

I am very pleased to be in Bangkok to attend these meetings of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers with the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN's Dialogue Partners. These sessions have become a traditional forum for ministerial discussions between Canada and ASEAN. I recall vividly the trip I made to the ASEAN countries the first time I served as Secretary of State for External Affairs in 1976. At that time, I announced in Jakarta that Canada would like to open a formal Dialogue with ASEAN, and it therefore gives me great pleasure to attend my first meeting.

Canada's growing relationship with ASEAN is a reflection of Canada's political commitment to the Association and its members. This commitment stems from the conviction that ASEAN is making a significant contribution to peace and stability in Southeast Asia, especially by its approach to the problem of Vietnam's continued occupation of Cambodia. Canada supports ASEAN in its initiatives to promote a settlement of this problem in accordance with the wishes of the international community as expressed in the Resolutions of the U.N. General Assembly and by the 1981 International Conference on Kampuchea. Canada shares the view of ASEAN that a settlement of the problem of Cambodia must ensure the right of the Khmer people to determine their own future free from outside interference.

ASEAN's contribution to the stability of Southeast Asia, indeed to the Asian and Pacific region as a whole, is also a result of the social and economic progress that has been made by ASEAN and its member countries. The ASEAN countries as a Third World success story represent a model not only for North-South cooperation but also for South-South cooperation. Despite recent setbacks caused by the world recession you have maintained rates of growth that are the envy of much of the developed world. Moreover, although faced with threats to your security, both from within the region and without, you have maintained your attachment to open and pluralistic societies. These strengths and the values embodied in your enduring traditional cultures have become the hallmark of ASEAN's international performance inviting respect and support from abroad.