

News Release

Communiqué

Department of
External
Affairs



Ministère des
Affaires
extérieures

No. 144

July 11, 1988.

CANADA AND THAILAND SIGN ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, and Air Chief Marshal Siddhi Savetsila, Foreign Minister of Thailand, signed today in Bangkok a Canada-Thai Economic Cooperation Agreement aimed at expanding the bilateral economic relationship through increased trade and investment.

Mr. Clark, currently making an official visit to Thailand, expressed his pleasure with the remarkable growth in Canada-Thai commercial relations in recent years. "Canada regards Thailand as a principal economic partner in Southeast Asia," he said, "and the Canadian private sector has increasingly recognized the great potential for expanding bilateral trade and investment. I am especially pleased that this Agreement makes the business community a full partner in our enterprise to bring more coherence and momentum to Canada-Thai economic relations."

Mr. Clark remarked on the significance of the Agreement within Canada's overall trade policy, saying that the Agreement also underscored Canada's commitment to increasing its trade and economic links with the Asia-Pacific region, particularly Southeast Asia. He added, "Thailand's signature on the Agreement is a recognition of the substantial opportunities which will follow from an expanded economic relationship, including the exciting prospects which will arise for both our countries over the next ten years as Canada and the United States reduce barriers to North American trade."

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures

Canada

Noting that two-way trade reached \$396 million last year and is expected to reach \$500 million in 1988, Mr. Clark said "Thailand, as one of the fastest growing economies in South East Asia, represents a highly attractive marketplace for Canadian resource products, manufactured goods, and engineering and consulting services." He pointed to the fact that Canadian-Thai joint ventures typify the direct investment business that is developing in Thailand. A number of British Columbia and Quebec firms had been particularly successful recently in establishing collaborative ventures in seafood producing farms, food processing, medical products, metal working, advertising, and fashion.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), through its Enterprise Thailand Program and the Industrial Cooperation Program, plays an important role in developing contacts between Thai and Canadian business persons for joint ventures, licencing agreements, and transfer of technology.

Canadian firms are pursuing several major projects in Thailand, including the U.S. \$1.2 billion Bangkok Mass Rapid Transport Project. Canadian business organizations have also been active in Thailand, including the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, Canadian Chamber of Commerce (through the ASEAN-Canada Business Council), and the Conference Board of Canada.