

Minister Joedono, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It is with great pleasure that I am here with you today, renewing your acquaintance, which I happily made a year ago.

I am particularly pleased to be with you on what is a special day for Canadians, especially those here in Indonesia.

Last evening at the Jakarta Convention Centre, the United Nations Conference on Biodiversity voted to establish its Permanent Secretariat in Montreal.

I congratulate the Mayor of Montreal, who visited Jakarta last week to promote his city's candidacy, for this important international distinction.

The members of the Canadian delegation -- federal, provincial and municipal government officials, non-governmental organization representatives, and their colleagues -- who worked so hard to make the selection of Montreal possible, also deserve our thanks.

This success demonstrates what we can accomplish when we work together as "Team Canada," that is combining the efforts of various levels of government and the private sector.

You may recall that last year I spoke about expanding Canada and Indonesia trade and investment flows and about the importance of the new World Trade Organization, the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation [APEC] forum and other trade and investment liberalization arrangements to our mutual prosperity.

At the conclusion of my speech I said that I hoped to return to Indonesia with a trade and investment mission.

Well, here we are!

I have been joined on this mission by 25 senior executives from some of Canada's foremost international firms.

We are here because although Canada and Indonesia already enjoy a strong economic partnership, we see scope for further expanding this relationship in areas where our objectives are complementary.

As bilateral partners, we have a "good fit" in respect of economic development priorities. Canada and Indonesia both face similar challenges in ensuring the benefits of economic growth for our citizens.

Our vast geographic expanses, the requirement for large-scale infrastructure development in sectors including energy, transportation, telecommunications, and the need to develop our natural resources sector -- in, among others, mining, oil and gas