

practical approach to strengthening this important body. It is by no means a perfect institution but we are a lot better off with this institution operating effectively than we would be without it.

Mr. Chairman, this Conference comes at a very significant time in Canada's relationship with the ASEAN countries. We are passing from the Philippines to Thailand as our Dialogue Co-ordinator. I believe that this happens at a time when the institutional and functional cooperation between Canada and ASEAN is working more effectively than at any time in the past. Following the Joint Cooperation Committee meeting between Senior Officials in Manila last September, there have been important exchanges in Ottawa between the ASEAN Ottawa Committee and the Canadian Government.

The development assistance dimension of our bilateral relationship continues to be of high priority. During the past year we have, I believe, made steady progress in the implementation of various projects which have been mutually agreed by Canada and ASEAN. The role of the ASEAN Ottawa Committee has been particularly useful in helping to maintain the momentum in project evaluation. In particular, the organization and delivery of Canada's development assistance to ASEAN have been considerably improved through the use of this consultative mechanism. Through it we have agreed to concentrate our assistance in environmental and natural resource management (particularly forestry and fisheries) and human resource development and training. Since 1982 we have committed some dollars 15 million to ASEAN regional projects. Current commitments to bilateral, institutional cooperation, industrial cooperation and regional projects which benefit the ASEAN countries now total more than dollars 225 million Canadian.

We would like to work with you to improve further the implementation and management of these programmes and to ensure that they bring true benefits to the region as a whole.

Mr. Chairman, we must look to the future of our relationship and to new initiatives which will add further substance to Canada-ASEAN relations. I am delighted that we will now sign the Instruments of Accession of Brunei to the Economic Cooperation Agreement. Within this Agreement, ASEAN and Canada must seek to pinpoint areas for improvement and concentration. In particular, I would hope that we can productively focus on the scope for investment and joint ventures. Canadian companies and