

Last week, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade participated in consultations organized by the Canadian International Development Agency [CIDA] across the country to help formulate CIDA's next five-year country program for the Philippines. A clear message emerged from the working groups in all cities, which were comprised of both industry and non-governmental organizations. CIDA should be formulating and delivering its programs increasingly through the existing network of Canadian and Philippine non-government organizations and business associations. The groups also suggested that CIDA cooperate with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to enhance Canadian investment in the Philippines. There is a good chance that we will fund the placement of an investment expert in the Philippine Board of Investments to advise them on potential Canadian sectors and partners.

Canada has a long history of CIDA assistance to the Philippines. We were one of the first foreign governments to resume aid after the 1986 restoration of the democratically elected government. Our aid to the Philippines amounts to over \$25 million annually, and has remained at this level for several years.

When I met President Ramos last year, I stressed that Canada is eager to build on the economic relationship established by our aid program and carry it forward into the commercial sphere. I stressed our firms' enthusiasm for an active role in the commercial rebuilding of the Philippines. To achieve greater participation, some of Canada's larger companies must pursue the projects that are developing as we speak. Some of these companies are ones such as yourselves, and my department and Canadian ministers intend to bring to the attention of the Philippine government the Canadian expertise and qualifications that make Canadian companies ideal partners in future Philippine development.

Canada continues to enjoy a special bond with the Philippines. Many Filipinos have made Canada their home. And we have excellent commercial ties. President Ramos has received an invitation from Prime Minister Chrétien to visit Canada, and has indicated that he will be pleased to do so once his schedule permits. He also mentioned his support for Quebec City's bid to host the Winter Olympics in 2002. Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Romulo conveyed to me his interest in seeing the Philippines and Canada work together to host the APEC meetings in the Philippines in 1996 and in Canada in 1997.

All of our activities with the Philippines are meant to advance a diversity of objectives and engage a cross section of our people and talent. Part of my role as Secretary of State is to portray Canada as a partner of quality and value, who is in the game for the long haul, rather than the quick fix. I say this because success in the Philippines, and indeed in the entire Asia-Pacific