

Mr. Secretary, the wisdom and experience of your country in the OAS, as within the region, is of immense value to us. It is my hope that in our discussions tomorrow, we will be able to jointly identify concrete ways to improve the machinery of the OAS - to make it both more relevant and effective as a forum for co-operation and joint action.

Canada and Mexico share many of the same concerns. Indeed, on many issues we have common interests and similar visions for the future of this hemisphere.

We share a commitment to combat the drug crisis - both the epidemic of abuse and the odious tentacles of production.

We share a recognition of the environmental threat to our own countries, to the region and to the world as a whole. We believe greater co-operation is possible between us to improve the environment of North America and beyond.

We share a commitment to stability and openness in the multilateral trading system. We both seek a successful and early conclusion to the Uruguay Round of trade talks. I am pleased that Mexico will host the next Ministerial meeting in April of this year which my colleague, the Honourable John Crosbie, Minister of International Trade, will attend.

Finally, as I have noted, we share a commitment to expand our own bilateral trade and economic relationship. I am confident that our discussions today and tomorrow will strengthen those linkages considerably.

Mr. Secretary, our meetings in Ottawa are significant in and of themselves. But they are also laying a firm foundation for the visit to Mexico of Prime Minister Mulroney on March 15 to 18. This will be the first visit by the Prime Minister to Latin America since Canada joined the OAS. It is significant that Mexico is the destination we have chosen to initiate the building of a new and expanded partnership with Latin America. I am confident that the Prime Minister's visit will be a great success and will set the course for a new and exciting phase in the relationship between our two countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, dedicated to a future of ever closer partnership between the peoples of Canada and Mexico, let us stand and raise our glasses to President Carlos Salinas de Gortari and Queen Elizabeth the Second.