

Minister, Ambassador Perron, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure this evening to be able to return some of the warm and cordial hospitality that has been extended to me and to the members of this Canadian trade delegation.

I know the members of the Canadian delegation will join me in expressing our sincere gratitude for a highly successful stay in your country. We have had a wide-ranging exchange of views on many subjects, and we have examined ways to expand and improve our trade relations.

Over the past two days, I have had the pleasure of meeting Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Kiet along with the distinguished Minister for Trade and Tourism, Minister Triet, Foreign Affairs Minister Cam, Energy Minister Hai and Transport, Communications and Post Minister Luu. As well, I have met representatives of a number of state organizations including State Planning Council Chairman Mr. San, the State Committee for Co-operation and Investment Chairman Dr. Xuan, Governor of State Bank Mr. Khiem and Petro Vietnam Chairman Mr. Thoang.

I am grateful to them all for making themselves available in such a busy period.

Over the course of our discussions, I have been impressed by the commitment of your government and people to the policies of economic reform and constructive engagement with nations of the region and the world. Canada strongly supports these policies, and an expanded role for Vietnam in world affairs. You have made strides in promoting economic development and your progress is most impressive. The course you are pursuing is not always an easy one. It will require considerable time and effort to rebuild and put in place a new infrastructure and to provide the legal, financial and institutional framework that will support and encourage development. However, I have no doubt that the efforts will reap great benefits for your country.

Canada's uninterrupted relations with Vietnam go back to 1973. Following the resolution of the Cambodian peace process, we are now taking concrete steps to enhance this relationship.

A number of recent events have illustrated this. Last July, we opened the Canadian diplomatic office in Vietnam and appointed our first charge d'affaires. In June, we had the first consultations of our senior officials. We also announced at that time our intent to resume a modest bilateral aid program for Vietnam.

On the trade side, over the past two years there have been a number of visits exchanged between our two countries. In April this year, we sponsored our first federal trade mission to participate in the Telecomp '92 Show in Hanoi. Additionally,