

I know first hand of the immense potential, and the will to succeed, throughout the region.

The Commonwealth-Caribbean meeting in Jamaica last year resulted in Caribcan, a new economic and trade assistance program which has developed from the special relationship between the Commonwealth Caribbean and Canada.

Canada's interest in the Caribbean is by no means confined to the Commonwealth States. We have closely monitored and we welcome the change of government, and the evolution towards democracy, in Haiti. We have, in Montreal, the third largest community of expatriate Haitians in the world, driven from their homeland by the brutality of the Duvalier regime, by the circumstance of poverty.

Canada stands ready not only to welcome Haiti to the ranks of free nations, we stand ready with economic assistance, which we're doubling next year to \$13 million. Again, I'm confident that democracy and development will go hand in hand.

We take heart from the growth of democracy in Central America, but are greatly concerned by the current polarization there.

In the past two years, Canada has sent observers to monitor elections in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala, and in each case their reports were highly positive. But we are acutely aware of human rights violations in Guatemala and El Salvador, and this continues to be of great concern to us.