

Mr. Chairman, distinguished colleagues:

It is a privilege and a pleasure for me for the first time to represent Canada at the annual ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] Post-Ministerial Conference. The Post Ministerial Conference [PMC] has become an important fixture in the calendars of successive Canadian foreign ministers since Canada became a Dialogue Partner in 1977. I look forward to the opportunity to benefit from the shared experience of this gathering and to contribute Canada's perspective on the important issues we shall be discussing.

With the inauguration yesterday of the ASEAN Regional Forum [ARF] we have opened another important channel for consultations within the ASEAN-led process.

With the ARF we have started something new — something that both reflects the profoundly changed international situation and signals the way for the future. Inspired by the ASEAN traditions of discussion and consensus, we have begun to develop a framework for a co-operative security dialogue which will contribute to stability and prosperity in the region.

The Canadian government is committed to promoting the full range of Canada's interests and values in the conduct of our international affairs, be they human rights, the environment, the economy, trade or peace and security. In this context, we are committed to expanding our relations with the Asia-Pacific region. This new emphasis is reflected in the review of our foreign policy being conducted by the Parliament of Canada.

The threats to international peace and security are changing rapidly. We will continue to shift away from security structures designed to contain Cold War threats and toward new architectures designed to manage instability. The creation of the ASEAN Regional Forum is an important step in this process.

We must prevent possible new sources of conflict by strengthening programs aimed at dismantling nuclear weapons and reducing conventional arms transfers. We should universalize the Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] which is up for renewal next April. In particular, the countries of South Asia and the Middle East should accede to the NPT in the interest of their own security. North Korea presents a special case. It must live up to its NPT and safeguards obligations that it entered into freely.

Large-scale movements of peoples, whether refugees displaced by persecution or persons seeking improved economic conditions, are continuing. We see this throughout the world whether it be Rwanda in Africa, Haiti in the Western Hemisphere or Burma in this region. We must work together to address the root causes of migratory pressures and not just deal with the consequences.