

Honoured Guests, Ambassador, ladies and gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure to be with you here today. This is my first trip to Surabaya and East Java, and it confirms my belief that we have made an excellent decision to appoint our first Honorary Consul in Indonesia, Mr. Alim Markus, in this dynamic city of 4 million inhabitants.

As the second-largest city of Indonesia in the province of East Java, one of Indonesia's most important manufacturing centres, Surabaya is the Gateway to Eastern Indonesia. I too come from a gateway city - Vancouver, in the province of British Columbia. Like Surabaya, Vancouver is a port city far from the centre of the country and the capital. However, both Surabaya, East Java and Vancouver, B.C., are central to the economic well-being of each of our countries.

I am most impressed that East Java boasts half a million industrial facilities producing an annual GDP of US\$22 billion, and that the province has averaged annual economic growth of over 8.5 per cent in the last three to five years, making it Indonesia's fastest growing economic region. According to the local Chamber of Commerce, East Java exports to Canada are valued at \$29 million. I think it is quite fitting that Canada is now represented in this important city and province.

And I am delighted that Ambassador Dickenson recommended that Canada appoint Mr. Alim Markus as our Honorary Consul. Mr. Markus assumed his new position on July 1st, Canada's national day, in a ceremony presided over by the Ambassador and the Governor, His Excellency Basofi Sudirman.

As President Director of PT Maspion Group, Mr. Markus is a highly respected member of the Surabaya business community and has strong Canadian credentials. His firm's North American sales office is located in Toronto - a city similar in size to Surabaya, which has annual exports to Canada approaching \$5 million per year. I want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Markus for taking on the job of Canada's Honorary Consul in East Java and wish him the best of luck in this new position. As Canada's pillar in East Java, I am sure he will be even busier than he already is, but I hope he will still have time to enjoy a game of golf every so often.

While this is my first trip to East Java, it is not my first trip to Indonesia. I was here with Canada's Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, last year when your country very successfully hosted the APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation forum] leaders' and ministerial meetings. The Bogor Declaration, which emerged from the APEC leaders' meeting, is a testimony to the leadership and vision of the Government of Indonesia, and especially President Soeharto. There are indeed few developing countries who would have the courage and foresight to propose free trade. There are even fewer countries who would show the commitment thereafter to take steps to begin the implementation of this lengthy and difficult process.