

its relationship with ODA agencies, and in its ODA management and delivery.

Conferences such as this one are valuable for both Canada and Japan. They allow professionals to identify areas of common interest and to explore ways of co-operating on real projects in third countries. For the expertise in our respective countries offers a unique opportunity for joint co-operation in many areas of development assistance. For example, the amount of assistance offered by the Government of Japan continues to increase while in Canada we have developed expertise in third country co-operation. At the same time, requests made by developing countries are much more diversified and complex. Under such circumstances, for the purpose of conducting development projects with greater effectiveness and efficiency, our two countries are committed to working together in co-operative activities in countries of mutual interest. We each bring different strengths to development - strengths that are complementary. Japan has been very open to drawing on the experience of other countries and taking the best of what is available and adapting, even improving, it.

By providing factual information to Canadian companies on Japan's ODA, we trust that this seminar will build awareness of the significant procurement opportunities available to Canadian exporters and to the Canadian private sector in general. Hopefully, this seminar will also provide a primer on how to access the procurement opportunities. In turn, we hope to encourage Canadian companies to participate more in Japan's aid projects.

By pooling resources and expertise, Canada and Japan can maximize the results of co-operation in countries such as Viet Nam, China, and Indonesia. We are here today to learn from the Japanese experience with the private sector, especially at the initial stage of project identification. In particular, I know you are anxious to understand the methods of operation of the Japanese ODA agencies, and to understand their programs and priorities. There is perhaps no other province in Canada where this is more important than here in British Columbia.

Indeed, just under half of all British Columbia exports are destined for Asia-Pacific markets. British Columbia ranks first among the provinces (per capita basis) for private sector services output. British Columbia suppliers are actively pursuing World Bank, Asian Development Bank as well as CIDA [Canadian International Development Agency] sponsored projects for power, rural communications, environmental remediation and human resource development. The possibility of working closer with Japan under ODA auspices on such opportunities is both timely and welcome. This seminar today gives us a practical opportunity to foster prosperity, in the Asia-Pacific region, through a mutually beneficial partnership.