

Business has also become an important element of the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) aid strategy in the region. That strategy emphasizes business links and institutional co-operation, human resources development, education, technology transfer, and sustainable development. Those programs help develop expertise in ASEAN countries, expertise that will in turn enhance trade with Canada through development and through personal contacts.

The relationship between efficient and effective aid and future trade is demonstrated by the example of Thailand. In the 1950s and 1960s, when Canada's Official Development Assistance efforts first began, Thailand was a poor country suffering the ravages of war. Canada became an active aid donor. Since then, in 1979, we led the world in helping the boat people. Our development assistance over this period has helped produce a strong trading relationship. Canadian trade with Thailand went from \$150 million nine years ago to \$765 million last year.

Some of the companies represented here tonight know how Official Development Assistance can open doors. Novacorp, which has been so successful in the Malaysian natural gas sector, credits its initial successes in that market to the opening provided by CIDA. Willowglen Services, which has sold its high-technology data system to Singapore, found its contract as part of a CIDA mission. So CIDA does not just stand for aid. It also stands for trade.

Canada's newest innovation in its development co-operation with ASEAN is the Canadian ASEAN Centre, which I opened last year in Singapore. That centre will encourage the growing links between that region and this country. Its principle is partnership -- with industry, governments, universities, non-governmental organizations, and individuals. Canada is the only country to have taken such an initiative, an initiative that has prompted interest from many others. Ian Robertson, the new executive director, is here tonight, and tomorrow a distinguished advisory council for this unique centre will be announced.

Beyond aid and trade, I am very pleased with the enhanced level of our political contacts. Those contacts build trust and understanding. There are regular parliamentary exchanges and there have also been regular ministerial visits to the region. Most