

Thank you, Minister Alatas, for your words of introduction and welcome. I am pleased to again be in your country, this time for the annual ASEAN Post-Ministerial meeting. In fact this is the sixth year of my attendance at these gatherings. I believe I may be the only Foreign Minister, at least among the current dialogue partners, to have been privileged to participate in PMC meetings in all ASEAN capitals. I find that my enthusiasm for them grows with each passing year - so much so that I look forward to welcoming all my ASEAN colleagues to Jasper in Canada, for a special meeting during Canadian Thanksgiving in October.

This is an extraordinary time in world affairs. Whether in Eastern and Central Europe, or Central America, or South Africa - to name just three regions - there have been dramatic changes that would have been impossible to predict when we last met in Brunei.

We should not assume these surprises are over - nor should we assume that future surprises will be positive. Governments, in particular, have the responsibility to try to anticipate change, and shape it positively.

Asia is not Europe. It is more diverse, more dynamic, and, in terms of the potential of conflict today, more dangerous. As a nation that lives between Asia and Europe, and prizes our connection to both, Canadians are profoundly aware of the differences, but are also in a position to observe what might be common elements between the Atlantic experience and the Pacific experience. What is strikingly clear is that change in Europe has been aided by a series of institutions which allow, and encourage, consultation and cooperation - the European Community, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, the OECD. In Asia Pacific, with the singular exception of ASEAN, there are no similar institutions.

No one wants to create structures just to have them. But neither should we be without them, if we need them. Canada believes that there is a growing need for more consultation and cooperation in Asia and the Pacific for arrangements which are not imported, nor contrived, but which reflect a reality, and protect a prosperity, of a part of the world which is marked both by uncommon growth and uncommon tensions.