

I AM VERY PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN YOU TODAY TO DISCUSS THE IMPORTANT ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST BETWEEN KOREA AND CANADA. BEFORE I BEGIN, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MR. YOO, CHANG SOON, CHAIRMAN OF THE FEDERATION OF KOREAN INDUSTRIES, FOR ARRANGING THIS MOST PLEASANT LUNCHEON AND MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE FOR TAKING TIME FROM YOUR BUSY SCHEDULES TO BATTLE THAT WORLD-FAMOUS SEOUL TRAFFIC TO GET HERE.

FOR MOST CANADIANS, KOREA IS AT ONCE VERY FAMILIAR AND YET QUITE UNKNOWN. BECAUSE OF CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UN FORCES IN THE FIFTIES, KOREA IS A HOUSEHOLD WORD IN CANADA. MANY FAMILIES HAVE RELATIVES WHO FORMED PART OF THAT CANADIAN CONTINGENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, OUR HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY HAVE TENDED TO LINK CANADIANS TO THE U.S. IN THE SOUTH AND TO EUROPE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC. UNTIL RECENTLY, FEW CANADIANS, SAVE OUR YOUNG SOLDIERS, HAD TRAVELLED EXTENSIVELY ACROSS THE PACIFIC TO KOREA.

ALL THAT IS CHANGING, HOWEVER, AS STUDENTS, TOURISTS AND BUSINESSMEN FOLLOW THE TRADE AND INVESTMENT FLOWS THAT HAVE GROWN SO DRAMATICALLY BETWEEN KOREA AND CANADA OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, AND SEEK TO VISIT THE SITE OF YOUR HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL SUMMER OLYMPICS.

TO MAKE THE MOST OF MY FIRST TRIP TO KOREA, MY SCHEDULE INCLUDES A VISIT NOT ONLY TO YOUR DYNAMIC CAPITAL CITY OF SEOUL, BUT ALSO TWO DAYS IN THE MORE SOUTHERN REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY. DURING THIS VISIT, I HOPE TO DEEPEN AND BROADEN MY KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR COUNTRY, AND CONVEY TO THOSE I MEET, CANADA'S INTEREST IN AND COMMITMENT TO THE PACIFIC REGION AND TO KOREA.