

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED TO FIND MYSELF HERE TODAY. AS SOME OF YOU ALREADY KNOW, I HAVE ALWAYS ENJOYED WORKING WITH BUSINESSMEN. I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY IN THE COURSE OF RECENT YEARS TO MEET MANY OF YOU. ALTHOUGH THIS WAS IN A DIFFERENT CAPACITY, THE SUBJECT OF TRADE PROMOTION, A SUBJECT TO WHICH THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT ATTACHES PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE, HAS ALWAYS BEEN AT THE HEART OF OUR MUTUAL INTEREST.

IN MY PRESENT CAPACITY, I AM CONTINUALLY AWARE OF THE PLACE WHICH THE PROMOTION OF OUR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS SHOULD HOLD AMONG OUR OTHER FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS. IT IS THE FIRST PLACE. AS SOME OF YOU KNOW, I AM ONE OF THOSE WHO BELIEVES THAT IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO DEVELOP SIGNIFICANT BILATERAL POLITICAL RELATIONS IN THE ABSENCE OF SUBSTANTIAL COMMERCIAL RELATIONS. FURTHERMORE, OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM AND OUR SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY ENCOURAGES OUR COUNTERPARTS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ACT AS A CATALYST AND TO BE THE ENGINE THAT DRIVES GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY.

THUS, IN THE CASE OF MANY AFRICAN COUNTRIES, OUR BILATERAL POLITICAL RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED AND FUNDAMENTALLY DEVELOPED FROM THE MOMENT WHEN THE CANADIAN PRIVATE SECTOR BECAME AWARE OF THE COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL OF THE CONTINENT AND MADE KNOWN TO THE GOVERNMENT ITS WISH TO PURSUE PROJECTS IN THE COUNTRY, AND

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