

Our economic strength and our jobs depend on expanding trade in these sectors. We want to create good jobs requiring skilled workers and professionals to produce value-added products and services. That is the main objective of Canada's overall international business development plan. To reach it, we have stepped up our efforts in a number of areas, including market intelligence.

We know Canadian companies want and need better market information and intelligence for their strategic planning. Your participation here today is ample proof of that. You need well-analysed information and you need it quickly in order to position yourselves and to win contacts. I can tell you that the Government is committed to working closely with the Canadian business community to determine your needs in trade, investment and technology.

We want to concentrate the activities of our government representatives abroad on gathering focussed, sector-specific information that can be of real and timely use to business.

This is the aim of our trade strategy: to focus on the growth markets of tomorrow -- Latin America and Asia -- and to offer a co-operative, co-ordinated strategic partnership to you, the exporter.

You are here today because you recognize your industry's export potential. I am here because I believe we must work together. Together we can form a partnership that will contribute to Canada's economic future.

Thank you. Now I would be happy to take your questions.