

and increasingly of remarkable prosperity. The countries of ASEAN cooperate on every level and have become key international players collectively and individually. Indeed the South East Asia region, always rich in human and material resources, has emerged as a major centre of global endeavour and achievement. It is surely time to associate Indochina as a whole with this remarkable success story, and to allow the talents and resources of the Indo Chinese countries to strengthen South East Asia success.

Our hopes and aspirations for a better future for Cambodia cannot blind us to reality. Unfortunately there are also reasons, if not for pessimism, then at least for very sober realism. The situation in Cambodia is extraordinarily complex and marked by very deep divisions, mistrust and fear. Overcoming these problems will not be easy and sadly could be impossible unless the Cambodian parties are prepared and able to find ways to bridge their differences. The results of the discussions among the parties that preceded this conference have not been at all reassuring in this respect, beyond the welcome symbolism that my neighbours the Cambodians are sitting together at our table.

For its part Canada believes that we must have some fixed points to our compass as we set out on these troubled waters.

First, Canada believes this conference must be the venue for a comprehensive settlement, covering internal as well as external elements and allowing for genuine democratic elections. The external and internal aspects of this problem are in our view inseparable. To proceed otherwise would be to fail. It would condemn Cambodians to further bloodshed and enmity, doom those who try to help them to endless frustration and possibly real risk, invite renewed outside intervention, and prolong regional instability.

Such an outcome would betray the better future we all seek for Cambodia and for the region generally. Frankly, I do not see how the work of this conference with respect to international endorsement and support for a settlement can be fulfilled unless the Cambodian parties arrive at a viable settlement in very short order. Planning for the one depends crucially on the realization of the other. We believe the conference must find a way to encourage early agreement among the parties and to make sure their work can appropriately inform discussions on external aspects.