

The Centre has been active in building partnerships with non-governmental institutions in the region, including providing support for the Fourth Asia-Pacific Roundtable organized by Malaysia's Institute for Strategic and International Studies (ISI) in Kuala Lumpur.

The Roundtable is quickly becoming the foremost venue in Asia Pacific to discuss broad security and strategic issues affecting the entire region.

Another major priority has been to support regionally-based women's groups promoting development in ASEAN. During the last year, the Centre has provided scholarships for over 50 women managers in both public and private sector institutions to take short-term training at the Asian Institute of Management in Manila.

I think that we have made a good start with the Centre. However, its full potential remains to be realized. I am very pleased today to introduce Mr. Ian Robertson, the new Executive Director of the Canada-ASEAN Centre. Mr. Robertson has had a long association with ASEAN. He also enjoys the distinction of having attended the first Canada-ASEAN dialogue meeting in Manila in 1977.

I will be asking Mr. Robertson to speak about his plans for the Centre during our "One Plus One" meeting later today.

Our meeting in Jasper will be an important chance to bring the Canada-ASEAN relationship to its full potential.

I understand that ASEAN Ministers have never before undertaken this type of meeting with a dialogue partner. I am very pleased that the first partner will be Canada.

I have invited several of my Canadian Ministerial colleagues, including the Minister of International Trade, and the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, to join us at our retreat to discuss how their responsibilities could be applied to enhancing the Canada-ASEAN relationship.

The Jasper meeting will be a milestone in our relations and represents an historic opportunity to make ASEAN better known within Canada. Indeed, what we might accomplish among ourselves will be only one small part in the process of building closer relations between our countries.