

Furthermore, Canada is prepared to open a formal dialogue with ASEAN in order to enhance our lines of communication and to facilitate co-operation in the field of development assistance. We will shortly be examining with ASEAN the best way for such a dialogue to take place.

When beginning in 1970, Canada began to place more emphasis on developing its bilateral relations with the individual countries of the region, it was natural, indeed inevitable, that Indonesia would be regarded with special interest.

Indonesia is a land composed of many fascinating and unique cultures as well as a wealth of ancient traditions which testify to the high degree of civilization that Indonesia has enjoyed for many centuries. For as many centuries, Indonesia has been a crossroads in the Pacific, which has attracted traders from all over the world.

The strategic position which Indonesia occupies in the Asia/Pacific area, its large population, and its immense natural resources place this country in a key position to play a major role in international affairs. Thus Indonesia, like Canada, has an interest in a multi-polar world where countries such as yours and ours can have a distinctive and effective voice in world affairs. To this end, our two nations are intensifying bilateral relations with a variety of countries, including each other, in order to avoid an excessive dependence on only one or two partners.

Canadians are impressed by Indonesia's pragmatic leadership in economic planning, which has resulted in steady economic progress. In my view these efforts are noteworthy not only because they have achieved a considerable measure of success, but also because they had to be carried out despite the great difficulties that necessarily face a country as large and as complex as Indonesia at its present stage of development.

But the Canadian experience in nation building made us see Indonesia in yet another light. Despite the great differences between Indonesia and Canada, there are similarities and problems we have in common. Indonesia, like Canada, is large. Indonesia, with its thousands of islands and Canada with its difficult terrain present a formidable geographical challenge. Indonesia is a tropical country, while Canadians have had to live and work in conditions of extreme cold. Canadians have learned first-hand that distance and climate make the job of transportation and of communication vastly more complicated, but we have also developed means to deal with these problems. Thus our experience with these conditions has given us an insight into the problems faced by Indonesia, as well as a capability to find practical and workable solutions.