

Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. Mark MacGuigan, said today on his arrival in Manila that he attached great importance to Canada's role as a participant in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Ministers' Meeting with Dialogue Partners, and was grateful to Foreign Minister Carlos Romulo of the Philippines who had invited him to attend the meeting.

"I attended my first ASEAN Foreign Ministers' meeting last year at Kuala Lumpur, and I consider this forum to be highly useful and significant in terms of Canada's relations with the region -- the more so this year since the Philippines is Canada's officially designated country of contact with ASEAN," Dr. MacGuigan said.

"Although Canada's relations with ASEAN as an association began in 1975, they have developed considerably in the past two to three years. Canada has demonstrated its co-operation with ASEAN by signing recently two Memoranda of Understanding. One provides for joint efforts by Canada and ASEAN in developing an ASEAN Forest Tree Seed Centre in Thailand. The other provides for development of a post-harvest fisheries project in each of the ASEAN countries.

Discussions are also progressing in negotiations for an ASEAN-Canada Industrial, Technical and Commercial Co-operation Agreement. Canada also co-operates closely with the member states of ASEAN to seek solutions to the humanitarian and security problems which result from developments in Indochina.

I expect that at this meeting, in addition to reviewing matters of bilateral interest, we will devote considerable discussion to the political situation in Kampuchea. On the question of Kampuchea, Canada has closely aligned its policy with that of ASEAN, and we co-sponsored the ASEAN draft resolution at the 35th United Nations General Assembly last year. We are particularly interested in preparations for the international conference on Kampuchea which will begin July 13 in New York.

I am therefore looking forward to discussing these and other matters related to peace and stability in South East Asia with my ASEAN colleagues and the other dialogue partners over the next two days."

Dr. MacGuigan said this was his first visit to the Philippines and he looked forward to enjoying the warm hospitality which Canada's ASEAN friends always extend.