



Statements and Speeches

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NEW FORMS OF CO-OPERATION FOR CANADA AND ASEAN

An Address by the Honourable Mark MacGuigan, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Singapore, June 17, 1982

...Last year when we met in Manila I noted that Canada and the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) had not had a formal dialogue session at the level of officials since the meeting which took place in Ottawa in November 1977. This was in spite of the degree of consultation we had achieved on a wide range of international and common issues and in spite of the very significant number of visits which had taken place between Canada and ASEAN. These contacts had provided effective and useful channels of communication but I suggested last year that perhaps the time had come to renew the official level dialogue. The dialogue has since been resumed and some of my officials with me today are fresh from the third Canada-ASEAN Dialogue Session which took place just three weeks ago in Manila.

The resumption of the ASEAN-Canada dialogue after an interval of almost five years signifies in my view the opening of a new phase in the relationship between Canada and ASEAN. In the early stages of the relationship it looked as though co-operation between Canada and ASEAN was being cast in the mould of a traditional donor-recipient aid relationship. While development assistance will continue to be an important element of our co-operative efforts we have been concerned that it should not be regarded as the main feature of the relationship. Thus, we wanted to be sure that when the dialogue resumed it would reflect the fact that Canada and ASEAN are moving towards a new kind of mutually beneficial partnership.

Along with the resumption of the dialogue, another sign of the new phase we have entered in our relationship is the Economic Co-operation Agreement which we signed in New York last September and which came into force on the first day of this month. In our view this agreement provides the broad framework for consultations to proceed on a regular basis with the aim of expanding and deepening the co-operation between Canada and ASEAN. Our officials at the Manila Dialogue Session reached agreement on the rules of procedure for the Joint Co-operation Committee (JCC) called for in the agreement. The JCC which is to meet normally once a year, will henceforth subsume future official level dialogue sessions.

Increased trade

The Manila Dialogue highlighted an improvement in our commercial relations which have steadily become more important. With respect to our two-way trade, I should like to commend your export performance in the Canadian market in 1981. ASEAN countries enjoyed an appreciable increase of 16 per cent in their exports to Canada
