

Good evening ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the organizers of the 35th Conference of the Quebec Industrial Commissioners' Association for inviting me here today.

The theme of this conference could not be more appropriate: "Opportunities - Arising from the Globalization of Markets." As Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, I would like to share some thoughts with you on this important subject.

The organizers did not choose this theme simply because it provided the basis for a series of interesting discussions. They merely recognized that the future of the Quebec and Canadian economy necessarily involves taking up the challenges of the globalization of markets.

More than anyone, you know how important it is to attract foreign capital in order to maintain our competitiveness. All of us here today are, in one way or another, directly or indirectly involved in promoting Canada's advantages as a business partner.

We must, therefore, market and promote ourselves more aggressively than ever — as regions, as provinces, and as a nation. Canada's numerous advantages as a destination for international investment must be vigorously conveyed. Our bottom-line economic advantages can be powerful tools:

- our projected growth rate is the highest of all the G7 nations;
- our exports are at record levels;
- our workforce is one of the best-educated, most highly-skilled and loyal there is;
- our proximity and access to the American market, the richest in the world;
- our world-class transportation and communications infrastructure;
- our vast resources and low energy costs; and
- the specialized advantages and incentives that reflect regional niches and priorities.

Whether at the municipal, provincial or federal level, this responsibility is a shared one, requiring the fullest co-operation and co-ordination of all the players.

I am happy to say that today we are consulting more than ever before.