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SSEA'S STATEMENT ON CANADA/ASEAN CO-OPERATION

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mark MacGuigan, said today, following the ASEAN meeting, that he had found his talks with the Foreign Ministers of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (composed of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand) to have been most productive.

The SSEA noted that Canada has a close and growing relationship with ASEAN members. Canada is expected to provide more than \$200 million in the next years for development to ASEAN member countries. Two-way trade grew by more than 40 percent last year. Canada and members of ASEAN consult on a wide range of international economic and political issues. Canada views events in Indochina with growing concern. In this connection Canada had co-sponsored a resolution initiated by the ASEAN countries in United Nations General Assembly in November 1979 condemning the invasion of Kampuchea by Vietnam. During his talks in Kuala Lumpur, Mark MacGuigan confirmed his support for the ASEAN Foreign Ministers condemnation of Vietnam's recent attack across the Thai-Cambodian border. He also expressed his grave concern about this Vietnamese incursion into Thailand. Noting that Thailand had generously extended first asylum to hundreds of thousands of Indochinese refugees since 1975 and that the Vietnamese action caused needless suffering and deaths among Kampuchean refugees and Thai nationals along the border. He finally called on all countries to refrain from taking measures which would increase tension and instability in the area, and cause further suffering to the people of the Indochinese peninsula.

As an indication of Canada's commitment to ASEAN objectives of greater economic co-operation, the SSEA proposed to his ASEAN colleagues that Canada and ASEAN enter into exploratory negotiations to examine the possibility of concluding an industrial and technical co-operation agreement. The proposal was that the agreement would cover industrial co-operation and technical assistance programmes in addition to traditional forms of development assistance such as the support for the fisheries and forestry sectors which had been discussed during the meetings. Such an agreement would also facilitate co-operation between the ASEAN and Canadian private sectors.

The SSEA announced that Canada has agreed to provide specific assistance to ASEAN in the forestry and fisheries sectors. At the meetings, Canada undertook to grant funds from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) toward the cost of experts, training, seminars and related equipment for a Forest Tree Seed Centre to be located in Thailand; an exchange of notes to this effect took place with the Thai Foreign Minister acting on behalf of ASEAN. Negotiations have not yet been completed on the establishment of a post-harvest fisheries technology project incorporating similar elements.

The SSEA said: "The ASEAN region holds some of the worlds most valuable reserves of tropical hardwoods, including teak and mahogany. Large-scale reforestration is urgently needed partly to safeguard the commercial resource, but also to protect watersheds and agricultural land, to provide fuel wood, and to preserve the ecological balance. The forestry project would reinforce ongoing ASEAN government efforts in this area and help to overcome one of the main obstacles to better forest management in the region, uncertainty of seed supplies and quality, and would also provide some of the training needed to ensure improved management of the resource. Benefits would be mainly to people employed in forestry within member countries, and in the longer run to future generations".

With regard to the fisheries project under negotiation, the SSEA said: "Fish provides about half the animal protein intake of the people of the ASEAN region, which is a protein-deficient area. It is estimated that 3 million people are already employed in fisheries within ASEAN countries. The assistance in the fisheries sector would focus on helping member-countries to reduce post-harvest losses, improve the traditional and modern fish processing technology and increase the income of small-scale fishermen".

The SSEA noted that industrial co-operation between Canada and the ASEAN region has expanded rapidly. The Canadian industrial co-operation programme carried out by CIDA involves support to the Canadian private sector to engage in joint ventures, licensing arrangements and other forms of economic co-operation with countries such as those in ASEAN. In 1979/80 thirty-nine projects were supported for the ASEAN region, almost eight times the number for 1978/79. This is the largest such Canadian programme for any region. Five projects were ASEAN-wide. These include: an ASEAN hardwood furniture seminar in 1979 which led to four Canadian firms sourcing from ASEAN exporters; an ASEAN standards seminar in Ottawa in May and June 1980 which brought representatives of ASEAN standards organizations together and assisted them in the formation of national industrial standards; and, an ASEAN seminar on licensing and transfer of technology which concluded in Kuala Lumpur on June 26 and which was intended

to promote a better awareness and understanding of intellectual property systems (patents) as an effective tool in industrial development. It will also provide advisory services for the improvement and modernization of industrial property standards. The Canadian programme has also supported the Private Investment Co-operation of Asia (PICA), a Singapore financing institution, and Technonet, a technology information centre also in Singapore. Both serve the ASEAN region.

Finally, Mark MacGuigan noted that prior to the beginning of ASEAN/Canada dialogue, the Canadian Heads of Posts in the five ASEAN countries have met in Kuala Lumpur with Senior Officials from Ottawa for a general review of Canadian policy in the region. This is the first time that such a regional meeting has been held. It was considered for all concerned extremely useful and beneficial.