trading companies. Mr. Hara is a member of the order of Canada and past Chairman of the Vancouver Board of Trade.

David Culver, President and Chief Executive Officer of Alcan Aluminum Limited, will join us later today. As Chairman of the Canada/Japan Business Cooperation Committee, Mr. Culver plays a critical role in the strengthening of ties between Japanese and Canadian firms. I know he looks forward to welcoming the Canada/Japan Business Committee to Vancouver next May.

Because Tokyo is one of the world's financial capitals with a significant Canadian presence, I asked Steve Probyn, a Vice President of Wood Gundy and Charles Coffey, a Vice President of the Royal Bank of Canada, to join me.

These are key members of "Team Canada". They are here with me to give substance to our commitment to the Pacific and to Japan in particular. As a member of Parliament from Vancouver, this is a commitment I heartily endorse. We are here to turn sentiments into substance, rhetoric into reality. We will do our share. We also count on Japan to do its share. Thank you.