

For 100 years, we have been a Pacific nation in geography. Now we are a Pacific nation in mentality, looking to a partnership across your, and my, ocean as the major source of new economic opportunity for Canada in the decade to come.

Just two years ago, Canada's Pacific trade surpassed its Atlantic trade. Trade, Investment and Economic Cooperation continue to expand more rapidly in the Pacific than in any other area, and bilateral contacts between Canada and the Asian Pacific nations have, accordingly, accelerated. For the nations that constitute ASEAN, we, as a dialogue partner, have not only seen a rapid growth in our bilateral relations, but also increasingly frequent opportunities for consultations on international issues of common interest. Canada ascribes great importance to ASEAN, and to what it has been able to achieve in terms of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. In addition to our annual participation in the Post Ministerial Committee, we have yearly consultations among officials, and a variety of contacts in the areas of science and technology, trade and economic development. Last month in Vancouver, we hosted a highly successful Canada/ASEAN Forum, an opportunity for 50 top business leaders, 25 from ASEAN and 25 from Canada, to come together to discuss cooperative ventures in the oil and gas, telecommunications and minerals sectors.

We share with Malaysia, and with ASEAN, a deep concern about the future of the world trading system, at a time when the pressures for protectionism are growing daily. The recent meeting of Ministers of the GATT countries in Punta del Este, Uruguay brought us closer to a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. I was pleased to meet your distinguished colleague, Tunku Razaleigh Hamzah. Canada and the ASEAN countries worked together closely in the preparations for the Punta de Este meeting, and at that meeting itself. Through continued consultation and cooperation, I am confident that we can, together, exert a strong influence on the process leading to reductions of international trade barriers.

There are, of course, innumerable examples of areas of interest which Canada and Malaysia have in common. We are members of the Commonwealth, which is proving its worth as a vehicle for trying to solve some of the world's more intractable problems. We look forward to hosting Prime Minister Mahathir and other Commonwealth Heads of Government next fall in Vancouver. As democratic nations and free societies, Canada and Malaysia place a very high value on the observance of basic human rights, the abuse of which is