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**NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY  
THE HONOURABLE RAYMOND CHAN,  
SECRETARY OF STATE (ASIA-PACIFIC),  
TO THE INDO-CANADIAN BUSINESS CLUB**

**NEW DELHI, India  
March 14, 1995**



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

**Canada**

Thank you for your kind introduction. I am honoured to be here today and I want to thank the Indo-Canadian Business Club [ICBC] for presenting me with this opportunity to address you. The vibrancy and enthusiasm that I see here reflect the positive direction of Canada-India relations.

As Canada's Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific, I have visited many countries in this immense and varied region. While this is my first visit to India, what has struck me most this week is the remarkable progress of India's program of free-market economic reforms and the potential this offers for Canadians, who already enjoy such profound historic ties with India.

Those linkages form a strong foundation on which we can build a more mature bilateral relationship across the whole range of activities, with the greatest emphasis being on our mutual economic and commercial opportunities.

We should now be putting all our energy into enhancing this friendly and constructive relationship. You may well ask how this is to be achieved. The answer lies in our commonality of interests, our shared aspirations about the future and our shared membership in the broader community of Asia-Pacific nations.

Canada and India have had diplomatic relations for almost half a century, with a history of bilateral co-operation that predates India's independence. We have been partners in various multilateral fora, including the Commonwealth, United Nations' peacekeeping operations and now the new World Trade Organization. We have enjoyed close bilateral ties in the area of development co-operation since the days of the Colombo Plan.

On the human side, over half a million immigrants have come to Canada from India since the turn of the century. Many Indians have come for higher education (and I hope more students and scholars will come); still many more visit Canada each year for business and pleasure. The Indo-Canadian community has contributed to Canada's rich and diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious mosaic. Canadians of Indian origin, whether representatives of big companies, or entrepreneurs from our dynamic small and medium-sized business sector, can contribute to the national effort we need.

They will add empathy to our Indian ties, the level of cultural affinity so long of benefit to our North American and European links. Much of our success in realizing our aspirations in business will have to do with the success we have in linking our peoples.

The Indo-Canadian community has maintained and nurtured its ties with India, and successive Canadian governments have encouraged this to continue. It is a source of strength for both Canada and India, and provides depth to our relations.

Commercial opportunities will undoubtedly provide the backbone for a new era of Canada-India relations. The visit of Roy MacLaren,

Canada's Minister for International Trade, to India last October with representatives from over 50 companies served to heighten awareness and interest both in Canada and India of the opportunities that exist.

Since that time, provincial ministers from British Columbia and Ontario have visited India to promote Canadian commercial interests. And I draw to your attention the 35 Canadian companies represented with me on this visit.

While some of these Canadian firms are experienced in the Indian market, most are newcomers to this country. Many are small to medium-sized enterprise (or SMEs), which generate most of the new jobs in Canada, and which are the main target of our country's international business development strategy.

Canada and Canadian business have developed greater confidence in long-term engagements here. India's economic liberalization program and its emergence into the broader trading world have contributed to this increased confidence.

The transition has extensive implications for India as a nation and for the sustainability of India's economic development. While we recognize that even positive change can be difficult and that the benefits are not always immediately evident throughout society, Canada continues to strongly support the economic reform program and urges India to stay the course.

This is a message I am sharing with Indian ministers and others whom I am meeting during this visit.

I have every assurance that the forward-looking leaders of the Indian government and business community will continue to press ahead with economic liberalization. Further reforms, transparency and certainty about the rules of the game will be essential to sustaining international business confidence.

As we enter into this new and exciting period in our relationship, we want to capitalize on opportunities for greater Canada-India commercial co-operation.

India's continuing efforts to modernize its infrastructure - especially in the areas of power generation and distribution, telecommunications services, transportation, and environmental protection - present enormous challenges for both countries.

Canadian companies have great expertise in these sectors, which they have successfully marketed around the globe. I invite Indian counterparts to take advantage of this visit to make contact with the companies represented here with me from these sectors. Organizations such as the ICBC can help provide valuable links between Canadian and

Indian business and I salute the interest and commitment of your members in this cause.

Canada and Canadian businesses are, as I have said, interested in developing long-term engagements. Bearing this in mind, we must increase the openings for joint ventures, technology partnerships and direct investment. Through these arrangements, Canadian and Indian businesses will not only successfully penetrate one another's markets, but will jointly exploit opportunities in third markets.

Some honourable mentions need to be cited in this connection: in telecommunications, Bell Canada International's partnership with Tata Industries in bidding for Cellular Mobile Telephone Systems; in printing and publishing, Quebecor and Teledirect's joint ventures with the Tej Bandhu Group to produce telephone directories, including Yellow Pages, in Delhi, Bombay and Madras; and, in consulting engineering services, SNC-Lavalin's partnership with Jaiprakash Industries; and these are only the tip of the iceberg.

In Canada, we have developed a forward-looking strategy known as Focus: India, which will be the cornerstone of our business development efforts. Some of you here today have been involved in the development of this effort. Focus: India is a Team Canada approach that involves federal and provincial governments and, far more important, the private sector. It aims not only to raise Canada's commercial profile in India but to facilitate Canada-India business linkages, sharing technology and expertise with Indian industry.

But this new era in the relationship cannot be limited to commercial exchange alone.

We shall continue to co-operate in areas of sustainable development, we shall embrace the rich intellectual interchange provided by our academic and cultural relations, we shall continue to work together on important issues such as the environment, and we shall continue to work through the Commonwealth and other international organizations to resolve the outstanding issues arising from the New World Order. We must also continue to address the more difficult and sensitive matters related to regional security and human rights in a mature and constructive manner.

I have a firm vision of a very close, mutually rewarding and multi-dimensional relationship between Canada and India in the 21st century.

You have my assurance that the Canadian government is committed to this goal, and that we will strive together to see this happen. Canadians look forward to building partnerships with India as it strides forward to achieve its vast potential.

Thank you.