

# STATEMENT DISCOURS

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Address by the  
Right Honourable Joe Clark,  
Secretary of State for  
External Affairs, to the  
Egyptian Businessmen's  
Association,  
Cairo, Egypt, April 9

OTTAWA

April 10, 1986.

Distinguished guests, honoured members,

I want to thank you for this opportunity to speak to you.

As the Foreign Minister of Canada, it is an honour to represent my Government during this visit to Egypt. Egypt and Canada have a long history of friendship and cooperation, sustained by mutual interest, shared values and many personal contacts.

As businessmen, you know that the best way to cement a friendship is through strong commercial ties. The close and warm relationship between our two countries owes much to your pursuit of this goal.

The Government of which I am a member came to office in 1984 with a strong commitment to economic renewal. We believe that Canada's position in the world is directly linked to its economic performance and productivity. We are committed to reaching out to the rest of the world, through trade.

Exports are of vital importance to Canada. They account for over 30 percent of our gross national product. We thus have a deep and abiding interest in maintaining and expanding our international trade.

Not surprisingly, our most significant trading partner is the United States of America. That relationship is the largest, single bilateral one of its kind anywhere in the world. Geographic proximity, a common language and complementary requirements have shaped this trading pattern. Some three-quarters of our exports head south to the United States. One-quarter of American exports cross our border into Canada.

But that trading relationship is not an exclusive preoccupation. We are also deeply committed to the multilateral trading system. It is for this reason that we have offered to host, in Montreal, the next round of multilateral trade negotiations. And I might say we do appreciate the support we have received from the Government of Egypt in our bid to host these meetings.

It is of vital importance to Canadians to broaden, deepen and expand our trading relations with the rest of the world.

I'm not sure how many of you have actually been to Canada; if you will permit me, I would like to offer a quick thumbnail sketch.

Although we have a vast country stretching between two oceans, Canada has a relatively small population of 25 million people. Our technological expertise has been shaped not only by the enormity of the geographic challenge, but also by the fact that we live in one of the most extreme climates in the world.

Two weeks ago in Ottawa, the capital of Canada, the temperature was minus 19 degrees. Meanwhile, on our west coast, flowers were blooming. In the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia, our most westerly province, the temperature was plus 21 degrees. I mention this, because these variations within our country have forced us to develop a highly diverse technological base.

It is true that resources and raw materials are an important element of our exports, but our major sales items are manufactured goods. They take an ever-increasing share of our global export trade.

Canada recognizes the importance of Egypt as a trading partner. Your country is a major economic and political force in the Middle East. Your current Five Year Plan for development calls for expenditures in excess of forty billion Egyptian Pounds.

In terms of your economic growth, Canadian companies have much to offer in goods, services and technology. We are "North American" but not "American". We have unique areas of expertise that could be welcome in Egypt. I am thinking of such sectors as telecommunications, energy production and distribution, transportation, computer software and hardware, oil and gas technology and agriculture.

Examples abound: Canada was the first country in the world to have a domestic satellite network; with the James Bay Project we developed an enormous hydro-electric capacity in northern Quebec; with CANDU nuclear reactors we have the safest and most efficient system in the world; Egypt has chosen several hundred Canadian General Motors locomotives for its rail system; and Canada's ability to feed not only itself but many others is renowned.

Your development plan calls for increased emphasis on the private sector. This coincides well with our own objectives.

As the Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, I have made it a point on many of my trips abroad to invite Canadian businessmen who have interests in the particular region to join me for meetings during my visit.

This has proved to be very successful and I am pleased to say there are a number of Canadian businessmen here with me today in Cairo. I am committed to working to widen the range of Canadian businesses who are involved internationally. We must search out as many mutually beneficial opportunities as possible.

For your part, the expansion of exports to Canada is heartening. Your non-petroleum sales to our market have shown steady growth over the past few years. The Canadian International Development Agency is providing support to the Egyptian Export Development Bank to encourage the production and export of your products to Canada. I can tell you that your products will be most welcome in our country.

I would like to pay tribute to the pioneering work done by the Egypt-Canada Business Council. Since its inception in 1981, it has provided a forum for businessmen to talk and get to know each other. It has made many substantive recommendations to our two Governments. It has created a climate of trust and friendship that serves us well. There can be no doubt that, as our relations continue to grow, the Council will have an ever more important role to play.

Having experienced for myself the generosity of Egyptians, I would like to invite each of you and your families to visit Canada, to sample first-hand the warmth of our people.

This year is ideal. Canada will be host to the world at Expo 86 in Vancouver. This world fair in transportation and communications has much to offer the visitor, not least of which is the magnificent setting on our west coast, surrounded by towering mountains and the blue Pacific Ocean.

Thank you for your gracious hospitality. It has been a pleasure to meet with you and get to know you.