

is, if any of APEC's members is still a developing economy in 20 years' time.

Some have questioned whether these target dates are realistic given the great diversity of economies and interests involved. My own guess - and it is only a guess - is that we will reach free trade in many sectors long before the 2010 or 2020 deadlines once the built-in momentum of liberalization is truly unleashed.

With this in mind, Canada has been less concerned with the issue of when the process ends than with the much more important question of when - and in what ways - it should begin. For instance, we have worked over the past 12 months to develop work programs, deadlines and frameworks that will enable all of us in APEC to realize that vision.

Coming out of the Osaka meeting of APEC, we will have a detailed plan with commitments to action in the progressive elimination of tariffs and non-tariff measures, as well as work in the areas of customs procedures, standards and conformance, investment, government procurement and dispute mediation, among others.

The plan also details work programs agreed by APEC's various working groups in areas such as transport, telecommunications, human resource development, small and medium-sized enterprises, and industrial science and technology. A number of Canadian firms are already involved in working group activities and helping to ensure that APEC work is relevant to the objectives and to the needs of the private sector.

The APEC plan calls upon member economies to develop their own detailed schedules for trade liberalization and facilitation. These will be discussed, and compared, throughout 1996, for implementation at the beginning of 1997. We do not expect that members will provide in detail their liberalization plans from now through to the target date of 2010. We shall, however, argue for schedules of three to five years so that we have some predictability and a planning time frame for the private sector.

This APEC plan, like all plans, could be better - it could have more detailed commitments, tighter deadlines and, in some cases, more ambitious objectives. What is more, there are still some important questions about the nature of APEC itself that remain unanswered. Can we deepen the integration of APEC while broadening its membership? After all, the more ambitious our undertakings at Osaka, the greater the pressure on countries outside the area to fall in line. How will we square the need, at least initially, to keep APEC to manageable proportions, with our commitment to "open regionalism"?

This in turn raises a more fundamental question. Do we expect to liberalize across the board on an unconditional most-favoured-