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Building bridges – one trip at a time

Experience has taught me over the years that at the core of positive change is relationship. Relationships driven by good will, integrity, shared values and common goals can move mountains.

This was very much on my mind last week while in Japan at the head of a trade mission featuring sixteen Canadian companies and organizations - including Indigenous businesses and representatives - all seeking to leverage Canada's competitive advantage in the natural resource sector with a focus on clean energy.

Canada's abundance of natural resources is only a global competitive advantage for our country if we have strong and diverse export markets.

Challenging global politics and the clean energy transition mean there has never been more demand for Canada's resources – particularly given our labour and environmental standards.

Canada aims to be the clean energy and technology supplier of choice in a net-zero world. In that context, significant opportunities exist in the Indo-Pacific region for Canada to expand trade and investment. Those opportunities are particularly promising in Japan.

The possibilities we explored in Japan can provide jobs and enhanced prosperity in a low carbon economy that works for all Canadians – an economy that maximizes ultra-low carbon hydrogen, critical minerals, LNG tied directly to the displacement of heavier hydrocarbons, and more.

Part of my job as Minister of Natural Resources – one that I very much enjoy - is the non-flashy, long-term investment in building solid working relationships with Canada's trading partners. Having previously conducted business in Japan as a clean tech executive, I can attest to the importance of building meaningful, respectful relationships with Japanese partners in ensuring long-term, mutually beneficial business dealings.

Indigenous opportunities

Last week's trade mission also presented the opportunity to strengthen

relationships between Japanese investors and businesses and Canada's Indigenous business sector.

Representatives of the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations were among members of the trade mission, as were representatives of the Metis National Council. These folks were successful in efforts to enhance understanding amongst Japanese investors that partnering with Indigenous communities on major resources projects offers opportunities rather than barriers. They showcased how Indigenous partnerships can add value with respect to supporting companies' Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) objectives.

Strategic focus

Canada's overarching economic and environmental strategy is very much focused on business-to-business and government-to-government outreach to long-standing allies and trading partners who share our country's democratic and environmental values.

Canada has an abundance of existing natural and human assets that make our value proposition highly competitive on a global scale as we tell our story internationally, including

- Diverse and abundant relevant natural resources;
- An educated and skilled workforce;
- Strong and growing energy and clean technology sectors;
- Robust regulatory and legal systems;
- Trade agreements with most of the major economies in the world; and
- World-leading ESG standards.

Last week's trade mission to Japan was another incremental step in Canada's 21st century journey.

That journey is about building an economy that will work for everyone - very much including the many thousands of Canadian energy workers whose skills and work ethic will help shape our success. It's about a national effort to pass on an environment and an economy that will ensure that our children - and their children - flourish for decades to come.

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