

Canada-ASEAN Developments



Ambassador Sime D. Hidalgo of the Philippines and chairman of the ASEAN delegation (left) is welcomed by Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allan MacEachen (right), while Maurice Copithorne, Asst. Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, looks on.

Canada-ASEAN joint cooperation committee meets for first time

THE INAUGURAL MEETING of the Canada-ASEAN Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) was held in Ottawa April 26-27, with 43 delegates attending from the capitals of the five ASEAN countries and from the ASEAN secretariat in Jakarta.

The JCC was established under the ASEAN-Canada Economic Cooperation Agreement which came into force on June 1, 1982. The purpose of the JCC is to promote and review various areas of cooperation envisaged under the Economic Cooperation Agreement including commercial, industrial and development cooperation. The JCC is co-chaired by Canada and ASEAN and will normally meet once a year.

Ambassador Sime D. Hidalgo of the Philippines chaired the meeting in Ottawa for ASEAN, while Maurice Copithorne, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, (Asia and the Pacific), was the Canadian chairman. The ASEAN delegations included the chairmen and representatives of various ASEAN committees as well as members of the ASEAN Ottawa Committee. Senior officials from a number of government departments and agencies participated on the Canadian side.

The Hon. Allan MacEachen, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, officially opened the JCC. In his remarks he

noted that the inaugural JCC meeting marked the maturing of a process in Canada's relations with ASEAN since 1976 when, as Secretary of State for External Affairs, he had announced in Jakarta that Canada would like to commence a formal dialogue with ASEAN. Mr. MacEachen observed that since its beginning in 1977 the Canada-ASEAN Dialogue had become an important element in Canada's expanding links with the Asian and Pacific world. He said, "Since the inception of ASEAN nearly sixteen years ago Canada has been impressed by its growth not only as a force for economic and social progress but as a significant factor for peace and stability". In declaring the JCC meeting open, Mr. MacEachen emphasized Canada's commitment to increased economic cooperation with ASEAN.

The opening remarks set the positive tone which characterized the two full days of discussions which followed. These discussions highlighted the evolving nature of the Canada-ASEAN relationship under the Economic Cooperation Agreement and sought to provide the foundations for an expansive two-way relationship beyond the provision of traditional development assistance and bilateral commercial relations with individual ASEAN countries. Mr. Copithorne stressed this point in his opening statement to the JCC and, by

example, referred to the JCC agenda items dealing with science and technology, communications, museums, broadcasting development and specialized financial fields, as well as cultural and journalist exchanges.

This theme was reiterated at a dinner hosted by Tom Delworth, Assistant Deputy Minister (Political Affairs), Department of External Affairs, in honour of the ASEAN delegates. Mr. Delworth said that he was impressed by the variety of items being discussed by the JCC and stated, "The relationship is clearly maturing and broadening in a most welcome way." Ambassador Hidalgo echoed these sentiments and at the end of the meeting stated that he was impressed by the extent to which Canada and ASEAN were able to reach agreement in just two days on cooperation in the fields of industry, commerce, agriculture and science and technology.

The inaugural meeting of the JCC covered a great deal of ground reflecting the increasingly varied aspects of the Canada-ASEAN relationship. A lively and informative exchange of views was held on general subjects such as the international economic situation, the global energy situation and international science relations. In addition, existing areas of Canada-ASEAN cooperation such as the Fisheries Post-Harvest Technology Project, the Forest Tree Seed Centre, the ASEAN Offset Programme and CANEX received a full review.

Other projects already identified in the areas of vocational training, oceanography and forestry were moved forward as was cooperation in the areas of visits by ASEAN journalists to Canada and the attachment of senior ASEAN financial officials to Canada's Department of Finance. The simultaneous visit to Canada of an ASEAN forestry planning mission sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency contributed to the JCC discussions in this sector.

There was a mutual desire expressed to expand relations and increase mutual awareness through academic, cultural and scientific visits. C.J. Marshall, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, (Public Affairs), noted in his remarks to the JCC Meeting that ASEAN was a major area of interest in Canadian government information activities. Discussion of the prospects for co-operation between museums in the preservation of cultural and natural heritage resulted in keen interest on both sides.

On leaving Ottawa, the ASEAN delegates expressed their satisfaction with the meeting and both sides looked forward to the second meeting of the JCC to be held in one of the ASEAN capitals at a date to be agreed upon.