

APM SPEECH

Martine Irman

Chair of the Board

Hello and welcome to EDC's Annual Public Meeting.

My name is Martine Irman, and I have the pleasure of addressing you today as Chair of EDC's Board of Directors.

Over the last year I've been able to see EDC's mandate – to grow and develop Canada's export trade—take a step to a new level.

In 2018, the corporation was there for Canadian companies as they faced the uncertainty of trade wars, emerging protectionism, and the renegotiation of NAFTA.

In late December, EDC contributed \$1 billion in financial capacity to the federal government's broader package of support for workers and companies affected by the downturn in Alberta's oil and gas sector.

This was in addition to similar support provided earlier in the year to companies hit by U.S. steel and aluminum tariffs, as well as continued support for Canada's forestry sector through the government's Softwood Lumber Action Plan.

In these moments EDC showed how – in working with other key partners – it can be a stabilizing force, helping to meet the needs of Canadian companies that are facing difficult circumstances. While the corporation's value was especially visible during those challenging times, its role in the Canadian economy is so much broader than that.

In 2018, EDC was again Canada's biggest financial supporter of the clean technology sector, providing more than \$2 Billion in financing to the companies that are innovating for a more sustainable future.

It also continued to champion women in trade – a subject near and dear to me. EDC provided targeted financing, built awareness through partnerships, and even created a new dedicated role within the organization focused on educating, enabling and empowering more women to export.

In the area of Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility, EDC also took significant strides in 2018.

It initiated a public review of its Environmental and Social Risk Management policies, work which informed EDC's recently released Climate Change and Human Rights policies.

If you take a moment to visit EDC's 2018 Annual Report, linked to on this page, you will see that this year's edition is an integrated report, combining in one, single document, information on EDC's corporate performance and its CSR performance.

This is a first for EDC.

It signifies the conviction that sustainable and responsible business practices are no longer a nice-to-have.

They are a corporate imperative that help drive and sustain long-term business success, while also supporting a more positive impact on people and the planet.

Before passing the baton on to my colleagues, I would like to say thank you to EDC's employees for everything they've done to support Canadian companies in such a challenging year.

They are the problem solvers, the international risks experts, the people who give Canadian exporters a leg-up in global markets every day.

The years ahead will, no doubt, produce many new and many unforeseen challenges.

I can say, with absolute certainty, that Canadian exporters are best positioned to face those challenges in the capable hands of the men and women of Export Development Canada.

Finally, I would like to thank Benoit Daignault, whose five-year tenure as EDC's President and CEO ended in February of 2019.

The tremendous impact of Benoit's leadership and vision will be felt for years to come. All of us on EDC's Board of Directors are deeply grateful for his vision and dedication to making EDC so much more relevant to so many more Canadian exporters.

With that, thank you all for listening.

And please, don't hesitate to send us your questions. We would be happy to hear from you.

All the best.