



news release

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MACLAREN SUPPORTS CANADIAN-ARAB AND CANADIAN-JEWISH BUSINESS CO-OPERATION

The Honourable Roy MacLaren, Minister for International Trade, today expressed his satisfaction about the positive results achieved by the roundtable on the new Middle East held in Ottawa last week.

Over two dozen participants -- mainly Canadian-Arab and Canadian-Jewish businesspeople, but also senior government officials and academics -- took part in the November 9, Roundtable Discussion on Canadian Business in the New Middle East.

"I am very impressed by the high level of co-operation that was evident among the Canadian-Arab and -Jewish businesspeople who took part in the roundtable, as well as their eagerness to contribute to the development of the region," said the Minister.

The objective of the roundtable, the first of its kind, was to provide an opportunity for the Canadian government and the Canadian business community to exchange views on trade development and investment priorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"The historic September 13 Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement makes a concrete commitment to economic development and the need for economic revival as a means to political stability in the region," Mr. MacLaren said. "Canadian business and government need to respond effectively to these historic changes and build on our special relationship with the region."

The highly successful roundtable focussed on such topics as the opportunities available to Canadian business in the new Middle East -- particularly in the much-needed areas of construction, water, environment, telecommunications, and institution building, in which Canada has world-renowned technologies and expertise; how to best help the West Bank and Gaza Strip rebuild and restructure their economy; the long-term Canadian business prospects in a peaceful Middle East; and the Government's role in promoting education and training, market studies and bidding for capital projects in the region.