

Ottawa, for ministers responsible for small and medium-sized business. CYAP helped turn each of these meetings into major networking and information-sharing events, with parallel activities involving culture, youth and small business.

In September, Ottawa hosted over 2,500 entrepreneurs, government officials and exhibitors from all 18 APEC economies in the national capital for APEC SME Week. The APEC Women Business Leaders Network also met during the week, and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce teamed up with Industry Canada to put together a Business Forum and Exposition. It proved to be a valuable networking opportunity for SMEs on the lookout for customers, joint venture partners or local distributors in Asia Pacific. For example, James C. Shen, Director of Business Development for Automation Works Inc. of Concord, Ontario said the conference allowed his company to make contacts in Singapore, Malaysia, and Chinese Taipei. Many others reported similar breakthroughs.

Another group that made a tremendous contribution to CYAP was The Chinese Entrepreneurs Society of Canada. This organization brought over 1400 overseas Chinese business people from Asia Pacific, the United States, Europe, and South America to Vancouver for the 4th World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention, marking the first time this event was held outside of Asia. According to Dr. David C. Lam, Honorary Co-Chair of the convention, and former Governor-General of British Columbia, the convention was, "an opportunity to showcase our province, city and country to the world. Hosting the convention made an important statement to the world business community and the media."

The event attracted government and business leaders: Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, International Trade Minister Sergio Marchi, and Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific) Raymond Chan addressed convention delegates throughout the week, and over 150 companies participated in a trade show which focused on the convention's telecommunications and technology theme.

Like many CYAP events, this business conference included a dynamic cultural program. At the close of the convention's opening day, 30,000 local residents joined delegates in Vancouver's historic Chinatown district to experience a bustling Chinese night market. The event was well received and local merchants have decided to make the Chinatown Festival a permanent addition to Vancouver's social calendar.

As Canada's Year of Asia Pacific headed towards the Vancouver APEC Economic Leaders Meeting in November, the success of the business component was already assured. The momentum from three Team Canada trade missions to Asia Pacific gave the year a running start. When the torch was passed to the CYAP initiative, Canadian companies, SMEs, governments, and organizations never looked back.