

Let me say how very pleased I am to be in Jakarta and to have this opportunity to speak to you today. First, I want to review with you international conditions which are shaping foreign and trade policies in both ASEAN and Canada. In particular, I want to turn attention to the partnership that is waiting to be established between Canada and Indonesia.

We are countries with challenges in common -- the physical challenges of transportation and communication over large areas; the political challenge of encouraging diverse cultures to thrive together; the economic challenge of building ties of investment and trade and trust across the Pacific. To respond to these challenges, we need to know one another better.

Several years ago, a British Columbia author described Canada as "the unknown country". To many Indonesians, we are still unknown -- defined by our geography and neighbourhood, but not by our nature. Let me present some facts that speak to our character and capacity.

We were one of the first countries to understand and develop the use of nuclear power; about 40 years ago we had the capacity to become a nuclear weapons state -- yet we chose, deliberately, not to use our knowledge for weapons, but instead for peaceful purposes. We are a country whose only experience with colonization was to be a colony -- a colony, moreover, of two powers, with different languages and cultures. As we became independent, we have deliberately encouraged the vitality of both these cultures, the status of both these languages -- and thereby created a Canadian tradition of diversity that allows different cultures to be themselves within one country. That tradition led Canadians to respond generously to the refugee crisis in Indo-China. Nearly 100,000 refugees have come to Canada from Indo-China in the last ten years -- in proportion to our open population, we have been one of the most welcoming countries in the world to refugees from this region.

Industrially, we are the world's 9th largest economy. Our innovations have placed us at the leading edge of new technologies in fibre-optics, telecommunication, transportation, resource development and geophysics. What we have learned, we make available to the world through a private sector of integrity and initiative, and through government instruments like the Canadian International Development Agency, which is involved in 70 projects this year in ASEAN alone.