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NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY
THE HONOURABLE RAYMOND CHAN,
SECRETARY OF STATE (ASIA-PACIFIC),
AT SUNWAY COLLEGE

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia
August 11, 1994

Canada

I am very honoured to be here today, and happy to meet and discuss education issues with all of you.

If Malaysia is to achieve its bold "Vision 2020" objectives, human resource development will be essential. As the Malaysian economy shifts to a focus on the advanced manufacturing and service sectors, there will continue to be a critical need for an educated workforce.

Canadian Education Co-operation in Malaysia

Since Malaysian independence in 1957, over 70 000 Malaysians have been educated in Canada. Even your Minister of Education, Datuk Amar Dr. Sulaiman Daud, is a Canadian Alumnus; he holds a post-graduate degree from the University of Toronto. Canadian institutions are eager to continue to help meet Malaysia's education and training needs. Canada actively supports increased education co-operation with Malaysia.

Here are some examples. The Education Canada office in Kuala Lumpur was officially opened in 1989 through funding from the Canadian International Development Agency. The same agency, CIDA, has also provided over 1.2 million ringgit in funding to a joint initiative by University Utara Malaysia and the University of Saskatchewan to develop management capabilities in support of Malaysian economic development objectives. In 1993, CIDA entered into an agreement with Lasalle International Fashion School to provide six scholarships worth a total of 162 000 ringgit. As well, in 1993 and 1994, the Canada ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] Centre provided funding for 15 University of Victoria M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration] students to undertake a six-week study tour of the Asia-Pacific. This tour included one-month placements with Malaysian companies.

Canadian Education Opportunities

Canada has much to offer Malaysian students wishing to study overseas and is on the leading edge of provision of education services. Consider the following examples. The medical faculties of six Canadian universities are twinned with the International Medical College of Kuala Lumpur. Three Canadian universities, the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba, and Acadia University, have twinning arrangements in Malaysia. I need hardly mention here that a twinning arrangement between the University of Calgary and Sunway College is already in the works.

Lasalle College was the first Canadian institution to operate a branch campus in Malaysia, with the establishment of the Lasalle International Fashion School in Kuala Lumpur in 1993. Other Canadian universities, including the University of British Columbia, the University of Alberta, Dalhousie University, the University of Saskatchewan, and numerous others have pledged to increase enrolment of Malaysian students. Dalhousie University,

for example, has pledged to increase the number of Malaysian students in its faculties of medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy.

Canadian students are also showing greater interest in Malaysia. This year alone, student delegations from the University of Toronto, St. Mary's University, the University of Victoria, and others have participated in study tours of Malaysia. Those are only some examples of the exciting developments taking place today in Canada-Malaysia education co-operation.

Education in Canada and Malaysian Perceptions

Some of you may wonder what it would be like to undertake your education in Canada. There seem to be a lot of misperceptions in this regard. For starters, Canada does not experience winter all year long! It is not some far-off northern ice field.

In terms of distance from Malaysia, for example, it is closer to fly to Vancouver, Edmonton or Calgary, Canada, than to New York, Miami or Boston in the United States. There are four distinct seasons in Canada, with temperatures ranging from below freezing to over 35 degrees Celsius. As the second-largest country in the world, it also claims several different climatic regions. Parts of the country, such as my own riding of Richmond, British Columbia, rarely experience freezing temperatures or snow. Canada is one of the most beautiful, diverse, clean, and safe countries in the world. For two of the past three years, the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Report has rated Canada as the best country in the world in which to live.

However, even for those areas that experience seasons and conditions very different from those in Malaysia, one must remember that there are fantastic activities and experiences associated with every season. If, as a potential international student, one is not looking for new and different experiences, knowledge, and challenges, then in my opinion, one misses some of the most important reasons for obtaining an international education. As Mae Chun of the *New Straits Times* puts it, and I quote: "Canada remains the best country in which to live partly because there is so much life packed into one short year."

Canada has been described as a cultural mosaic. Malaysians will have the opportunity to experience a world of cultures in only one country. In Toronto, more than 50 per cent of the population is made up of ethnic groups that are non-French and non-British in origin. There are over 850 000 Canadians of Asian origin living in Canada. Chinese has become Canada's third most spoken language.

If you investigate carefully, I think you will find that Canada is the best bargain in quality education. On an average annual basis, it is significantly less expensive to study in Canada than

in the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, or New Zealand. Canada boasts a system of over 70 universities that offer undergraduate and graduate courses in all areas of business, engineering, computer science, health sciences, and humanities. Several Canadian universities have been rated among the top 20 in the world. In addition, many individual faculties have been rated among the top in the world. Canadian university degrees are among the most widely recognized in the world. Alongside the university system, there are also vast possibilities for studies at the post-secondary level in a well-developed network of community colleges and technical institutes.

In conclusion, to quote Dr. Saywell, of the Asia Pacific Foundation, "Canada has an internationally competitive education system that provides quality education, at a reasonable cost, in a relatively safe country, with a good world-wide reputation."

I would like to see more Malaysians in Canada studying in and experiencing a diverse country, while at the same time sharing your own Malaysian culture with Canadians. Students graduating from Sunway's Canadian Matriculation Program would make excellent candidates for studying in Canada. I strongly urge all of you to put Canada on the top of your priority list. The Education Canada office in Kuala Lumpur can provide comprehensive information and counselling to you, and it participates in education fairs and other outreach activities. Feel free to use their services.

I wish you all the best in your studies. Thank you.