

Canadians look for progress in the areas of human rights, democratization and good governance to accompany economic development. Peace, tolerance, freedom and respect for the individual are responsibilities of all governments, and are the best rewards for their own peoples.

This is not imposing our particular values on others, nor insisting on the transposing of our institutions on cultures with different roots and traditions. It is, however, saying that there are principles and standards that have been universally agreed upon, as you, yourselves enunciated in your declaration at the conclusion of your Ministerial meeting.

Even as we believe in the fundamental importance of individual rights, we recognize other rights with which they must co-exist: the rights of groups, of communities, and communities of nations. We also understand and share your belief that individual rights imply social duties.

Without an acceptable and accepted balance between rights and duties, there can be no real internal stability on which sustainable progress and peace must be built.

And surely if we are to consolidate the gains of the past and confront the awesome challenges of the future, we must have peace as our primary goal.

Peace is more than the absence of war. It is the full expression of the human individual, or in the words of the UN Charter to which we are all signatories, "social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

Distinguished delegates, Canada is proud to be an ASEAN dialogue partner. We join with you in marking ASEAN's 25 years as an organization at the same time that we, in Canada, celebrate 125 years as an independent nation.

Canada after 125 years -- like ASEAN after 25 years -- is still evolving. ASEAN unity was forged out of a shared appreciation that the benefits of acting together far outweighed the risks of acting alone. ASEAN is proving itself to be a model of regional co-operation that recognizes the value of democracy, accommodates diversity, builds on common values and encourages positive change in response to evolving circumstances. The major realignment of global power and priorities in the wake of the end of the Cold War presents a unique opportunity for the consolidation of the gains ASEAN has made over its first 25 years.

There is no question that the future of ASEAN is bright. Canada applauds ASEAN's past success and looks forward to the leadership that ASEAN can provide in every area of human endeavour.